

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

The grant disbursal function to Universities and Colleges will be located in an independent entity which works in a transparent, merit-based approach through an ICT enabled platform: Shri Prakash Javadekar

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While replying to a starred question in Lok Sabha today, the Union Minister for HRD Shri Prakash Javadekar said that the Ministry has prepared the draft Higher Education Commission of India Bill, 2018 to repeal the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956 for establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) for promoting the quality of academic instruction, maintenance of academic standards and autonomy of higher educational institutions and for holistic growth of higher education and research in a competitive global environment.

The Minister said that the much needed higher education reforms have become essential now since the scenario has changed drastically since the establishment of UGC in 1956. During the period, the number of Universities has grown from 20 at the time of establishing UGC to 900 at present, while the number of colleges has grown from 500 to 40,000 and number of students increased from 2 lakh to 3.75 cr, Shri Prakash Javadekar explained.

Over the last six decades the size, scale and complexities of India's Higher Education Sector has increased manifold and it is now considered to be one of the largest Higher Education Systems in the world. With the increase in number of Higher Educational Institutions, the expert committees such as Hari Gautam Committee recommended that the regulator should focus on promotion of quality teaching and research and usher measures to bring the much needed reforms in the higher education sector. The draft Higher Education Commission of India Bill, 2018 now proposes to enable the Commission to perform its role effectively in attaining standards and enhancing quality in higher education.

The HRD Minister further added that the proposed Higher Education Commission of India will focus largely on promoting the quality of academic instruction, maintenance of academic standards and grant of autonomy of higher educational institutions. The grant disbursal function to Universities and Colleges is now proposed to be located in an entity which works in a transparent, merit-based approach through an ICT enabled platform.

The Minister said that the draft Higher Education Commission of India Bill, 2018 has been put in public domain on 27.06.2018 for seeking comments and suggestions from educationists, stakeholders and general public before 20.07.2018. The Ministry has received 9,926 suggestions/comments covering Members of Parliament, State Governments, academicians, teacher unions, Chambers of Commerce, students etc. and appropriate changes are being made in the draft Bill based on the public feedback.

The Ministry is in the process of finalization of the draft Higher Education Commission of India Bill, 2018 based on the suggestions/comments received from various stakeholders viz. Members of Parliament, State Governments, academicians, teacher unions, Chamber of Commerce, students etc. Shri Prakash Javadekar explained that the final draft Bill will address all the concerns of the various stakeholders.

While replying to a supplementary question, the Union Minister assured that the new entity will not be a bureaucratic body and will focus only on quality education and maintenance of education standards. He further said that earlier the UGC played both the role of as regulator as well as a grant disbursing authority but now there will be two separate entities comprising of academicians. While one entity will carry out the regulatory function, the other will take care of the funds disbursal aspects. He once again assured that the new grant disbursal entity will not be HRD ministry, it will be an independent body headed by academicians.

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