



Integration of skill based and Vocational education in NEP 2020: perspectives and challenges

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ABSTRACT

The traditional education system in India has primarily focused on textbook knowledge while less on developing vocational knowledge and practical skills. NEP (National Education Policy) 2020 seeks to change this scenario by shifting the paradigm from a rote based academic approach to a skill-based education system as it recognizes the importance of vocational education and equips the students with the necessary skills to thrive in a rapidly evolving job market. According to the policy, by 2025, at least 50% of learners in the school and higher education system shall have exposure to the vocational education for which a clear action plan with targets and timelines one has to develop. To achieve these objectives, secondary schools will have to collaborate with industrial training institutes (IITS), Poly techniques, Local Industry, etc. Skill labs are also necessary and needed to be setup in the schools like a hub and spoke model, which will allow other schools to use the facility. Main challenges in implementing these recommendations lies mainly in the budgetary allocation and capacity of vocational institutes and administrator. It is high time that the government starts mapping out the linkages between the demands of industry and supply of vocational courses so that skills can be align according to the jobs available. Alongside these challenges, there is also a need to consider the factor of digital literacy. In order to effective implement the recommendations in the NEP 2020; the government needs to learn from the existing inadequacies in its training programmes. The existence of skilled work force is beneficial to any of the society and it will lead India ahead in the economic development. A quality vocational education provided by skilled institutions/trainers will generate a young and efficient work force, which will contribute immensely to the progress of our nation.

Keywords: Skill and vocational education, NEP 2020, policy perspectives, challenges.

INTRODUCTION

NEP 200 emphasizes exposing 50% of students to the vocational training with practical skills, thereby ensuring student's careers and readiness for the real life challenges. NEP 2020 target to integrate vocational education into mainstream education as students can pursue at least one vocation and expose to several others. The NEP 2020, stated that there will be "No hard separation, between the vocational and academic streams". It also aims to improve the social status hierarchy associated with vocational education by integrating it with mainstream education in a phased manner. NEP 2020 is comprehensive framework in at transforming the education system in India, with the objective of addressing the evolving needs and challenges of the countries educational landscape. The policy encompasses various reforms and initiatives that aim to promote holistic development equitable access quality.

NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of apprenticeships and internships to provide hands on experience and industry exposure to students. This approach allows learners to apply theoretical knowledge in real world settings, fostering practical skills development and enhancing employability. The new education policy enables every student to get quality education irrespective of his or her socio-economic background, gender or disability. NEP 2020 enables teachers to use a variety of learning techniques and experiments. Higher education institutions will offer vocational education either on their own or in partnership with industry and other institutions. With NEP 2020, students are encouraged to choose subjects based on their interests and aptitudes. The programme allows students to select vocational courses according to pursue their passions. It also aims to develop specialized skills among students in a variety of fields, such as finance, healthcare tourism, engineering and more.

Major provision

The NEP 2020 stated that there would be no hard separation between the vocational and academic streams. School students will have 10 bag-less days in a year, during that period they will exposed to the vocation of choice. This will be supplement by experiential vocational learning from grades 6 to 8. At the secondary stage i.e. for students of ages 15 to 18 years or grades IX to XII, every student will receive training in at least one vocation, and more if they are interested.

Some of the other provisions are as following

- ✓ The secondary stage will comprise of four years of multidisciplinary study, building on the subject oriented pedagogical and the students shall have the option of exiting after grade 10 and re-entering in the next phase to pursue vocational or any other courses available in grades 11-12th
- ✓ Students will have options to choose subjects, particularly in secondary school including subjects in physical education, the arts and crafts and vocational skills. Therefore, that they can design their own paths of study and life plans.

- ✓ Vocational exposure at early ages in middle and secondary school. The NEP 2020 has laid emphasis on recruiting adequate teachers of vocational subjects to schools and school complexes. It also emphasizes on hiring a local eminent person or expert as a master instructor in various subjects, such as traditional local arts, vocational crafts, entrepreneurship, agriculture, etc. where local expertise exists to benefit students and help preserve and promote local knowledge.
- ✓ Coverage of vocational education will cover the Government aided schools also in addition to the Government schools.
- ✓ Hub and spoke model of vocational education system will provide the infrastructure in the hub schools and the students of nearby schools (spoke school) can utilize the same for the vocational training.
- ✓ Exposure of pre-vocational education at upper primary level.
- ✓ Internships bag-less days etc. have been included under innovation component of Samagra Shiksha.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ The credit-based framework will also facilitate mobility across general and vocational education.
- ✓ To conduct a series of pilot studies for online education and training of teachers & incentivizing their digital literacy.
- ✓ To invest in creating digital infrastructure & promoting appropriate online teaching-learning platforms.
- ✓ The National skills qualifications framework will be enhanced further for each discipline and professions.

