

State to set up regulator for vocational education

Panel Moots Quality Council, Accreditation Board, Varsity

Vishwas Kothari | TNN

File photo

Pune: A bill for the proposed Maharashtra Vocational Education and Training (MVET) Act will be tabled during the monsoon session of the state legislature, minister for higher and technical education (H&TE) Rajesh Tope said here on Friday.

The bill envisages setting up of an independent regulatory commission for development of vocational education in the state, a quality council and accreditation board and a separate university for vocational education.

"Our attempt will be to see that the bill is passed by the end of the monsoon session or latest by the winter session, so as to have the regulatory commission and other proposed measures in place, at the commencement of academic year 2012-13," Tope told reporters after receiving the report of an 11-member expert panel, assigned by the government for recommending reforms in vocational education.

Symbiosis Centre for Distance Learning (SCDL) chief Swati Mujumdar, who headed the panel, submitted the three-part report, which carries recommendations to promote vocational education not only at the higher secondary (standard XII) level but also at the secondary (standard X) level and the undergraduate levels.

Tope said, "The report will be posted on the government's website to secure feedback from various stakeholders on the issue of development of vocational education. Over the next one week, we will make a presentation to the chief minister and the deputy chief minister to see that the report is accepted by the government."

"The policy-level reforms sought to be introduced are in tune with the prime minister's ambitious National Skill Development Mission, which looks at the creation of a 50 crore-strong skilled workforce by 2022," he said.

As of now, the industry is facing a major demand-supply issue when it comes to the skilled workforce.

"Employment is available and yet we have a huge number of educated unemployed people only because they lack in employability and skills," he added.



THE BIG PICTURE

- Nearly 4 lakh students choose vocational education and training
- It is offered in standards VIII, IX and X in the technical schools and in standards XI and XII by way of minimum competency vocational course (MCVC)
- Another 1.75 lakh students study at the industrial training institutes
- However, these students have few avenues at the higher level of studies
- This consideration also formed the backdrop for the government to work out major policy reforms through the 11-member experts' panel

As of now, there is no system to assess the level of skills among the unorganised sector, the kind of advanced skill training needed for vertical mobility and the opportunities

Rajesh Tope | MINISTER FOR HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The proposed MVET Act will have an overarching influence over the manner in which the regulatory commission, the quality council and accreditation board and the independent university will function.

"The commission will be run by a multi-member governing council comprising university vice chancellors, nominated members of AICTE, UGC, Maharashtra state education board and representatives of industry bodies like CII, MCCA and others," he said.

The commission's prime mandate will be to plan, promote, develop, regu-

late, coordinate and standardise vocational education in the state.

The quality council and accreditation board will work on standardisation of existing institutes offering vocational studies by way of setting norms and accrediting ratings.

The proposed university will deal with the much-needed study opportunities for vocational course students at the higher level of education, he added.

Another major area to be addressed is the unorganised sector, which constitutes almost 93% of the country's workforce.

"As of now, there is no system to assess the level of skills prevailing among this section, the kind of advanced skill training they need for vertical mobility and the opportunities they can have," said Tope.

The regulatory commission will have a number of departments under its control to deal with the secondary and higher secondary-level as well as university-level reforms for vocational education, collaboration with the industry, vocational training, recognition of prior learning (RPL), which is critical to assess the skill of the unorganised workforce, he added.