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Title: Regarding decision of Government to abolish UGC.

SHRI M. B. RAJESH (PALAKKAD): Thank you, Deputy-Speaker, Sir. At the time of formation, the University Grants Commission (UGC) was originally visualised as an autonomous body comprising of academia. The UGC was the product of post-Independent India to serve a social purpose in the field of higher education.

Of course, it is true that in the recent years that purpose has been diluted. There has been a deliberate attempt to undermine the functioning and authority of the University Grants Commission. Despite these efforts, it has played two important roles in the entire history of Indian higher education. The first role it has played is of distribution of funds and resources to higher education, that is, to Universities and colleges. Second is the regulatory role.

Sir, now the Government is going to abolish UGC and is going to set up the Higher Education Commission of India. These regulatory roles will be played by the Higher Education Commission of India and funding will be directly controlled by the Ministry. This move to abolish UGC will increase political control of higher education, academia and institutions of excellence. So, this will have disastrous consequences not only in the field of higher education but also in the fields of free thought, critical thinking, etc.

Sir, academia in the entire country is opposed to this move of abolishing the University Grants Commission. When the views of the State Governments were sought in this regard, the LDF Government of Kerala has expressed its opposition. Echoing the sentiments of academia and echoing the sentiments of the people of Kerala, the Government of Kerala has opposed the proposed move of the Union Government to abolish UGC. This is neither in the interests of higher education nor in sync with federal principles of our country.

Therefore, Sir, I urge upon the Government of India to drop the move to abolish UGC and set up Higher Education Commission of India. Thank you, Sir.

HON. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:

S/Shri Innocent,

Dr. P.K. Biju,

P.K. Shreemathi Teacher and

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Adv. Joice George are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri M. B. Rajesh.

