

**Bill No. C of 2024**

**THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES (PREVENTION OF  
SALE OF DEGREES) BILL, 2024**

A

BILL

*to prevent the sale of degrees by private Universities and ensure the  
maintenance of educational standards, integrity, and accountability  
in higher education, and to provide for matters connected  
therewith or incidental thereto.*

*WHEREAS it is expedient to prevent private Universities from engaging in the  
sale of degrees and related malpractices that undermine the credibility of Indian  
higher education to protect students, safeguard educational standards, and  
ensure accountability in the private education sector.*

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-fifth Year of the Republic of India  
as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Private Universities (Prevention of Sale of  
Degrees) Act, 2024.
- 5 (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may,  
by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Short title and  
commencement.

Definitions.

2. (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

(a) “affiliate(s)” means educational institutions which can run degree or other equivalent programmes, but are not empowered to provide degree on their own and have to be necessarily attached with some private University for the purpose of awarding degree; 5

(b) “appropriate Government” means in the case of a State, the Government of that State; in the case of a Union Territory, the Union Territory Administration and in all other cases, the Central Government;

(c) "degree" means any academic title awarded by a private University or its affiliate(s), to a student or any other person in the name of certification, diploma, or degree after the successful completion of a prescribed course of study and examination, and duly recognized by the University Grants Commission or any other relevant authority or the appropriate Government, as the case may be; 10 15

(d) "degree fraud" refers to any fraudulent activity or illegal act involving the unauthorized sale, issuance, or procurement of degrees, diplomas, certificates, or academic titles;

(e) "private University" means a university duly established or incorporated by a private body, institution or trust through a Central/State Act or by any other corresponding law for the time being in force or enacted by the appropriate legislature and maintained by a private entity; 20

(f) "Regulatory Authority" means the University Grants Commission or any other body designated as such and notified by the appropriate Government in the Official Gazette under section 5 of the Act; and 25

(g) "sale of degree" means the practice of granting academic certifications in exchange for money, goods, or services, without requiring the recipient to complete the necessary academic course requirements. 30

(2) Words and expressions used herein and not defined, but defined in the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 or any other relevant law for the time being in force, shall have the same meanings respectively assigned to them in those Acts. 35 3 of 1956.

Prohibition of sale of degrees.

3. (1) No private University or its affiliate(s) shall engage in the sale, exchange, or any other form of financial transaction for granting academic degrees or certificates without requiring compliance with the prescribed academic standards.

(2) Any degree, diploma, or certification awarded in contravention of this section shall be null and void. 40

Mandatory Transparency and Disclosure.

4. Every private University and its affiliate shall,—

(i) maintain transparency in admissions, academic assessments, and awarding of degrees or certificates;

(ii) prepare and submit a detailed report of degrees or certificates conferred and the students' academic performance annually to the Regulatory Authority, so designated under Section 5 of this Act, in such form and manner as may be prescribed. 45

	5.	(1) The appropriate Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, designate the University Grants Commission (UGC) or any other body as the Regulatory Authority for the purposes of monitoring and enforcing the provisions of this Act.	Regulatory Authority.
5		(2) The Regulatory Authority so designated, shall have such powers and perform such functions as may be prescribed to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Act, including but not limited to:	
		(a) issue guidelines and advisories for the effective implementation of the Act;	
10		(b) receive complaints or on its own initiative, investigate any suspected violations of this Act;	
		(c) conduct periodic audit of private Universities to verify compliance with academic and procedural standards and norms;	
15		(d) exercise regulatory oversight over matters related to the sale of degrees by private Universities, if any, either <i>suo motu</i> or which may be brought to its notice and recommending appropriate actions, including prosecution or derecognition, as may be prescribed; and	
		(e) any other matter relating to this Act, which may be referred to it by the appropriate Government, from time-to-time.	
20	6.	The Regulatory Authority shall, while investigating any matter referred to in clause (b) or clause (d) of section 5, have all the powers of a Civil Court trying a suit and, in particular, in respect of the following matters, namely,—	Regulatory authority to have powers of a Civil Court.
		(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India and examining him on oath;	
25		(b) requiring the discovery and production of any document;	
		(c) receiving evidence on affidavits;	
		(d) requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office;	
30		(e) issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses and documents; and	
		(f) any other matter which may be prescribed.	
	7.	The Regulatory Authority shall, in collaboration with the appropriate Government, raise public awareness about the dangers of degree fraud and establish reporting mechanisms for complaints.	Awareness and Reporting.
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	8.	(1) A dedicated Grievance Redressal Cell shall be established within the Regulatory Authority to address complaints and grievances specifically related to degree fraud and violation or contravention of any of the provisions of the Act, in such manner as may be prescribed.	Establishment of a Grievance Redressal Mechanism.
40		(2) Any student, employee, or member of the public may submit complaints regarding suspected instances of illegal sale of degrees and violation or contravention of any of the provisions of the Act, in such form and manner as may be prescribed.	
	9.	(1) Any private University or its affiliate(s) or any individual shall be held guilty of an offence under this Act if they:	Offences.
45		(a) issue, sell, or grant degrees or certificates without adherence to the prescribed academic and procedural standards and norms, as may be prescribed;	

