

Lecture on the ‘Maharashtra Public Universities Act 2016’: A Report

Background:

The State Legislative Assembly passed the new Maharashtra Public Universities Act 2016, paving the way for wide-ranging fundamental reforms in the functioning of public universities. The Council too passed the Bill unanimously. The Bill proposes to usher in far-reaching changes in various areas of university activities, putting students’ interests at the centre, as also to lend greater autonomy of functioning and eliminate rampant commercialisation of education.

Outcome:

- To make the teachers aware about the nature and structure of the Maharashtra Public Universities Act 2016
- To deliberate on the possible consequences of this act on the scenario of higher education in Maharashtra
- To understand the role of teachers in the context of the new act

Event:

The IQAC arranged a scholarly lecture-cum-presentation on the ‘Maharashtra Public Universities Act 2016’ on **14th December, 2017** in the Multipurpose Hall. Vice Principal Dr. R. Y. Shinde addressed the faculty in the college. Prin. Dr. A. A. Rekhi was the present on this occasion.

In his speech, Dr. Shinde commented on many new ideas sought to be implemented such as restoration of university elections, setting up of students’ development councils (SDCs), choice-based credit system, cutting down of political appointments through nomination of experts, increasing social reservations in various university bodies, special emphasis on skill development, uniform regulatory regimen for all universities and introduction of modern accounting system. He opined that the Act proposes to strike a balance between elections and nominations to various university bodies to stamp out nominations of vested interests. Nominations will now be done after election of chairpersons of boards of studies as against the past practice,

when nominated members would have a say in elections of such chairpersons as well as deans of various faculties. However, he added, the nominations should be impartial and transparent.

The new Act proposes to nominate eight experts from nationally important institutes into academic councils. Similarly, academic faculties and board of studies will also have five and four nominated experts respectively, from industries and national research and educational institutes in order to the quality of curriculum. Another important provision in the Bill is to increase social reservation in various bodies to give a greater say to various sections of the society in the university's decision making process. Reservation in senate has been increased from nine seats to 14 and in management council from one to four. In academic council, positions of principal, professor and lecturer have also been provided with social reservation.

Dr. Shinde pointed out that the Act lays major stress on entrepreneurship development through skill development. For this, the Bill has introduced the idea of board of innovation, incubation and enterprise and board of national and international linkages. The boards will strive to bring in the latest in global entrepreneur skills to the universities. The Act also proposes to establish internal quality assurance boards as a precondition for quality assessment by NAAC and university grants commission.

Dr. S. T. Patil, IQAC Coordinator, proposed a vote of thanks.

Dr. S. T. Patil
Coordinator, IQAC