

IIM-C faculty raises concerns over management, writes to Centre

'Decline In Academic Environment'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: A simmering discontent among teachers about the functioning of the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIM-C) has come out into the open with the premier institute's faculty association writing a letter to the Union ministry of education citing their 'grave concerns about the current state of affairs' that have led to a 'decline in overall academic and research environment'.

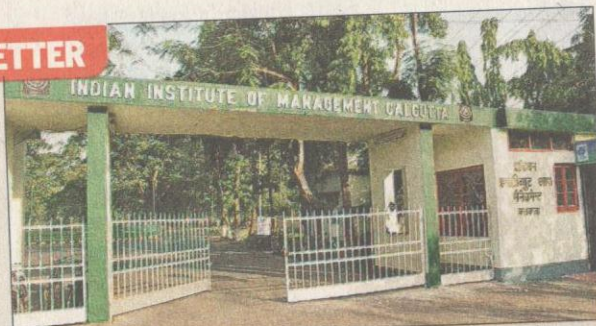
The letter, signed by 75% of faculty members, has termed current director Anju Seth's tenure and her style of functioning as 'arbitrary, discriminatory, and, having a very narrow vision.' It has also alleged 'violations of due processes and established norms, shrouding of the regulations and ordinances formulation in opaqueness'.

Efforts by the TOI to get in touch with Seth failed. A ques-

EXCERPTS FROM LETTER

➤ In violation of well-established institute rules, norms and practices, the Academic Council (AC) of IIMC, the "principal academic body" — recognized in the IIM Act, as one of the "three Authorities" (the Board and the Director, being the other two) — has been systematically undermined in terms of both its powers and functions

➤ It is deeply troubling that in an institute of national importance like IIM Calcutta, harassment and victimization of faculty



members have become the order of the day. It may be noted that just in the last two months two faculty members (including a foreign national) have resigned, citing harassment by the director and her vindictive attitude...

➤ The Academic Council who selects the two faculty nominees to the board through election has been overlooked without reason and an attempt is underway to choose the faculty members on the board ignoring extant rules...

tionnaire was mailed to her office but her representative said the director has refused to comment.

The IIM Calcutta Faculty Association (IIMCFA) sent the letter to the secretary of the Ministry of education Amit Khare on December 2.

The letter states that office-bearers are being harassed and there was a lack of redressal

mechanism. The signatories have pointed out irregularities in the nomination of two faculty members to the Board of Governors (BoG) and deceleration of progress towards Global eminence.

A copy of the letter has been sent to the director and secretary of the BoG.

"These concerns have accumulated over the current direc-

tor's tenure," says the letter. It mentions that though teachers have reached out several times to the director and the BoG, their 'concerns have been ignored or brushed aside with narratives of institutional change, which is supposedly underway, but not apparent to us'.

"Further, we believe the Board is also contemplating imposition of restrictions on the free-

dom of expression of faculty, specifically in raising issues related to larger academic concerns and administrative lapses in the institute..."

The faculty members alleged that there is a decline in academic and research environment. It alleged that there is a faculty and staff shortage and spending on research has been reduced. Under the current director, over-centralisation has slowed down, rather than accelerated, the pace and process of decision making, said the letter.

Consequently, only one additional faculty member has been recruited in last two years, despite several resignations and retirements of faculty. The student-teacher ratio has worsened significantly over the last two years. IIMC today has 20-30 full-time faculty members, fewer than IIM Ahmedabad (IIM-A) or IIM Bangalore (IIM-B), the professors said.

"We fear that unless there is an effective intervention by the Ministry of education, IIM Calcutta will see a drastic decline in its academic capabilities," wrote Ashok Banerjee, secretary of IIM Calcutta Faculty Association.