



CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEME FOR VOCATIONALISATION OF SECONDARY AND HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

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Abstract : The role of education in facilitating social and economic progress has long been recognized from time to time throughout the world. Education improves functional and analytical ability and thereby opens up opportunities for individuals and also groups to achieve greater access to labour markets and livelihoods. Education is not only an instrument of enhancing efficiency but is also an effective tool of widening and augmenting democratic participation and upgrading the overall quality of individual and societal life. Vocational education is defined as a practically illustrated and attempted job or career skills instruction. Till the end of the twentieth century, vocational education focused on specific trades such as, those of automobile mechanic or welder, and it was therefore associated with the activities of lower social classes. Vocational education is related to the age-old apprenticeship system of learning. However, as the labor market becomes more specialized and economies demand higher levels of skill, government entrepreneurs are increasingly investing on the vocational education through publicly funded training organizations and subsidized apprenticeship or traineeship initiatives for entrepreneurs) At the post-secondary level vocational education is typically provided by an institute of technology, or by a local community college. Vocational education has diversified over the 20th century and now exists in industries such as retail, tourism, information technology and cosmetics as well as in the traditional crafts and cottage industries As such, a variety of components fall under the vocational education umbrella: agricultural education, business education, family and consumer sciences, health occupations education, marketing education, technical education, technology education, and trade and industrial education.

Vocational education or vocational training (VET) prepares trainees for jobs that are based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic, and totally related to a specific trade, occupation, or vocation. It is sometimes referred to as technical education as the trainee directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology.

VET has never been viewed as an attractive choice for school leavers. Parents all over the world continue to cherish the hope that their children will pursue an academic education. The ultimate goal is a university degree. However, unlike the university, VET does not enjoy the same prestige and public recognition. Special efforts are therefore necessary to promote the importance and value of VET education in our society. VET is an important integral part of the national education and training system. There must be due public recognition. In this respect, working closely with policy makers, the schools, parents, media and graduate alumni has been a successful strategy. Efforts must be made for a comprehensive marketing program, reaching out to students, teachers, parents and the community, through visits to schools, institute attachment programs, open houses, media publicity and VET branding campaigns.

IndexTerms - Vocational education, Secondary and Higher Secondary Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

India's transition to a knowledge-based economy requires a new generation of educated and skilled people. Its competitive edge will be determined by its people's ability to create, share, and use knowledge effectively. A knowledge economy requires India to develop workers – knowledge workers and knowledge technologists – who are flexible and analytical and who can be the driving force for innovation and growth. Developing skilled workers enhances the efficiency and flexibility of the labour market; skills bottlenecks are reduced, skilled workers are more easily absorbed into the economy, and their job mobility is improved. It is crucial to invest in quality secondary and tertiary education and in Vocational Education and Training if India's economy is to develop and remain competitive.

National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 (GOI 2015) came into effect with the primary objective of meeting the challenge of skilling at scale with speed, standard (quality) and sustainability. It aims to provide an umbrella framework to all skilling activities being carried out within the country, to align them to common standards and link skilling with demand centres.

495 million (including people 15 years and above) form labor force in India as on January 2022 as per World Bank Statistics. According to latest statistic provided by The Economic Census, 130 million are in Organised sector, which translates to 26.25 percent and the rest will be in the Unorganised sector. This gives the magnitude of the task where Vocational Education and Skill Development are concerned.

The vocational education system in the country faces a daunting task in trying to achieve the goals of National Skill Development and Entrepreneurship policy of 2015. The quality of technical and vocational education imparted in vocational training institutions such as ITI s, polytechnics and others in the country has been a matter of concern among policy makers. Skill training in India needs to be based on National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) and industry-led standards. This is another daunting task.

The NSQF is aimed at multiple entry & exit within and between vocational education, skill training, general education, technical education & the job market. Under this framework, skilling will be integrated with formal education by introducing vocational training classes linked to the local economy from class nine onwards in at least 25% of the schools, over the next five years. Seamless integration of vocational training in formal education is expected to ignite student interest. Having qualified trainers for skill development is an important but often overlooked aspect. Having regular 'train the trainer' programs along with the curricula and training infrastructure being current as per the latest industry requirements is crucial for success.

