

Follow Us:



Monday, January 25, 2021


[Home](#) [India](#) [World](#) [Cities](#) [Opinion](#) [Sports](#) [Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Videos](#) [Explained](#) [Audio](#)

SUBSCRIBE

Sign in



Ads by Google

Stop seeing this ad

Why this ad? ⓘ

[Home](#) / [Education](#) / At IIM Calcutta, it's teachers versus Director over her powers, their role

At IIM Calcutta, it's teachers versus Director over her powers, their role

The letter, the faculty claims, was sent to the government only after exhausting all redressal avenues internally.


 Written by [Ritika Chopra](#) | New Delhi | Updated: January 25, 2021 9:17:41 am

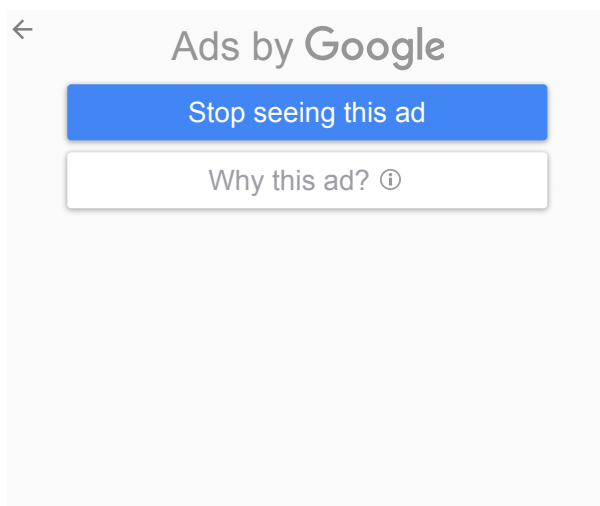


The faculty at Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, is locked in an unprecedented standoff with the institute's director alleging that she has centralised powers in her hands and usurped their role in administration and decision-making.

Director Anju Seth has attributed the confrontation to “a small group of individuals” upset with her efforts to foster a culture of transparency and accountability.

That group isn't small.

Last month, as many as 61 teachers — over 75% of the IIM-Calcutta's faculty — wrote to the Ministry of Education (MoE) urging it to step in alleging that Seth's style of functioning, was “arbitrary, discriminatory, and, having a very narrow vision.”



The letter, the faculty claims, was sent to the government only after exhausting all redressal avenues internally. This is unusual given that the IIMs, in the past, have always been critical of government interference.

Official sources said that any intervention by the Ministry is unlikely, at least for now. “We cannot start interfering in an institute’s internal affairs, especially when we are advocating autonomy for other higher education institutions along the lines of what has been granted to the IIMs,” an official said.

Also, the crisis is seen more as an ego clash as much as a turf war. “These issues aren’t things that can’t be resolved internally,” the official said. Indeed, higher education secretary Amit Khare is learnt to have met Seth and Kulkarni and asked them to resolve the standoff internally.

Seth was appointed as the first woman head of IIM-Calcutta in November 2018. An alumna of IIM-Calcutta (1978), she has a doctorate from the University of Michigan (1988). She joined Virginia Tech in 2008 and headed its department of management from 2008 to 2013. She will complete her term as director at IIM in a year.

Among the issues flagged by the teachers is faculty shortage. Sources said that only one new faculty member has been hired in the last two years despite the institute losing over 10 teachers on account of resignation, superannuation, and voluntary retirement. Some of the exits, teachers allege, were due to “harassment.”

“There’s a lot of micromanagement by the director... For instance, the doctoral research programme committee which deals with permissions for faculty to

present papers at international conferences is almost defunct because the director insists on having the final say who can or cannot attend international conferences,” said a teacher.

It's also alleged that in her role as chairperson of the Academic Council (AC), the highest body of the faculty – all permanent teachers are its members — Seth indulged in selective recording of minutes and decisions of the Council.

Members have alleged that minutes of a crucial AC meeting held on September 17 and 21 last year did not reflect the decision that faculty feedback on Regulations under the IIM Act should be shared with the Board of Governors.

Top News Right Now

- [Covid deepened inequalities – wealth, education, gender: Oxfam report](#)
- [Ladakh standoff: India, China hold ninth round of LAC talks](#)
- [J&K: Drop in law & order incidents but uptick in militant recruitment](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

The new IIM Act came into effect January 31, 2018, and grants sweeping powers to all 20 business schools, including in the appointment of directors, chairpersons and Board members. Each IIM, under the new IIM Act, has to draft its Regulations, which will oversee and guide the administration of the Institute.

Teachers at IIM-Calcutta have alleged that the Regulations seek to reduce the Academic Council's remit. One of them being that the Academic Council, in future, will only be able to elect one representative to the Board instead of two as has been the norm. Now, the Board chairperson will select the second.

The faculty also claims that, unlike peer institutes such as IIM-A and IIM-B, the formulation and adoption of the proposed Regulations of IIM-C was done without their engagement and consultation.

The Academic Council, they say, was given just five days to submit suggestions on the draft and that the faculty feedback on centralisation of powers in the Board and Director was not considered by the Board while passing the Regulations.

Last month, after writing to the MoE against the institute leadership, the faculty also wrote separately on its concerns regarding the Regulations and requested the government to hold off its notification.

[The Indian Express](#) sent a questionnaire on these complaints to Seth. In response, she said: “Our team at IIM Calcutta is committed to uphold the requirements of the IIM Act to firmly set the Institute on the path to global excellence while at the same time fostering a culture of transparency, accountability and meritocracy. These essential aspects of the Act may cause disruption and discomfort to a small group of individuals with dissimilar values and interests.

“We are pained by the baseless stories instigated by this small group to sully the Institute’s reputation built over decades. Despite the challenges we have confronted including those posed by the COVID crisis, we are now operating at even greater effectiveness and efficiency with devotion to the success of our talented students. Having converted challenges into opportunities to strengthen our resilience, we are excited to march into the future with integrity and commitment to the pledge of ‘IIM First’, blessed by the good wishes and support of valued members of our faculty and extended community.”

Asked about the faculty’s concerns over the new Regulations, Board Chairman Shrikrishna Kulkarni wrote: “As a practice we do not discuss internal matters related to our beloved Institute and my Board in the public domain... Please be reassured that we on the Board are fully committed and aligned to the best interest of IIM Calcutta. The allegations listed in the email below are without context and baseless.”

“IIM-C, unlike most IIMs, has a unique faculty-driven academic culture. Teachers at IIM-C pride themselves in the role they play in the day-to-day decision-making. For instance, the teachers there have always elected their two representatives to the Board of Governors. This doesn’t happen even at IIM-A or IIM-B. To change this legacy or culture, without taking the stakeholders along will obviously cause problems,” said a professor at IIM-A.