

Lok Sabha Passes IIM Bill, Gives More Autonomy to B-Schools

The bill is aimed at restricting government role in the functioning of these institutes; IIMs will now be able to grant degrees

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: The 20 Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) in the country joined the league of 'Institutes of National Importance' just as the IITs and AIIMS after the Lok Sabha passed the Indian Institute of Management Bill, 2017. Brought in by Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar in parliament today, the Bill gives B-schools more autonomy and will allow them to grant degrees instead of post graduate diplomas.

Restricting government role in the functioning of these institutes, the bill also gives statutory powers to these institutions in their running including the appointment of directors and faculty members.

Moving the bill for consideration and passage, Javadekar said the aim of the bill is to remove the government's interference in IIMs. He said the proposed legislation will usher in a new era of freedom in the IIMs and these institutes will not require to come to the government for various permissions and clearances.

"We should trust our institutions.

It is difficult to run IIMs from here," he said adding that allowing autonomy to institutes which have created an eco-system for excellence in higher education.

The bill also has provisions for appointment of members of the board of governors (BoG) in each of the 20 IIMs through a transparent process, while limiting even the HRD Minister's role. The government will have only one representative in each BoG so that the institutes can take decisions independently. It also abolishes the post of visitor. Currently, the President is the 'visitor' of the IIMs. In other

institutions such as the IITs and NITs, the President acts as the Visitor who appoints the directors and chairpersons on the advice of the HRD Ministry.

"It is a historical bill which will bring a new era in management education in the country," he said. Even that financial transaction will be subject to CAG evaluation as the institutes run on tax payers' money. While former Congress leader Shashi Tharoor praised the move and called the passage of the bill a 'remarkable' moment, the former minister criticised the government for not enhancing finan-

cial assistance to IITs and IIMs, saying they are reeling under funds crunch. He suggested the government should have some say in determining fee structure in the IIMs as higher fees may badly hit students from the poor families.

While the ministry has previously clarified that the "law of the land will apply" on the issue of reservations, the Bill only has a vague enabling provision on faculty reservation. So while the proposed law categorically states that IIMs will have to provide reservation for SC/ST and OBC students, it has a clause which only says that IIMs

shall try to recruit teachers from weaker sections of society.

Meanwhile Saibal Chattopadhyay, director, IIM Calcutta welcomed the move, saying they had been waiting for the bill to be passed. "The major beneficiaries will be our PGDM (post graduate diploma in management) and FPM (fellow programme in management) students who will now be getting MBA degrees and PhDs which are globally recognised. Also, the IIMs now become institutes of national importance as per an Act of Parliament. It's a big day for the IIMs," he said.