

# Standing Committee Report Summary

## The National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers (Chair: Ms. Kanimozhi Karunanidhi) submitted its report on the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2021 on August 4, 2021. The Bill seeks to amend the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research Act, 1998. The 1998 Act established the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Punjab and declared it as an Institution of National Importance. An Institution of National Importance refers to an autonomous institute established under an Act with: (i) the power to hold examinations, (ii) the authorisation to grant degrees, and other academic distinctions or titles, and (iii) funding from the central government. Key observations and recommendations by the Committee include:
  - **Board of Governors:** The 1998 Act required the Board of Governors of a NIPER to have at least one public person or social worker from Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe. The 2021 Bill proposes to remove this requirement. The Committee recommends reconsidering this omission. The Department of Pharmaceuticals should ensure that at least one public person or social worker from Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe is included in the Board of Governors to enable social inclusion.
  - **Members of Parliament in the Council:** The Bill seeks to establish a Council to coordinate activities among the institutes under the Bill to ensure development of pharmaceutical education and research, and maintenance of standards. The Bill proposes to include three Members of Parliament (MPs) as members in the Council. The Committee recommended that MPs nominated as members must have prior exposure to the medical or pharmaceutical fields. This may be mandated by amendments in the Bill or Rules under it.
  - **Appointment of Directors:** The Bill empowers the Board of Governors to appoint a Director of a NIPER after approval of the President of India. The Committee noted that NIPERs are based on the model of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), where the Council appoints Directors after approval from the President of India. The Committee stated that the Director of NIPERs may also be appointed by the Council after approval from the President.
  - **Standardisation of NIPERs:** The Committee noted that even though all NIPERs are declared as Institutes of National Importance, there are huge disparities among NIPERs in terms of infrastructure, courses offered, campus area, and academic and research outputs. It recommended that certain standards for such parameters may be established to ensure that every NIPER meets standards of an Institution of National Importance.
  - **Delay in approvals:** The Committee observed that of the seven established NIPERs, only NIPER, Mohali has a finished campus. The Committee noted that proposals to create five more NIPERs (at Madurai, Jhalawar, Nagpur, New Raipur, and Bengaluru) have been pending since 2012. It recommended the Economic Finance Committee under the Ministry of Finance to expedite approval processes for construction of permanent campuses for all NIPERs. It also recommended the EFC to give priority approvals for requests to upgrade laboratory facilities at existing NIPERs.
  - **Frequency of Council meetings:** The Bill states that the Council must meet at least once every year. The Committee recommends that it should meet at least once in every six months to enable better coordination and administration of NIPERs.
  - **Transfer of members:** The Committee observed that the Bill does not provide for the transfer of Directors and faculty members among NIPERs. The Committee noted that transfers among NIPERs may encourage mutual sharing and learning between NIPERs. It recommended that the Bill should empower the Department of Pharmaceuticals to enable inter-NIPER transfer of members.
  - **Additional courses:** The Committee noted that four NIPERs offer specialised courses in natural products and traditional medicine. It recommended the Department of Pharmaceuticals to consider offering similar courses at other NIPERs. Further, it recommended that the Ministry of AYUSH may present a separate Bill to promote and develop research on indigenous medical systems in NIPERs. The Committee also recommended that Bachelor's degrees in Pharmaceuticals must be initiated to expand the pool of professionals for pharmacological research.

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