Perspectives on skill development and vocational education:-

It aims to develop all round capacities of the learner through an integrated education. The entire Indian Industry across sectors feels NEP 2020 as a very impressive forthcoming policy as it has brought vocational Education to the main stream of Education. NEP 2020 also set up four independent verticals through the higher Education commission of Indian (HECI) to carry on the task of regulation accreditation managing funding and financing, and framing the expected learning outcomes for higher educational programmes.

Here are some benefits for students:-

- ✓ It helps a student to become all-round individual with holistic development and become more industry ready.
- ✓ It will cover in improving individual capacities in critical thinking, soft skills, problem-solving abilities, creativity etc.
- ✓ Students can design their own paths of study and life plans.

- ✓ It gives emphasis on the wide implementation of the choice based credit system, which allows flexibility in education that system to benefit students.
- ✓ One can attain self-confidence socio-economic independence and career opportunity if taken path in vocational education.
- ✓ Vocational education enables talented youths with work aptitude and work place adaptability.
- ✓ Vocational education creates job opportunities for every individual right after completing high school.
- ✓ This will also reduce unemployment in society.
- ✓ It will promote dignity of labour and different vocations involving Indian arts and artisanship.
- ✓ Vocational training is one of the effective ways to develop and manage the skilled work force in labour -intensive economics like India and the NEP 2020 reaffirms this faith.
- ✓ It given emphasis on conceptual learning rather than rote learning.
- ✓ It encourages cultivating life skills like cooperation, teamwork, empathy, resilience etc.
- ✓ It enhances regular formative assessment for learning rather than the existing summative assessment.

Challenges to overcome

- ✓ Teachers, especially at higher secondary levels are not fully skilled to teach vocational course and sufficient teachers with proper skilled training is required.
- ✓ There is no proper detailed curriculum , only basic introduction to all the vocational courses
- ✓ Challenges of vocational training lies on both the demand and supply sides. Social mind-sets not giving importance to vocational education is a significant problem on the demand side. Little priority has been given to the vocational training compared to the other streams of the education. At the same time, the main issues on the supply side include inadequate logistics and equipment, lack of trained vocational teachers and lack of weightage given to the students from this stream in admission to higher education.
- ✓ The possible challenges in implementing NEP 2020 recommendation lie mainly in the budgetary allocation and capacity of vocational institutes and administrates.

Some more challenges are-

- ✓ Overcoming social status hierarchy associated with vocational education.
- ✓ Integrating vocational education with general education, with focus on social inclusion gender equality and inclusive education.
- ✓ Introducing Lok Vidya (indigenous knowledge and skills) in schools through vocational education.
- ✓ Facilitating horizontal mobility of vocational students in school.
- ✓ Integrating new age skills, 21st century skills and entrepreneurship education in school.

- ✓ Promoting online and upon vocational education.
- ✓ Developing and implanting a holistic assessment and evaluation system.
- ✓ Fostering vertical mobility of vocational students.
- ✓ Ensuring professional training for preparation of quality vocational teachers.
- ✓ Systemic changes as recommended by NEP 2020, it will require efficient use of budgets.
- ✓ There is also a need to factor in the challenges of digital literacy.
- ✓ The government needs to learn from the existing inefficiencies in its training and improvement programmes to implement the recommendations in the NEP 2020 effectively.

Conclusion:-

The focus on vocational education and skill development under NEP 2020 holds immense significance in bridging the gap between education and industry needs. By aligning curriculum, providing industry exposure, recognizing prior learning, and fostering entrepreneurship. This policy aims to create a workforce equipped with the necessary skills for a rapidly evolving world. By giving due importance to vocational education and integrating it into mainstream learning, the policy aims to empower students. NEP 2020 can potentially transform Indian education system. It is crucial to recognize the positive impact vocation education can have on an individual's lives and the economy as a whole. Together, Let's strive for a comprehensive and inclusive education system that empowers students to excel in their chosen fields. The policy also perceives it as a way of "emphasizing the dignity of labour." The day is not far when the Indian youth will not be a job-seeker but a potential job-provider.

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