	(b) facilitate or abet any activity leading to the unauthorized issue or sale or grant of academic degrees and certificates;	
	(c) submit false or misleading information to the Regulatory Authority regarding compliance with this Act;	
	(d) fail to maintain accurate academic records or provide such records when required or called for by the Regulatory Authority;	5
	(e) obstruct or refuse to cooperate with inspections or inquiries by the Regulatory Authority or comply with the directions issued under this Act; and	
	(f) violate or act in contravention of any of the provisions of this Act.	10
	(2) The offences under this section shall be deemed to be cognizable and non-bailable.	
Liability of an officer of the University.	10. (1) If it is proven that any offence under section 9 was committed with the consent or connivance of, or due to negligence by, any officer of the university, such officer shall also be deemed guilty of the said offence and be liable to punishment in accordance with the provisions of this Act.	15
	(2) Where an offence under this Act is committed by a private University or its affiliate(s), the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Principal, Faculty and/or other persons responsible for the management thereof shall be deemed guilty unless they prove that the offence occurred without their knowledge or that they exercised due diligence to prevent it.	20
	(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-sections (1) and (2), no action shall be taken against any person for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act.	
Penalties.	11. (1) Any private University or its affiliate(s) found violating the provisions of this Act shall be liable to be punished with—	25
	(a) a monetary fine, which may extend up to rupees one crore; and/or	
	(b) suspension of accreditation or affiliation, depending on the severity of the violation; and/or	
	(c) disqualification of specific academic programs or all programs until remedial action is undertaken.	30
	(2) Any individual, including officials or faculty of a private University or its affiliate(s), proven to be involved in the sale of degrees or certificates or found guilty of any of the offences under Section 9 shall be punished with—	35
	(a) a monetary fine, which may extend up to rupees ten lakh; and/or	
	(b) suspension or permanent disqualification from holding any position in any educational institution.	
Protection for Whistleblowers.	12. (1) Any person who, in good faith, reports instances or files a complaint regarding the illegal sale of degrees or violation or contravention of any of the provisions of this Act shall be entitled to protection against retaliation, including but not limited to:	40
	(a) dismissal, suspension, or demotion from employment;	
	(b) discrimination in terms of employment conditions or opportunities;	
	(c) any form of harassment, whether physical, psychological, or professional.	45

Provided that any such retaliatory action taken by any organization, body or individual(s) against a whistleblower shall be deemed as a punishable offence and shall be liable to be punished as per the provisions of this Act or any other relevant law for the time being in force.

5 (2) The identity of whistleblower(s) and the contents of their complaints shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed except:

(a) when required by law or judicial process; or

10 (b) to the extent necessary for conducting an effective investigation or proceeding under this Act, in which case adequate measures shall be taken to protect the whistleblower's identity; or

(c) any other circumstances, as may be prescribed.

13. The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of the provisions of any other law for the time being in force and, in case of any inconsistency, the provisions of this Act shall have overriding effect on the provisions of any such law to the extent of the inconsistency.

Act not in  
derogation of  
any other law.

14. (1) The appropriate Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

Power to  
make rules.

20 (2) Every rule made by the Central Government under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or both Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

25 (3) Every rule made by the State Government under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of the State Legislature where it consists of two Houses, or where such Legislature consists of one House, before that House.

## STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The purpose of this Bill is to address the serious issue of degree selling by private Universities, which undermines the credibility of Indian higher education and devalues legitimate academic achievements. By enacting stringent penalties and establishing an enforcement mechanism, this Bill aims to maintain the integrity of academic qualifications, protect students from degree fraud, instill confidence in the education system and preserve the reputation of Indian education on a global level. The Bill also seeks to provide necessary safeguards for whistleblowers, so that students and general public can fearlessly report cases of degree fraud and other violations of the provisions of the Bill and bring the guilty to justice.

Hence this Bill.

IMRAN PRATAPGARHI

## MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 14 of the Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Bill.

As the matters in respect of which rules may be made are matters of procedure and administrative detail only, the delegation of legislative power is, therefore, of a normal character.

RAJYA SABHA

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*(Shri Imran Pratapgarhi, M.P.)*