

Std.X passouts to get special ID nos

Anahita Mukherji, Times of India, Aug 22, 2010, 03.20a.m. IST

MUMBAI: Even as the government of India has embarked on an ambitious project to provide a unique identification number to all its citizens, the Maharashtra government is seriously considering a similar proposal for its students.

The Maharashtra Knowledge Corporation Limited (MKCL) a company promoted by Maharashtra's Higher and Technical Education Department, which has handled online admissions to junior college for the last two years wrote to the chief minister last week proposing a system whereby every child who passes Std X gets a Unique Student Registration Number.

This will help create a student's digital footprint with a system that manages a student's entire education profile. Whether a student opts for higher education, technical education, arts, agriculture, or for that matter any professional field, his qualifications will automatically be added to his profile, said Vivek Sawant, managing director of MKCL, talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function to celebrate its tenth anniversary.

Students climbing the higher education ladder have complained of the numerous admission forms they need to fill out at every stage of their education. The registration number will eliminate the need to fill out admission forms after Std X, as a student's entire profile will be stored, once and for all, on a centralised system. So when it comes to applying to a college, a student will have to fill out his choice of institution and stream.

Every time students opt for a new degree, they won't need to fill out forms specifying whether they are male or female, date of birth, etc, said Sawant. Every new degree that students acquire will be reflected in their digital profile.

MCKL wants to implement this system, not only for children who have passed their SSC exams, but even students from national boards such as ICSE and CBSE who are studying in Maharashtra. Currently, MKCL wants to tie up with the government of Maharashtra to provide this service to students who will pursue further education within the state. At a later stage, they may consider tying up with other states so that the qualifications of a student from Maharashtra who migrates to another state will also show up on his digital profile.

This isn't the only country where such a system has been conceptualised. Australia is also mulling over such a system of unique IDs for students.

Conduct exams online wherever possible. A year after the Common Entrance Test to the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology went online for the first time, the Maharashtra Knowledge Corporation Limited (MKCL) has come up with a proposal to conduct all university exams online wherever possible and declare the results instantly.

There are several problems with the current pen-and-paper examination system that can be rectified if the exams go online. For starters, the current examination system forces students to cram their textbooks. Simply memorizing a subject does not equal to true understanding of it. Online exams can help test what a student actually knows, said Vivek Sawant, managing director of MKCL.

According to him, the present examination system involves a lengthy process, plagued with problems such as paper leaks, mass copying, non-availability of examiners and mistakes in the results, which take a long time to rectify. All these problems can be solved if university exams were to go online, Sawant added.