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## Issues in Vocational Education in India & their Possible Solutions

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### Background:

In a country like India where population, especially the young population is huge & the opportunities of employment are limited, the education needs to be updated at so many levels. Desperate times call for desperate measures. In order to earn livelihood, simply getting a degree through formal education doesn't serve the purpose. Simple education alone isn't enough.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an element of prime importance in any nation's educational initiative. Vocational education & education of skill development both go hand in hand and are interrelated to each other. Both of them are ultimately related to productivity. Vocational education equips a person with all the necessary & required skills for a particular job and it is the need of the hour for every country to have a sound vocational education system. It can be understood as skill-based education. In India there is a need of strong vocational education which enhances professional skill sets, as it is very low as compare to higher education.

The Indian education system acknowledges the role of education at all levels and specifically vocational education. From the Wardha scheme of Basic education (1937) to Kothari commission (1964) to UNESCO (2013) to NPE (1968, 1986 and 2019) all have laid specific emphasis on vocational education. According to the report of the Indian Education Commission (Kothari Commission (1964-66), it sets a number of goals to be followed; one of the important out of them was to vocationalize secondary education. An advisory body, National Council for Vocational Training, was set up by the Government of India plays its vital role in implementation of vocational education in India. The new approach of NEP draft 2019 also strives towards increasing employability amongst the youth of India, leading to sustainability in return. Sustainability and economic growth of a nation can be balanced through innovative pedagogical approaches in an encouraging way to address the challenges in vocational education.

Vocational education should be an integral part of school and higher education. But, apparently, the clear differentiation of vocational education from academic and professional education, in turn has resulted in complete institutional and curricular disassociation from school onwards to higher education institutions. This situation is in urgent need of change. This article discusses about the issues in the successful implementation of vocational education. The present article also tries to suggest the possible solutions or initiatives for the same to increase the quality of vocational education & skill development in India.

**Key Words:** Vocational Education Training Institutions (VET), Skill Education

## Vocational Education

Vocational education is the kind of education or training that prepares students for jobs, specific trade, occupation or vocation, in which the individual participates. Vocational Education and Training (VET) ensures skill development in a wide range of occupational fields, through school-based and work-based learning. It comprises of all sort of trainings from handicrafts to agriculture, from mechanics to health care industry. It aims in making a student self-reliant. Vocational education has to become an attractive option for students to choose from. This is crucial for the wellbeing of the huge number of people that are about to join, wish to join and are already in the workforce. It is equally important for the national economy.

It plays a key role in ensuring lower school dropout rates and facilitates a smoother school-to-work transition. In the changing world of jobs, nature of work, well-designed vocational education & training systems can play a pivotal role in developing the right kind of temperament, attitude & skills for the work force market, not only for the student mass but also for the adults who require up-skilling or re-skilling. Although there are lot many areas in which our country is facing problems in implementing vocational education on real front, some of the issues in vocational education are discussed below-

### Issues of Vocational Education in the Present Education System:

**1• Shortage of VET Institutions:** The number of well-equipped technical and vocational institutions established post-Independence aren't adequate. As quoted by AICTE (2018-19) the number of such VET institutions is just 10,426 in the country. The youth of the country willing to receive technical education can hope for a bright future; but such institutions are very few in considerations to such a huge population.

**2• Limited/restricted Curriculum:** In the techno-vocational education & training institutions, only technical subjects are provided. There is no provision of liberal education. So, with the technical knowledge, the learners are not able to acquire knowledge of social objectives and human relations of production.

**3• The Indifferent Attitude of The People:** In the present-day scenario, more respect is given to the activities related to the intellect or activities of mental engagement than physical activities or physical labour. On the basis of the nature of work or labour, the caste system was developed in our country. The roots of division of labour based on thousands of years of caste system have gone deep into our society. The people engaged in handicrafts and other manual works for earning their bread were not looked with respect. So, this problem is not that easy to solve.

**4• The medium of instruction:** Medium of instruction in the Vocational courses is also an issue. English is the most common medium of instruction in almost all major technical institutions of modern India. The student who have studied throughout in Hindi medium or some other regional language, find it extremely difficult to receive technical and vocational Education in English. Such students, not being to deal with difficulties in understanding, feel disappointed & exhausted to keep up with the studies and leave vocational and technical institutions after a term of stagnation. So this sort of frustration also brings about a loss of money, time and energy.

**5• Lack of good Teachers:** Teaching personnel with good academic record who have also received Technical and Vocational Education are always after good salaries and other material gains. They hesitate to go in the teaching & training profession. As a result, such institutions are deprived of able and talented persons. And the institutions are looking for teachers who can work for menial salary. Besides, sufficient respect is not accorded to teachers in society.

**6• Insufficient practical exposure:** Mere theoretical knowledge will not suffice for successful candidates to go for establishing small workshops and small industries.

**7• Shortage of continuous Education:** Young people complete the Technical and Vocational Education and get employed. In the beginning, they are full of knowledge, but with time, they forget many things. Also with advancing times, change in the technology, techniques, work ethics lead to outdated workforce. Overall bringing a lack of efficiency in their work.

**8• Lack of co-ordination among Govt. Agencies & regulatory bodies:** Different ministries manage their initiatives of employment independently in India and there is a wide range of VET providers such as social businesses, non-profits and corporate.

