

Bill No. XL of 2023

THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

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further to amend the Central Universities Act, 2009.

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

1. (1) This Act may be called the Central Universities (Amendment) Act, 2023.

Short title and commencement.

(2) It shall come into force with immediate effect.

5 2. After section 22 of the Central Universities Act, 2009, the following new section shall be inserted, namely:—

Insertion of new Section 22A.

10 "22A. (1) It shall be mandatory for every University to constitute an Industry-Academia Linkage Cell which shall be the principal body within the University for the purpose of developing the requisite skills among the students to facilitate their transfer from academia to industry.

Industry-Academia Linkage Cell.

(2) The Industry-Academia Linkage Cell shall be responsible for performing such functions that shall include but not be limited to:

(a) enable active and streamlined co-operation between the University and related industries and industrial institutions;

(b) foster an environment of ingenuity and research within the University; 5

(c) provide incubation facilities for students;

(d) create opportunities for students to participate in real-life industrial projects;
and

(e) undertake any other activity that falls within its ambit in the interest of the students." 10

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Indian education system is often criticised for encouraging rote memorization, a concept that only encourages students to learn everything through repetition. Employers themselves have often raised concerns about Indian students lacking intrinsic skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and leadership.

A study has revealed that about 50 per cent. of the Indian youth are not on target to possess the essential skills that will be required for various jobs in 2030. Around 1/6th of Indian students pursue engineering but due to a lack of skills required to execute technical jobs, less than 20 per cent. are employed in the field. Another study found that 80 per cent. of Indian engineers are not equipped for a job in the knowledge economy, a system that is largely based on the consumption and production of intellectual capital. Yet another study of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) students in India highlighted that they do not gain critical thinking skills over 4 years of the undergraduate degree taken up by them, as compared to similarly placed students in other countries. Even though Indian students are known for their expertise in science and technology and undergo massive migration in such fields, clearly the curricula followed in Indian Universities do not help them acquire crucial skills to thrive in the industry.

The persisting constraints in research and development (R&D) coupled with a lack of interdisciplinary opportunities have resulted in a weak innovation ecosystem in academia. It is no coincidence that India has 8 scientists for 1000 people, as compared to 18 in Canada, 21 in the US and 53 in South Korea. To address this situation, there is a compelling need to facilitate stronger linkages between academia and industry. This will enable students to attain transferrable skills from Universities and carry them forward when entering industries, thus creating more value for the economy as a whole.

While the National Education Policy, 2020 does emphasise the need for greater industry-academia linkages, it has not laid down any distinct roadmap or strategy for facilitating the same. Hence, this Bill mandates every Central University in the country to constitute an Industry-Academic Linkage Cell that will help in the creation of an ecosystem at the University level for facilitating the transfer of knowledge from academic and research institutions to the industrial market. This will also provide a much-needed nudge towards revamping the current teaching mechanism and envisioning the syllabi in a manner that actively encourages creativity and curiosity among students.

Hence, this Bill.

V. VIJAYASAI REDDY.

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further to amend the Central Universities Act, 2009.

(Shri V. Vijayasai Reddy, M.P.)