

Standing Committee Report Summary

Functioning of National Akademis and Other Cultural Institutions

- The Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture (Chair: Mr. V. Vijaysai Reddy) submitted its report on the 'Functioning of National Akademis and Other Cultural Institutions' on July 24, 2023. National Akademis are autonomous bodies instituted to promote various art forms and culture. They operate under the administrative supervision of the Ministry of Culture. They are: (i) Sangeet Natak Akademi, (ii) Sahitya Akademi, (iii) Lalit Kala Akademi, (iv) National School of Drama, (v) Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, (vi) Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, (vii) Kalakshetra Foundation. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
 - **Budgetary allocation and issues:** The Committee observed that the Ministry of Culture has been allocated Rs 3,400 crore for 2023-24, which is only 0.075% of the total Union budget. It observed that this was below the allocation of 2% to 5% by countries such as UK, US, China. Moreover, the Committee noted that the combined budgetary allocation for National Akademis in 2023-24 at Rs 401 crore was inadequate. It recommended an increase in the budgetary allocation to the National Akademis and other Cultural Institutions to increase their efficiency and outreach. It recommended Akademis to explore the option of channelling CSR funds and private partnership for donations and grants. It also recommended undertaking fundraising events, galas and exploring the revenue potential of OTT platforms.
 - **Election and tenure of Heads:** The Committee observed that the process of appointing the Chairman/President of National Akademis and the tenure of these officeholders varies across National Akademis. Moreover, the composition of the Governing Council of each Akademi is also different. To address this issue, the Committee recommended that the government formulate fixed guidelines on the election and tenure of the Chairman/President, as well as the constitution and operation of the Governing Council. It also recommended the inclusion of an MP on the Governing Councils of each of the Institutions.
 - **Regional outreach:** The Committee observed that the presence of regional centres of National Akademis across states is uneven. Many culturally rich states such as Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh do not have a National Akademi operating in them. Further, the Committee observed that most institutions were headquartered in Delhi. It recommended the establishment of regional centres in each state and remote areas such as tribal areas and rural areas to promote tribal and village culture, respectively. It also suggested the relocation of several cultural bodies out of Delhi to ensure a pan-India presence.
 - **Availability and expertise of staff:** The Committee observed that a significant proportion of posts across National Akademis remain vacant. It recommended that the Ministry of Culture complete the recruitment process to vacant posts within a fixed time period. The Committee also noted that the majority of administrative personnel across National Akademis lack expertise or knowledge in arts and culture management. It recommended that a comprehensive assessment of the training needs of the existing staff be undertaken to identify skill gaps. The Ministry of Culture could implement coaching programmes to address these gaps.
 - **Governance:** The Committee noted the allegations of financial irregularities and administrative mismanagement in some National Akademis. It recommended the identification of existing gaps in governance and consistent monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of practices meted out to address them. In order to prevent financial misconduct, the Committee recommended segregating the functions of purchasing, provisioning, financing and policy-making functions within the Akademis.
 - **Co-ordination between National Akademis:** The Committee observed the lack of an integrated promotion of arts and culture by the National Akademis. It recommended inter-Akademi co-operation via (i) establishing formal channels of communication, (ii) sharing best practices and resources, (iii) initiation of joint research projects, (iv) exchange programmes, and (v) joint application for funding.

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.