



Standing Committee Summary

The Universities for Research and Innovation Bill, 2012

- The Standing Committee on Human Resource Development submitted its 248th Report on 'The Universities for Research and Innovation Bill, 2012' on February 26, 2013. The Chairperson was Oscar Fernandes.
- The Bill seeks to allow the central government to establish Universities for Research and Innovation through notifications. The university can be notified only after the Memorandum of Agreement between the government and the promoter of the university is laid in Parliament for at least 30 days. Within this time period Parliament can choose to either disapprove or modify the agreement for setting up the university.
- The Committee noted that while these proposed universities would give impetus to quality research in the higher education sector, it would create two types of universities in the country. The proposed universities would have higher autonomy, better service conditions and a different mechanism for establishment than the existing universities. Therefore, it recommended that the Ministry identify a few existing central and state universities which may be given flexible governance structure and full autonomy on an experimental basis.
- The Committee pointed out that since the procedure for establishment of the universities for research and innovation is different from the existing universities, they do not fall within the definition of 'university' in the existing Acts and the Higher Education and Research Bill, 2012. Therefore, there would be difficulty in regulating these universities.
- The Committee recommended that the existing system of establishing universities through central or state acts should also be made applicable to the proposed universities. A Model Act on the lines of the parent Act governing central universities, IITs or NITs can be enacted.
- The Committee pointed out that since the new universities would have better pay and service conditions, there would be migration of faculty from traditional universities. It recommended that the Ministry accelerate its efforts to reduce shortage of faculty.
- The Bill allows both private and foreign universities to apply to set up universities for research and innovation. The Committee was of the view that the idea of giving entry to foreign universities through this Bill should be deliberated upon with care. It also pointed out that the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010 pending in Parliament has higher level of checks than envisaged in this Bill. It recommended that since research and innovation is intrinsic to the development of higher education system, these universities should be set up with state funding before allowing private or foreign universities.
- The Bill states that each university shall constitute a committee to review the performance of the university within 15 years of it being set up. Subsequent reviews shall be every 10 years. However, the Committee felt that such evaluation was not sufficient. It recommended that a healthy regulatory and monitoring mechanism be included in the Bill so that the autonomy is not misused.
- The Committee strongly suggested that a specific provision outlining the kind of penalties liable to be imposed in case of non-adherence to the terms and conditions should be incorporated in the Bill. Also, the authority which shall impose the penalty and the procedure should be outlined in the Bill.
- The Committee suggested that there has to be an inbuilt mechanism for redressal of grievances of students and teachers in the Bill.
- The Committee was of the view that the Bill should lay out the objects for each category of university be it pure or basic science, humanities and social science.
- According to the Committee, suitable provisions for women, persons with disabilities and persons belonging to weaker sections in admission and employment should be incorporated in the Bill. Also, there should be a definition of "teachers of the university" along with other officers associated with such universities.

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