

Standing Committee Report Summary

The National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019

- The Standing Committee on Agriculture (Chair: Mr. P. C. Gaddigoudar) submitted its report on the National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019 on December 3, 2019. The Bill declares certain institutes of food technology, entrepreneurship, and management as institutions of national importance. These are the National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM), Kundli and the Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology (IIFPT), Thanjavur. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
 - **Composition of the Board of Governors:** The Bill provides for a Board of Governors, which will be the principal executive body of the institute. The Board will be responsible for the general superintendence, direction, and control of the affairs of the institute. The Chairperson of the Board will be a distinguished person in the field of food science or technology, management, or public administration. The Committee observed that since the food processing sector is a specialised field, the Chairperson should have a practical experience of the industry or academia. It recommended that the provision should be amended to remove public administrators from those who can be appointed as the Chairperson. The Committee noted that this would help de-bureaucratise the working of the institute and adopt industry friendly policies.
 - The Committee noted that the Institute of Technology Act, 1961 provides for inclusion of three Members of Parliament in the central body for management of IITs. It noted that the food processing sector is linked to the farming sector and a Member of Parliament has the experience of ground reality of this sector. Thus, they will be able to bring the necessary practicality in the working of the institute. Therefore, the Committee recommended the inclusion of Member of Parliament in the Board of Governors on the line of the Institutes of Technology Act, 1961.
 - **Maximum limit on fee for technical courses:** The National Fee Committee under the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) fixes the maximum tuition and development fee to be charged for professional courses. The Committee noted that NIFTEM Kundli is charging a higher fee for certain programmes as compared to the maximum fee recommended by the National Fee Committee.
 - The Committee recommended the central government to form a high-level Committee to analyse the extent of excess fee charged by NIFTEM Kundli till date and take corrective measures. It also recommended the Ministry of Food Processing Industries to cap the fee of existing courses according to the recommendations of the National Fee Committee from the current academic session. The Committee recommended introduction of a new provision in the Bill to cap the fee for various courses in NIFTEMs at a reasonable level.
 - **Tuition fee waiver scheme:** The AICTE provides for a tuition fee waiver scheme for women and economically backward classes for courses in technical institutions. The Committee noted that NIFTEM Kundli and IIFPT Thanjavur were not providing this fee waiver as required under AICTE Rules. It recommended the central government to ensure implementation of tuition fee waiver scheme for economically weaker sections. The Committee also recommended the central government to start a full fee waiver scheme in these institutes for students belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and divyang students.
 - **Scholarship fee:** The Committee noted that NIFTEM Kundli has been collecting a separate fee from students to provide scholarships. It noted that since 2016-17, the institute has been charging Rs 6,000 per student every semester as scholarship fee. It recommended that such component of fee should be discontinued. It also directed the central government to enhance budgetary support towards the institute so as to provide scholarships to students from economically weaker sections of the society.
 - **Delegated legislation:** The Committee noted that the Bill empowers the Board to make, repeal or amend provisions of the statutes of these institutes with the prior approval of the central government. The Committee recommended that the Bill should be amended to require any such changes to the statutes to be laid before each House of Parliament.

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