



Vocational Education And Skill- Enhancement in The NEP-2020

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Abstract

The National Education Policy 2020 proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of education, including the educational structure, regulations and governance, to create a new system which is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century students. According to the policy, by 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education. . It can be defined as skilled based education. Vocational Education helps in Economic growth. The NEP intends to focus on developing industry linkages and demand-driven vocational courses by engaging industry at various levels, including co-developed courses and development of incubation centres at HEIs. Besides this, the policy also envisages alignment with international standards.

The focus areas for vocational education are intended to be chosen based on skill gap analysis and mapping of local opportunities. The increased impetus for vocational education and lifelong learning in the policy is likely to provide comfort to employers as far as continuous supply of skilled manpower is concerned and will improve the overall supply-side recognition of the vocational system. The policy aims to overcome the social status hierarchy associated with vocational education and integration of vocational education into mainstream education in all educational institutions in a phased manner. This paper throws light upon present status of Vocational Education and the future prospects in NEP 2020.

Keywords –NEP, Vocational Education, Skilled -Manpower, Occupation, Industry, Economic Growth.

Introduction:

Education is not merely provision of information from trainer to learner, but the point is that this person requires practical educations for some of its tasks. By considering this theory The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India has finally seen the light of day, providing India with an education policy after 34 years. Vocational development program focuses on specific trades and imparts the practical skills which allow individuals to engage in a specific occupational activity. Vocational development is not only important in providing employment opportunities to individuals but also helps in enhancing the

productivity of firms. Vocational development program comprises all skill transfers, formal and informal, which are required in the improvement of productive activities of a society. Vocational education will be integrated into all school and higher education institutions in a phased manner over the next decade. Focus areas for vocational education will be chosen based on skills gap analysis and mapping of local opportunities. MHRD will constitute a National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE), consisting of experts in vocational education and representatives from across Ministries, in collaboration with industry, to oversee this effort. Individual institutions that are early adopters must innovate to find models and practices that work and then share these with other institutions through mechanisms set up by NCIVE, so as to help extend the reach of vocational education. Different models of vocational education, and apprenticeships, will also be experimented by higher education institutions. Incubation centres will be set up in higher education institutions in partnership with industries.

One of the primary reasons for the small numbers of students receiving vocational education is the fact that vocational education has in the past focused largely on Grades 11–12 and on dropouts in Grade 8 and upwards. Moreover, students passing out from Grades 11–12 with vocational subjects often did not have well-defined pathways to continue with their chosen vocations in higher education. The admission criteria for general higher education were also not designed to provide openings to students who had vocational education qualifications, leaving them at a disadvantage relative to their compatriots from ‘mainstream’ or ‘academic’ education. This led to a complete lack of vertical mobility for students from the vocational education stream, an issue that has only been addressed recently through the announcement of the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) in 2013. Vocational education is perceived to be inferior to mainstream education and meant largely for students who are unable to cope with the latter. This is a perception that affects the choices students make. It is a serious concern that can only be dealt with by a complete re-imagining of how vocational education is offered to students in the future.

Objectives and Methodology :

This research paper is based on relevant data gathered from secondary sources such as research articles and well-known websites. The main objective of this paper is to study the present status of Vocational Education and the future prospects in NEP 2020.

- a) To investigate the current state of education in terms of vocational education and skill development with respect to NEP 2020.
- b) To find out the future prospects for vocational education and skill development in India .

Reimagining Vocational Education:

The 12th Five-Year Plan (2012–2017) estimated that only a very small percentage of the Indian workforce in the age group of 19–24 (less than 5%) received formal vocational education Whereas in countries such as the USA the number is 52%, in Germany 75%, and South Korea it is as high as 96%. These numbers only underline the urgency of the need to hasten the spread of vocational education in

India. This policy aims to overcome the social status hierarchy associated with vocational education and requires integration of vocational education programmes into mainstream education in all education institutions in a phased manner. Beginning with vocational exposure at early ages in middle and secondary school, quality vocational education will be integrated smoothly into higher education. It will ensure that every child learns at least one vocation and is exposed to several more. This would lead to emphasizing the dignity of labour and importance of various vocations involving Indian arts and artisanship.

By 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education, for which a clear action plan with targets and timelines will be developed. This is in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 4.4 and will help to realize the full potential of India's demographic dividend. The number of students in vocational education will be considered while arriving at the GER targets. The development of vocational capacities will go hand-in-hand with the development of 'academic' or other capacities. Vocational education will be integrated in the educational offerings of all secondary schools in a phased manner over the next decade. Towards this, secondary schools will also collaborate with ITIs, polytechnics, local industry, etc. Skill labs will also be set up and created in the schools in a hub and spoke model which will allow other schools to use the facility. Higher education institutions will offer vocational education either on their own or in partnership with industry and NGOs.

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The National Skills Qualifications Framework will be detailed further for each discipline vocation and profession. Further, Indian standards will be aligned with the International Standard Classification of Occupations maintained by the International Labour Organization. This Framework will provide the basis for Recognition of Prior Learning. Through this, dropouts from the formal system will be reintegrated by aligning their practical experience with the relevant level of the Framework. The credit-based Framework will also facilitate mobility across 'general' and vocational education.

