

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**SHRI KAPIL SIBAL ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVE TO DEMAT DEGREES
NATIONAL DATABASE OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS IN
ELECTRONIC FORMAT ENVISAGED**

New Delhi: January 12, 2010

Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister of Human Resource Development announced, here today, the initiation of a process for the establishment of a national database of academic qualifications (degree/certificates from school to graduate/postgraduate level including professional degrees) created and maintained in an electronic format by an identified, registered depository. What is envisaged is a shift from the current practice, through dematerialisation of certificates, to a technology-based solution that would ensure confidentiality, authenticity and fidelity, enabling online verification and easy retrieval of academic qualifications. At present two Depositories, National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) and Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) are registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

Holding of academic qualifications in an electronic depository would provide immense benefit to educational institutions, students, alumni and employers by enabling online access of academic qualifications, eliminating the need for persons to approach educational institutions for obtaining transcripts of such qualifications or for verification as well as reduce the need for institutions to preserve records related to academic performance of students over a long time. The system could also eliminate fraudulent practices such as forging of certificates and mark sheets through facilitating online verification.

For the purpose, the Ministry has constituted a Task Force under Prof. Sanjay Dhande, Director, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur. The other members of

the Task Force shall include Prof. Debashis Chatterjee, Director, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kozhikode, Prof. S.S.Mantha, Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Prof. Ved Prakash, Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC), Shri. Vineet Joshi, Chairman, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), a nominee of the Department of Financial Services not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India, the Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor (AS&FA), Ministry of Human Resource Development or his nominee from the Finance wing of the Ministry and a nominee of the Planning Commission. The Joint Secretary (Higher Education) of the Ministry of HRD shall act as the Convener of the Task Force. The Task Force shall have the following terms of reference:

- (i) To prepare a road-map for implementation of the concept of electronic depository of academic qualifications in dematerialized form.
- (ii) To identify a registered depository to whom the work of creation and maintenance of the national database of academic qualifications in an electronic depository can be entrusted.
- (iii) To detail the terms and conditions on which the work of creation and maintenance of the national database of academic qualifications can be entrusted to the identified electronic depository.
- (iv) To draft an appropriate legislation to provide legal mandate to the holding of academic qualifications in an electronic depository.
- (v) To make recommendations on such other incidental matters that may be relevant to the implementation of the concept of electronic depository of academic qualifications in dematerialized form.

The Task Force is expected to submit its recommendations by March 31st, 2010.

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