

'Make in India' push: institutes gear up to train smartphone technicians

Industry sees a shortage of 1.5-2 lakh technicians and engineers in the next 3 years

RAJESH KURUP

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In July 2015, at a meeting of top executives of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) and handset-maker Lava International, the talks centred on the dearth of smartphone engineers and technicians.

Among the many divergent views, the consensus was that inexperienced technicians were doing more damage to the devices than fixing them.

That's when TISS decided to take things into its own hands. The result: a course - Bachelor of Vocational Education in Electronics Manufacturing Services - started in January this year.

"There were not much courses, apart from a couple of engineering, polytechnic and ITI courses, those train people to repair smartphones. Lava officials said that they have huge requirements at its manufacturing

units," Amit Gupta, Vertical Anchor, Electronics, TISS School of Vocational Education.

With 600 students enrolled, the three-year degree course will supply a workforce of supervisors, engineers and line operators to mobile manufacturing units.

Other skills

Apart from the technical skills, these personnel would also be provided training in communication and general management also.

The course fee is ₹19,000-20,000 a year, with a 10+2 eligibility and for students aged between 18 and 20 years.

"For the TISS students, we will provide facilities for skill building at our shop floors. After three years, these students will have the opportunity to be employed with the handset manufacturing sector, which will be a large industry due to the 'Make in India' initia-

Tapping talent

- * Tata Institute of Social Sciences started a 3-year degree course - Bachelor of Vocational Education in Electronics Manufacturing Services
- * IT training institute Jetking Infotrain to start a six-month certification course 'Smartphone Engineer' by April 15
- * Aptech already runs two courses - NetLink (course duration 140 hours) and Vidya (70 hours) - imparting training on hardware, operating systems, connectivity and administration

tives," said Vivek Tripathi, Chief Human Resource Officer at Lava International.

As of January-end, India had a total of about 104 million mobile users, according to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India data.

A February report by Counterpoint Research said that smartphone shipments in the country grew 23.3 per cent to touch 100 million units in 2015.

The industry expects a shortage of 1.5-2 lakh smartphone technicians and engineers in the next three years, which is expected to further rise with firms such as Foxconn, Samsung and Karbonn in-

vesting in handsets facilities in India.

A slew of courses

Similarly, IT training institute Jetking Infotrain is gearing up to start a six-month certification course, 'Smartphone Engineer' by April 15. The course will teach basics, assembling and disassembling smartphones, with fees of about ₹35,000.

The course is open for students who have completed their 10+2 courses.

"We got requirement requests from handset-makers such as Karbonn Mobiles, Micromax and

Samsung. With this course, we plan to train about 5,000 students every year," Siddarth Bhawan, Vice-President at Jetking, said.

Aptech already runs two courses - NetLink (course duration 140 hours) and Vidya (70 hours) - imparting training on hardware, operating systems, connectivity and administration. The courses, with duration of 3-6 months, are open to 10th pass.

"Our market is usually focused on usage and maintenance of services and devices, which includes repairs, maintenance and upgrades. A large part of the R&D efforts as far as design, software, hardware, component development and sensors has always happened in other markets such as the US and China," Shashank Khedekar, technical head at Aptech, said.

Many of the pass outs settle for a job with a service with a starting salary of ₹8,000-10,000 mostly in the rural areas, while some move to tier-II and -III cities to start their own repair shops.