

Parliament sessions – planning versus performance

The Union Budget session for the financial year 2012–13 began on 12 March 2012. Thirty-nine bills have been listed for consideration and passing, and 30 new bills listed for introduction in this Budget session (12 March–22 May 2012). As far as the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MS&T) are concerned, 11 bills were taken up for consideration and passing, and nine bills were taken up for introduction in the Budget session 2011 (21 February–25 March 2011; Table 1)¹. However, only The National Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010 was passed by the Lok Sabha, and no bill was introduced in the Budget session 2011.

Two bills, i.e. the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research, Puducherry Bill, 2010 and the Academy of Scientific and Innovative

Research Bill, 2010 were passed by both houses of parliament and the Educational Tribunals Bill, 2010 was passed by the Lok Sabha. In the case of the nine bills listed for introduction in parliament in the Budget session, two bills; i.e. the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2011 and The National Academic Depository (Amendment) Bill, 2011 were introduced to the Lok Sabha in the Monsoon session (1 August–8 September 2011)².

There are seven bills listed for consideration and passing, and four new bills will be introduced in this Budget session which are related to MHRD and MS&T (Table 2). Only, The Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University Bill, 2012, is new among the four bills for introduction, while the rest were not introduced in the parliament sessions of the last year.

The Seeds Bill, 2004, was introduced to the Rajya Sabha on 9 December 2004, and the Standing Committee submitted its report on 28 November 2006; however, it is still pending. According to Ramesh Chand, Director, National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, New Delhi, 'It is noteworthy here that the draft of the Seeds Bill has been revised three times in last eight years (2004, 2008, 2010) mainly to accommodate the concerns expressed by farmers' bodies, civil society and parliamentarians, and the latest 2011 version is still pending in the Upper House of Parliament. The unreasonable delay and indecisiveness on these important issues is doing more harm than good. The Seeds Bill, 2004 was tried to incorporate the interests of all the stakeholders, and it should become an Act at the earliest for ensuring farmers' access to quality seeds

Table 1. List of bills for consideration and passing, and for introduction in the budget session 2011

Bills for consideration and passing	Bills for introduction
The Institute of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010	The Agriculture Biosecurity Bill, 2011
The Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research Bill, 2010	The Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill, 2011
The Educational Tribunals Bill, 2010	The Establishment of Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill, 2011
The Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010	The Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2011
The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010	The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2011
The National Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010	The National Commission for Human Resources for Health Bill, 2011
The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bangalore Bill, 2010	The National Academic Depository (Amendment) Bill, 2011
The Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research, Puducherry (Amendment) Bill, 2010	The National Council for Higher Education and Research Bill, 2011
The Protection and Utilization of Public Funded Intellectual Property Bill, 2008	The Universities for Innovation Bill, 2011
The Pesticide Management Bill, 2008	
The Drugs and Cosmetics (Amendment) Bill, 2007	

Table 2. List of bills for consideration and passing, and for introduction in the budget session 2012

Bills listed for consideration and passing	Bills listed for introduction
The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions	The Agricultural Bio-Security Bill, 2012
Medical Educational Institutions and University Bill, 2010	The Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University Bill, 2012
The Institute of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2011	The Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill, 2012
The Educational Tribunal Bill, 2010	The Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2012
The National Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010	
The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Amendment Bill, 2010	
The Pesticide Management Bill, 2008	
The Seeds Bill, 2004	

and realizing the yield potential of agricultural technologies’.

The Pesticides Management Bill, 2008 aims to regulate the distribution of pesticides and in the process also create a data-exclusivity regime for pesticides. This bill, which was aimed at replacing the Insecticide Act, 1968, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in September 2008 by the Union Agriculture Minister, Sharad Pawar and till date has never been taken up for debate on the specified dates.

Several important bills like the Educational Tribunals Bill, Foreign Education

Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010; The National Academic Depository (Amendment) Bill, 2011, and The National Council for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) Bill, 2011 are still pending before parliament. Several of these bills have come under sharp attack from the Opposition and ruling party members ever since they were first introduced in the 2010 Monsoon Session of parliament. These bills are at various stages of legislative and consultation process in parliament, and the delay in their clearance has pushed

the educational reform agenda of the MHRD back by several years.

1. Sarkar, Jaimini, *Curr. Sci.*, 2011, **100**, 1278–1281.
2. Bulletins of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, 2011.

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