

# Committee to submit report on vocational education reforms

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**Pune:** An elaborate report on major reforms in the policy to develop vocational education and the steps required for establishment of a vocational university in the state will be handed over to the government early next week by an 11-member expert panel.

The new vocational education policy will be aligned with the objectives of the National Skill Development Mission, which aims at providing skilled manpower across different sectors of the economy and narrowing the gap between demand and supply of workforce.

Speaking to TOI on Tuesday, chairwoman of the panel Swati Mujumdar said, "A major thrust of our report is on implementation of reforms at three different stages viz. the SSC (Std X); HSC (Std XII) and under-graduate (UG) as well as post-graduate (PG) levels of studies."

She said, "A special section is dedicated to the recommendations on bringing the unorganised sector workers into the mainstream of skilled workforce."

Recently, the panel made a presentation before Union agriculture minister and NCP chief Sharad Pawar and will soon make a presentation before state chief minister Prithviraj Chavan, prior to going public with its recommendations, she added.

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As of now, those passing HSC (vocational) have few options at the UG and PG levels other than joining conventional courses like BA and BCom. Many students end up losing the vocational skills learnt at the HSC level.

In August 2010, city-based Symbiosis Centre for Distance Learning (SCDL), which is headed by Mujumdar, had forwarded a proposal to minister for higher and technical education (H&TE) Rajesh Tope seeking improvements in the state's vocational education system. The H&TE department constituted the 11-member panel on January 27 to go into the issue.

The committee has on board Dilip H M Chenoy, managing director and chief executive officer of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC),

which is a public-private partnership initiative for promoting skill development through creation of large, quality, for-profit vocational institutions.

Former director of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) V S Prasad, former advisor to NAAC Shakuntala Katre, senior corporate executive Pradeep Bhargava, state director of vocational education S G Devadkar and the chairman of Maharashtra State Board of Technical Education are among other members.

Mujumdar said, "Over the last six months, we have carried out a series of activities to collect vital feedback from different stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, industry bodies and academic experts. This includes consultation with the National Knowledge Corporation, the Planning Commission, the HRD ministry and industry bodies like Ficci, CII and MCCAIA."

Close to 2,200 students and 200 teachers from rural, semi-urban and urban centres have been covered as part of a survey to know their aspirations vis-à-vis development of vocational education at higher levels of studies, she said.

Similarly, the panel has worked out the modalities for establishment of an independent vocational university and is currently in the process of drafting an act for the same, she added.