



Standing Committee Report Summary

The Indian Medicine Central Council (Amendment) Bill, 2005

- The Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare (2005-06) submitted its 11th Report on The Indian Medicine Central Council (Amendment) Bill, 2005 on 29th July 2005. The Chairperson of the Committee was Shri Amar Singh.
- The Indian Medicine Central Council Act, 1970 (Principal Act) created a central council to regulate ayurveda, siddha, and unani medicine, set minimum standards for education, and maintain a register of all practitioners in these fields.
- Currently, the council has members from states with registered ayurveda, siddha, and unani practitioners, a representative from each university, and centrally appointed members with specialized knowledge who make up no more than 30% of the council.
- The Bill allows the central government to nominate six ex-officio members to the council. The Committee observes that since the government already appoints up to 30% of the members, this clause should be deleted.
- The Principal Act allows council members to serve a five year term or until a new successor is elected. The Committee notes that elections have been frequently delayed and some council members have served well beyond their terms. The Bill makes it mandatory for the government to hold elections three months before the council's term expires. It also provides for a fixed term of five years and a two term limit. The Committee supports the fixed terms but suggests a three term limit. They also recommend that the government, in consultation with the council, start elections six months before term ends.
- The Principal Act states that members will begin their term from the date of election or nomination. Since many elections can be delayed, the Committee recommends that a member's term should start from the election notification date.
- Following commencement of this Bill, the existing central council is dissolved and the central government shall appoint a Board of Administrators until it is reconstituted. The Bill provides provisions for the central government to reconstitute the board and notify the selected members. The Committee notes that dissolving an elected body is undemocratic, and recommends removing this provision.
- The Bill specifies that a council member can be removed on the recommendation of the majority of members. If the vice-president is removed, the Bill permits the central government to appoint a person to fill the vacancy. The Committee believes that the vice-president should be elected by and amongst the existing council members. The Committee also recommends elections to be held within one month rather than three.
- The Bill also allows the central government to remove nominated members and dissolve any council committee on the ground of misconduct. The Committee believes that an elected body cannot be dissolved by an executive order and the existing Commission of Inquiry is sufficient. They also state that the central government should not remove nominated members as this provision is unfair to nominated members. The Committee recommends deleting both clauses.
- In the Bill, the central government may direct the central council. The Committee observes that this gives the central government undue power and may hinder the Council's work. They recommend deleting the clause.

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