

Standing Committee Report Summary

The Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University Bill, 2012

- The Standing Committee on Agriculture (Chairperson: Mr. Basudeb Acharia) presented its report on the Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University Bill on March 14, 2012, in the Lok Sabha. The Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on May 22, 2012.
- The Bill aims to establish an agricultural university called the Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. The jurisdiction of the university shall extend to the Bundelkhand region, covering 7 districts in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and 6 in Madhya Pradesh (MP). The university will cover ancillary disciplines such as horticulture, forestry, animal sciences and fisheries, as well.
- Key recommendations of the Standing Committee pertained to Parliamentary jurisdiction on enacting the Bill, opinions of the state government, location of the university and its feasibility. The Committee made the following recommendations:
 - **Jurisdiction of Parliament to enact a law on this subject:** The Committee noted that there was lack of clarity with regard to the entry under which the university could be established. The sole central agricultural university in the country was established under Entry 25 of the Concurrent List (scientific and technical education) in Imphal. However, the several occasions the introduction of the Bill was opposed on grounds of whether the central government had the jurisdiction to establish the university under the Entry 25. Subsequently, the Bill was introduced under Entry 63 of the Union List (institution of national importance).
 - The Committee received no convincing justification from the Ministry or the Department of Legal Affairs on why the university in Imphal could be established under Entry 25 but not the proposed university. The suggestion of establishing it under Entry 63 of the Union List (institution of national importance) was opposed by the Committee. They were of the view that such a classification should not be randomly assigned to a university, but be earned based on performance. The Committee recommended establishing the university under Entry 64 (institutions for scientific or technical education) or Entry 25 (as the Imphal University).
 - **Need for university:** The Committee noted that UP planned to set up a university in Bundelkhand and agricultural universities already exist in MP. These span the same region in which the new central agricultural university is proposed to be set up.
 - **Choice of location:** The Committee reported that Jhansi had been irrationally proposed over Chhatarpur. The Planning Commission had recommended Chhatarpur too as it is technically the most central location. The Committee recommended a survey be conducted before finalising the region for the establishment of this university. It also proposed Chhatarpur as the ideal location.
 - **Other problems associated with the setting up of the University:** The Committee noted that the establishment of this agricultural university could pose a few other problems that need to be considered, such as, (i) inadequate opportunities for employment after completion of studies at the university, (ii) burden on the exchequer, (iii) insufficiency of the currently allotted 300 acres of land, (iv) lack of trained manpower and, (v) failure to fill the region's developmental gap due to the proliferation of similar universities. This would also mean encroaching upon the land of two other existing universities.
 - **Lack of clarity in specifying logistics:** The Committee also recommended reviewing the quality of faculty, constraints in land procurement, adequacy in number of teachers/students, hostel building and other costs, etc. The Bill should also indicate how the university would contribute to the local community's benefits.
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