

Standing Committee Report Summary

Reservation in Higher Educational Institutions

- The Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports (Chair: Mr. Digvijaya Singh) presented its report on 'Implementation of Article 15(5) of Indian Constitution regarding special provision for reservation to SCs/STs and OBCs in educational institutions including private educational institutions' on August 20, 2025. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
 - **Law on reservation in private higher education:** The Committee highlighted that number of students from OBC, SC, and ST communities in private higher educational institutions (HEIs) is considerably low. It noted that there is a disproportionate admission of students in public institutions that are not equipped with quality resources and faculty. The Committee noted that there is no law regarding implementation of reservation policies in private HEIs. It recommended implementing provisions for reservation under Article 15(5) of the Constitution through a central law.
 - **Reimbursement to private HEIs:** Under the Right to Education Act of 2009, 25% of the seats in private schools are reserved for children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections. The government reimburses the expenditure by private schools on these children. The Committee recommended similar provisions for reimbursement to private HEIs.
 - **Support for increasing seats:** The Committee observed that reservation must be provided without compromising the quality of education and reducing general category seats. Hence, increasing reservation will require increasing seats, building infrastructure, and hiring faculties. It recommended: (i) providing adequate funds to private HEIs, (ii) supplementing resources through public-private partnerships, and (iii) providing low-interest loans to them.
 - **Support to students:** The Committee observed that students from marginalised groups require additional support due to poor foundational education and under-funded schools. It also noted that the dropout rate of students from reserved categories is higher in private HEIs. It recommended developing model programs in private HEIs which includes bridge courses and free coaching for entrance exams. The Department of Higher Education may also offer scholarships.
 - **Anti-discrimination measures:** The Committee observed that caste-based discrimination has often been reported in private HEIs. It recommended strict enforcement of anti-discrimination policies and constitution of grievance redressal mechanism in private HEIs.
 - **Increasing awareness:** The committee observed that students from marginalised sections are unaware of reservation benefits. Some private universities have partnered with schools and organisations to support admissions of students from marginalised communities. The Committee recommended that the Department should collaborate with NGOs and community leaders to spread awareness about opportunities available for them in private HEIs.
 - **Data on caste:** The Committee highlighted a lack of a reliable and updated database on the composition of the student population in private and public HEIs. It also noted that currently, declaration of caste during the admission process is optional. It recommended that private HEIs must collect data on caste category of all applicants as well as admitted students. Applicants and students should be given the chance to declare that they do not have a caste identity.

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