

# Standing Committee Report Summary

## The Rajendra Central Agricultural University Bill, 2015

- The Standing Committee on Agriculture (Chair: Mr Hukmdev Yadav) submitted its report on the Rajendra Central Agricultural University Bill, 2015 on April 27, 2016. The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 23, 2015.
- The Bill converts the existing Rajendra Agricultural University in Pusa, Bihar into a Central University, and declares it to be an institute of national importance. Key recommendations of the Committee have been summarized below.
- **Composition of Board of Management:** The Bill establishes the Board of Management as the principal executive body of the University. The Board has the power to (i) appoint teachers and other staff, (ii) manage finances, and (iii) redress grievances of students and teachers, among other things. The Committee noted that elected representatives do not have a place on the Board. It has recommended that two Members of Parliament may be nominated to the Board, on the recommendation of the Speaker/Chairman of the respective Houses.
- Under the Bill, the Vice Chancellor of the University appoints two persons representing farmers, to the Board of Management. The Committee observed that the nomination of farmers should be conducted in a transparent manner. It recommended that the number of farmers nominated should be increased to allow for a broader representation of the sector, and should include women farmers, and farmers belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, etc.
- **Composition of Extension Education Council:** The Bill establishes an Extension Education Council to supervise over the extension education policies of the University. Extension education is the application of scientific knowledge to agricultural activities by farmer education. The Committee recommended that provisions relating to the Council be modified to include two eminent social scientists from the fields of sociology, social anthropology, etc among its composition. It also recommended that the Heads of Departments within the University be included on the Council on a rotational basis.
- **Skill development of farmers:** The Committee observed that traditional or indigenous skills of farmers may be upgraded or modernized through the application of scientific knowledge. It recommended that a separate department be opened in the University, in order to run a specialized course for research on the modernization of traditional skills of farmers.
- The Committee also recommended that a practical course be incorporated in the syllabus of the University. The course would be for one month and would involve students staying and interacting with farmers to gain some field knowledge. The government may grant some additional incentives to students in addition to their stipend, for this purpose.
- **Comprehensive action plan:** The Committee stated that there is a need to establish more agricultural research institutes under the proposed University. It recommended that a comprehensive action plan should be created for the University, keeping in mind challenges faced by the country in the agricultural sector.
- **Observations about existing University:** The Committee made certain observations regarding the functioning of the existing Rajendra Agricultural University. It stated that several research institutes/stations under the University are under-funded, under-staffed and are not functioning properly. The number of scientists and non-teaching staff are also below the sanctioned number of posts. For example, in the Sugarcane Research Institute, Pusa, only 15 of the sanctioned 89 posts of scientists are filled up. Among non-teaching staff posts, 170 of the total 275 posts are filled up. The Committee also observed that the fund allocation and utilization ratio of these institutes has been inadequate.

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