

## **15,000 Jobless Engineers in Gujarat**

Ahmedabad: There was a time when enrolling in an engineering course was seen as a ticket to a lucrative career. But the circumstances seemed to have changed. Today, there are over 16,000 engineering graduates in Gujarat who are clamouring for a job. They are registered with the employment bureau.

The downturn of fortunes is also reflected in the 30,000 engineering seats which are likely to remain vacant in the state's colleges. The number of empty seats in engineering colleges has been increasing every year - from 10,778 vacant seats in the year 2013-14 the number of vacant seats rose to 28,092 in 2015-16. This year no less than 41% of the 71,829 seats are likely to remain unoccupied.

Experts say that the empty-seat syndrome has been accentuated by unregulated hikes in engineering seats without carrying out market surveys and qualitative checks. This is one of the contributory factors for increase in unemployment in the engineering sector.

According to the socio-economic review of the state, in 2012 there were 11,451 engineering students who had registered at the state's employment exchange, in 2016 the number increased to 16,559 - a jump of 44%. Simultaneously, the number of seats available in engineering colleges also jumped from 53,271 to 71,829. An increase of 34%.

The industrial sector seems to paint another picture. It says there is no dearth of job for 'qualified and talented' students. "Students from top grade engineering institutes do not find it difficult to get jobs," said Yatindra Sharma, past chairman, Gujarat state council, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). He is also the managing director of KHS Machinery. "However, many tier-3 engineering institutes have mushroomed. Management, faculty and academic quality of such institutes are below par. Students from such colleges have to undergo extensive training to make them industry-ready."

"There is a demand for technical manpower in the industry. While overall exports from the country has taken a beating, exports of engineering products have largely remained steady. High cost of capital equipment and engineering products from Europe and America has boosted preference for Indian products. As a result, there is no reduction in the requirement of technical workforce in the industry," Sharma added.