National School Qualification Framework (NSQF)

NSQF is a nationally integrated education and competency based skill framework that will provide for multiple pathways both within vocational education and between general and vocational education to link one level of learning to another higher level and enable learners to progress to higher levels from any starting point in education and skill system. It is a framework to enhance employability skills of our students by introducing applied learning skills in integration with academic stream.

Objectives

- To enhance the employability of youth through demand driven competency based modular vocational courses, training for a specific career or trade.
- To fill the gap between educated and employable.
- To reduce the dropout rate at the secondary level
- Accommodate the diversity of Indian education and training systems
- Develop and implement a set of qualifications for each level, based on outcomes that are accepted across the nation
- Develop and streamline multiple progression pathways that provide access to qualification and help people in moving easily between different education and training stream and between industry sectors.
- Progression paths also take into consideration their prior learning and experience through RPL assessments
- Function as a supporting mechanism for national regulatory and quality assurance measures for education and training
- Enhances international mobility of workforce through compliance with global standards

Details

The Scheme Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), under the umbrella of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan or Samgra Shiksha Abhiyan. Under the Scheme financial assistance is given to the State Governments/UT Administrations and incentives to Government aided and recognized unaided private schools for the remaining period of XIIth Plan for implementation of vocational education.

The scheme involves introduction of vocational education in schools, capacity building of vocational education teachers/skill trainers, development of competency based curriculum and teaching learning material, development of management information system for monitoring and evaluation, incentivizing government aided and private recognized unaided schools and taking up innovative programmes under vocational education .

NVEQF (now NSQF) is a nationally integrated education and competency based skill framework that will provide for multiple pathways both within vocational education and between general and vocational education to link one level of learning to another higher level and enable learners to progress to higher levels from any starting point in education and skill system. It is a framework to enhance employability skills of our students by introducing applied learning skills in integration with academic stream.

NSQF organizes qualifications according to levels of knowledge skills and aptitude in order to facilitate interaction between general education, vocational education and training that have hitherto been operating as separate and independent verticals

- The levels are detailed definitions of learning outcomes that the learner must possess and demonstrate irrespective of whether the learning takes place through formal schooling or non-formal.

- It primarily aims at establishing interoperability through a national level quality assurance framework that is on par with international standards
- As a competency framework it integrates vocational education and training, general education, technical education through various paths that show the higher order and levels of learning
- It aims at providing flexibility with multiple entry and exit levels
- One of the main objectives of NSQF is to facilitate easy entry into job market with desired skills and knowledge and continue learning and skill building for further qualifications
- Certification and credit, transfer of credits, scoring more marks – establish equivalence
- NSQF is derived in partnership with industry and prospective employers for validation of curriculum and upgrading with current knowledge and technologies.
- Training for a specific career or trade.
- Students directly develop expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology through manual or practical activities also known as Technical education or Vocational education.

Issues

- **Non Compliance to minimum wage:** The Trainer's salary is fixed by the state which does not take minimum wage of the state into account.
- **Noncompliance to labor laws in salary structure:** There are states' who itself fixes the structure of the trainers within the given CTC which does not comply to law of the land for employees.
- **Lack of Content/Books:** Although the schemes aims at providing the training in the sectors that has good market in the state and has future prospects however there are many sectors where vocational trainers are still struggling to a formal content developed by PSSCIVE which is common across the state. Language barrier is another problem as many sectors do have books but are yet to be translated into regional languages
- **Lack of industries Remote locations:** The scheme aims at providing hands on skills to students through Industry exposure in form of On Job training, Industry visits, apprenticeship for below 18 and placement for 18+ students after passing out. A large number of schools at remote locations with no industries nearby. The students do not want to travel to far off places also the funds are not enough to afford such visits.
- **Lack of Training of Trainers:** The scheme prescribes qualification criteria of vocational trainers to be hired. There is necessity of refresher's training for the trainers to be updated on their sectors and changes in scheme.