Employment considerations:

The NEP mentions that the primary reason why vocational education was perceived to be inferior to mainstream education is the lack of a defined path. Several studies around the aspiration of the youth point out some common findings. One, youth are increasingly aspiring for a university degree or post-graduation degree. Two, choices of the youth are majorly influenced by the family followed by their interests. The lack of information is also a crucial factor. In a survey, about 84% of the respondents considered a university degree or post-graduate degree as a requirement for their ideal job. Merely 2% of the youth were interested in pursuing vocational education. Every student going through a formal education system aspires

for a professional and a white-collar job. This has also got to do with middle-class values and notions of success. This aspiration is further encouraged with a rigid merit-based system leaving behind the ones who are less affluent. This makes blue-collar jobs an inferior option and secondary aspiration.

As per data from MHRD, approximately 26% of India's students enrol in higher education. Moreover, the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) states that vocational education is sometimes referred to as technical education, as the learner directly develops expertise in a particular set of techniques or technology. However, over the years, there has been limited participation by the industries and an inadequate in employment opportunities.

Issues & Challenges:

Through, the study of the prevalent Vocational Education System in India the following Issues & Challenges have been identified :

- Vocational Education is treated as poor cousin of the mainstream education system
- Mind set of the stakeholders (as last opportunity in the career progression)
- Developing co-ordinated Management System at National and sub-national Levels (sporadic policy initiatives).
- Pathways for employability of vocational pass outs.
- Development of Quality Standard acceptable to industries.
- Mismatch between demand and supply.
- Acceptance of Vocational Education as a career of choice.
- Lack of professional growth and career advancement for the vocational pass outs.
- Over emphasis on skill development than education & training.
- Pathways in institutionalising assessment & certification.

Apart from that However there is a lot of variation among the various programs in terms of duration, target group, entry qualifications, testing and certification, curriculum, etc. which has resulted in Issues related to recognition of qualifications, equivalence and vertical mobility.

Suggestions:

Education is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is essential for the success of all the Sustainable Development Goals. The renewed education agenda encapsulated in Goal 4 on 'Quality Education' along with its seven targets — four of which are related to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) — is inspired by a vision of education that transforms the lives of individuals, communities and societies, leaving no one behind, and is guided by the concept of lifelong learning. The NEP embraces the Education 2030 Agenda completely and commits to expanding TVET considerably to enable social justice and livelihoods through providing quality lifelong learning opportunities for all.

- Place learners and their aspirations at the centre of vocational education and training programmes.
- Create an appropriate ecosystem for teachers, trainers and assessors.
- Focus on upskilling, re-skilling and lifelong learning.

- Ensure inclusive access to TVET for women, differently abled persons and other disadvantaged learners.
- Massively expand the digitalisation of vocational education and training.
- Support local communities to generate livelihoods by engaging in the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- Align better with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Deploy innovative models of financing TVET.
- Expand evidence-based research for better planning and monitoring.
- Establish a robust coordinating mechanism for inter-ministerial cooperation.

Way forward:

The NEP 2020 acknowledges the shortcomings in the existing education system and aims at making it inclusive and aspirational. It envisages the integration of vocational education in the existing school and higher education system with a view to reducing the dropout rate. A renewed emphasis on vocational education is a positive step. Bridging the skills gap is an important objective. However, this must not be limited to the formal sector to which less than 9% of the workforce belongs. The skilling mission must also be extended to the vast informal sector. The NEP aims at exposing at least 50% of the students from class six onwards to vocational education, by including vocational education in mainstream schooling systems. Another challenge is to increase awareness and change the perspectives towards vocational education. Integrating it with mainstream education will also imbibe young students with values such as dignity of labour and the ethics of care.

This must be accompanied with conducive changes in the labour market so that employment opportunities are created in the domains of these vocations. The pandemic has also necessitated the need for a skilled workforce in healthcare services. Similarly, a skilled workforce can help India achieve its goals of self-reliance. Skilling and universal vocational education are thus important measures in the long term for reaping the benefits of our demographic dividend.

Conclusion:

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system was always a pressing need, even at the best of times, for meeting the requirements of skilled manpower for India's economy and for achieving the aim of inclusive and equitable growth.

The above discussion indicates that vocational education has played a major role in economic development, in developing countries like India, the vocational development program has not been very successful. Though governments have paid much more attention to this sector in the past few years, outcomes are still poor. The vocational development program is facing several challenges; quality of institutions and lack of linkages between vocational development providers and industries are two major problems. Vocational development program programs could serve this purpose by providing the marketable skills to individuals. The NEP 2020 rightly acknowledges the need to meet the goals of access and lifelong learning. However,

it needs to be supported by robust structural changes to ensure holistic development of learners. This will consequently lead to greater possibility of global and domestic mobility of skilled human capital, as aspired by the NSQF initially.

Vocational Education & Training (VET) help with bridging the skill gap between work and education. Through properly planned and effectively implemented VET programme, there is a possibility to prepare employable persons for sustained employment. Qualitative skill development of the new generation is a national need. It is now the time to engage all stakeholders i.e. the industry, governments, and the students themselves to construct a roadmap to effectively realise the potential of India's demographic dividend. A young workforce equipped with practical industrial acumen will enhance productivity and play a vital role in building a self-reliant India.

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