**9• Inadequate vocational education to industry linkage:** This results in low rates of employment due to the reason that what job providers are seeking for, are not communicated with training sector. Besides it also affects the placement.

**10• The demand-supply mismatch of job market:** The current VET programs are largely supply-driven and still lack of relevant training for available jobs. A divergence between the skills that the population possesses and skills required by industry is a major cause of low employability among Indian youth. With low skills and experience limited to the unorganized sector, these workers remain unemployable in industry. The current public VET system offers only a few training courses and covers around 100 skills. Out of these, several skills like stenography have becoming outdated due to the emergence of new technologies. This increases the gap between industry requirements & the skilled manpower supply.

### **Suggestions:**

- The problem of shortage of VET institutions can be solved by establishing more such institutions for imparting technical and vocational education at all stages. So the Government at the Centre as well as in the states should provide for more institutions to cope with the increasing demand.
- The curriculum of Technical and Vocational Education should be broadened with liberal and general education. Supplementary educational materials for vocational education should be created & development keeping the present & future requirements of job markets in mind, with NCERT and/or SCERTs.
- The youth of the country should be given proper education to change their attitude towards work with special emphasis on dignity of labour. They should be taught the importance of physical labour & developing skills, both soft skills (mental + attitudinal) as well as manual skills. Introducing them to various vocations with good earning potential can also help in changing attitude of the modern youths.
- The course content of the VET programs should be developed & translated into Hindi & other regional languages & imparted in the classrooms through the most suitable medium of instruction, according to the requirement of the students in the classroom. Recognition of prior learning of the students could be done in order to reduce dropouts.
- Government can solve the problem of dearth of good teachers in VET institutions by attracting talented persons to be teachers in technical and vocational institutions. Teachers should be given decent pay scales and the society should respect these builders & shapers of the future of a country. Along with it, an appropriate training module for the teachers should also be developed.
- Regular & rigorous practical training sessions & workshops should be properly organized and young enterprisers should be given practical knowledge of starting industries and setting up business firms. Collaboration with NGOs, industries could be done in order to provide practical skills, exposure, knowledge, industrial training, internship, and hands-on experience to the students. And assessment of all vocational education courses, jointly with the partners that are providing the practical skills training to the students could also be conducted.
- Part-time instructions should be provided to persons employed in jobs in order to improve quality of work. Refresher Courses should be organized to acquaint the in-service people with the recent development of knowledge in the field of Science and Technology.
- Coordination between the Ministries, regulatory bodies, social businesses, non-profit organizations, & corporates, is required to create a conducive environment that enhances the capacity & quality of VET. The entire national skill development system should be put under the single ministry or governing body, rather than running them under the leadership of several other Ministries. This will lead to better focus and coordination between different initiatives.
- The Apprenticeship Act formed by the government in 1961 to connect job seekers and industrial units, made it obligatory for employers in specified industries to provide basic skills and job training according to prescribed standards. Improvements in the 1961 Act are much needed according to the present times, circumstances and challenges faced by youth, which are different from those existed in India at the time of formulation of the act.

The employment scenario has changed and different types of skills are required to meet the present industrial demand.

- There is a need to improve links between schools (VET institutions) and the industry to minimize the mismatch between industrial demand of work force & the skilled manpower being developed in the VET institutions.

### Conclusion:

The task of delivering vocational education to such a huge population which comprises of millions of youths is quiet prominent, particularly in disciplines related to agriculture, technical, and healthcare education. Vocational education plays a vital role in human resource development of the country by creating skilled manpower, enhancing a country's industrial productivity and improving the quality of life. It helps students to be skilled and in turn, offers better employment opportunities. Vocational or skill-based education is becoming more and more important today because employers these days expect the new employees joining them to have all the practical skills, like, the agriculture sector needs to be supplemented with skilled workers in many related areas such as horticulture, fertilizers, and pesticides, food processing, fisheries, and livestock management. Similarly technical & management field requires technical education which includes degree and diploma programs in engineering, information technology, architecture, town planning, management, business administration & management, hotel management, catering, and food technology while health care education includes a whole host of allied health staff such as radiologists, laboratory technicians, pharmacists, physiologists, home caregivers for the elderly, and many others. Many of these sectors are vital to India's wellbeing and overall development, so the humongous target of vocational education must be addressed in multiple ways. Government employers, the respective sector skill councils (SSCs) and all other stakeholders must work together to address a large part of this target. In the entire process the role of educational institutes providing skill-based education will be crucial, thus NPE 2019 should provide solutions in harmony to the existing problems and also makes possible efforts towards building an employable sustainable society.

If the problems related to the generation of employment and development of rightly skilled, employable masses are addressed well, in a righteous manner, it can strengthen any country's economy. India being a developing country has come a long way to formulate, enhance and implement vocational education. The Government is fully cognizant of the crucial role of vocational education and has already taken a number of important initiatives in this area.

In order for vocational education to perform its part successfully in the dynamic national context and for our country to reap the benefits of development & new age technology, there is an urgent need to review the fundamental elements of imparting vocational education and training to make them relevant, flexible, contemporary, inclusive and creative.

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