

Standing Committee Report Summary

Promotion of legal education and research under the Advocates Act, 1961

- The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice (Chairperson: Dr. E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan) submitted its report on 'Promotion of legal education and research under the Advocates Act, 1961' on August 4, 2016.
- **National law schools as institutes of national eminence:** At present, there are 17 law schools that have been set up by various state governments. The Committee noted that more states should set up the national law schools that impart the five year honours law degree. They must be treated similarly to institutes, such as the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Indian Institutes of Technology, and receive funding from the central government. Further, the Committee recommended that the National Law Schools set up under state legislation may be declared as institutes of national eminence.
- **Statutory basis to committees set up by BCI:** Currently, the Legal Education Committee (LEC) has been constituted by the Bar Council of India (BCI) to regulate the standards of the LLB degree. However, the composition of the LEC exceeds the prescribed limit. The BCI has also constituted the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) and Directorate of Legal Education (DLE) to upgrade standards of legal education. The Standing Committee noted that the expansion of the LEC, and the constitution of the CDC and DLE are beyond the scope of the powers of the BCI under the Advocates Act, 1961. It recommended that these bodies be given statutory basis through the Advocates Act.
- **Autonomy to universities in curriculum design:** The Committee observed that the postgraduate, specialised courses and research curriculum of a law university is governed by the University Grants Commission (UGC). The Committee recommended that these universities be given autonomy in the designing of their courses.
- **Financial support to law universities:** The Committee observed that the national law schools, law universities and legal departments of universities need adequate financial support. It recommended that the UGC frame rules under the UGC Act, 1956 to provide financial stability to legal education institutions. This could be on the lines of support given to technological and agricultural universities at present.
- **Inclusion of courses on arbitration, etc.:** The Committee suggested that legal education institutions must focus on emerging areas like arbitration, mediation, etc. The Committee also suggested that basic law courses like drafting of deeds, conciliation and mediation may be taught at the higher secondary school level.
- **Setting up of Advocate Academies:** The Committee suggested that the centre encourage all states to set up Advocates Academies on the lines of the State Judicial Academy for training of advocates. The Committee also recommended that the central government provide financial assistance to states for setting up these academies.

DISCLAIMER: This document is being furnished to you for your information. You may choose to reproduce or redistribute this report for non-commercial purposes in part or in full to any other person with due acknowledgement of PRS Legislative Research ("PRS"). The opinions expressed herein are entirely those of the author(s). PRS makes every effort to use reliable and comprehensive information, but PRS does not represent that the contents of the report are accurate or complete. PRS is an independent, not-for-profit group. This document has been prepared without regard to the objectives or opinions of those who may receive it.