Suggestions or Strategies to be adopted

The growing problem of unemployment among the youth requires a recasting of the entire vocational education scheme. Future policies on vocational courses must revolve around the following issues:

- i) Sensitizing the state and union territories about vocational education - There is a need to sensitize state governments and union territory administrations on the importance of skill training/vocational education in the context of the problem of unemployment.
- ii) Introducing vocational education at VIII std onwards - There is an urgent need to cater to the class VIII pass-outs whose numbers will swell with success of the universalisation of elementary education and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan initiatives.
- iii) The vocational courses should be demand and need based, keeping in mind the constantly changing requirements of technologies/industries. Vocational courses must have an in-built flexibility to allow students to switch courses with changes in demand patterns.
- iv) Industry Involvement - The existing scheme should be strengthened by involving industries through MOU in the designing and certification of courses and training of students and faculty.
- v) Vocational courses in the service sector - At present, most of the vocational courses are in the manufacturing sector. Given the slow growth in this sector and the exploding opportunities in the services sector, vocational courses should concentrate more on the latter.
- vi) Providing vocational education in extension education programs- There should be focus on convince of schemes like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Adult Education, and Vocational Education Program at schools, ITIs, polytechnics, community colleges etc.
- vii) Incorporation of new technological courses in Vocational Education - The syllabi of vocational subjects should 'be updated on a regular basis to keep pace with changes in technology. This is especially relevant in trades like food processing, dairy technology, leather and tanning technology, etc.
- viii) Networking of institutions - Vocational institutes should also be networked with professional institutes like the Central Food and Technology Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysore, Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI), Chennai etc. to keep abreast with technological developments.
- ix) Local requirements/needs - The vocational education scheme should focus on the capacity of the local industry to absorb students of a particular trade. Excess supply of students of a 5% particular trade needs to be avoided. In this context, there is need for diversification even within a trade. There should be regular exchange of ideas/skills among vocational education teachers, master craftsmen and trainees.

- x) Provision for access to Tertiary education - The vocational stream should be treated like the arts, science and commerce Stream and students passing out from this stream at the +2 stage should have direct access to the tertiary stage in a related discipline.
- xi) Restructuring of school curricula - The National Curriculum Framework of the NCERT should be restructured to give due emphasis to work experience, prevocational and generic vocational competencies at various levels of school education.
- xii) Appointment of fulltime teachers-Full time teachers must be appointed on a regular and permanent basis as in the case of the academic stream.
- xiii) Apprenticeship - All vocational courses at the +2 level must be covered under the Apprenticeship Act, 1961.
- xiv) Linkage of vocational courses to Higher education - There is a need to establish linkage it between vocational courses at the +2 level and courses at the university level. The present admission criteria for entry into vocational courses at the graduation level also need to be changed.

Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi in his scheme of Basic Education insisted that manual or productive work should be an integral part of education. He emphasized not only education of the brain and intellect but also education of the heart and hand. Basic education was essentially practical and vocational in nature. The Sargent Report (1944) also emphasized vocational education at the lower and upper primary stages. The Education Commission (1964-66) laid special emphasis on the spread of vocational education. 'To bring education into closer relationship with productivity it is necessary to give a strong vocational bias to secondary education and to increase the emphasis on agricultural and technological education (professional) at the university stage. This is of special significance in the Indian situation where the educational system has been training young persons so far mostly for Government services and the so-called white-collar professions (clerical, teaching, legal etc.)'. The introduction of practical subjects in the secondary schools was first recommended by the Hunter Commission in 1882. But till date that recommendation was not implemented in practice. Education must prepare the students for life and fulfill the needs of life. It must be practical and productivity based. "Even today the enrolment in the vocational courses at the secondary stage is only nine percent (9%) of the total enrolment, which is the lowest in the world. Hence there is every need to concentrate more on vocational education and training in our country.

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