

Standing Committee Report Summary

The National Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010

- The Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, chaired by Shri Oscar Fernandes, submitted its 226th Report on 'The National Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010' on September 30, 2010.
- The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabh on April 15, 2010. It seeks to amend 'The National Institutes of Technology Act, 2007' and adds five Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) as institutions of national importance.
- The Committee notes that some central and state government secretaries are being appointed to the Board in their ex-officio capacity. Due to their pre-occupation with other assignments it may not be possible for them to attend Board meetings. The Committee therefore recommends that designated nominees of such members may be authorized to attend Board meetings on their behalf.
- The Committee observed that the inter-disciplinary knowledge regime as indicated by the Department is not clearly spelt out in the Bill. The Committee hoped that the Department would strive towards flexibility and freedom in research.
- The Committee cautioned that mere declaration of these NITs as institutions of national importance may not be sufficient to transform them into premier institutions. There is need to ensure that all requirements of these institutes are met in a time bound manner, especially the appointment of qualified faculty.

Observations and recommendations of the Committee:

While the Committee supported the Bill, it raised a few issues:

- The Committee pointed out the differences in the composition of the Board of Governors of the NITs and the IISERs. The Bill creates a 16 member Board for IISERs that includes four central government secretaries, the financial adviser to the Ministry of HRD and four eminent scientists nominated by central government. In comparison, the NIT Board consists of eleven members. Of these, two members are Joint Secretaries in the central government and another two members are experts nominated by the NIT Council. The Committee has raised two issues: (i) over-representation of central government nominees; (ii) nomination of experts by the central government. The Committee recommends that the composition of the Board be reviewed and made more expert specific in line with the mandate of IISERs.
- The Committee also recommends some changes in the proposed IISER Council. It suggests that instead of proposed five, only four secretaries should be nominated to the IISER Council (as in the case of NITs).

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