

# A Study on Vocational Training and Its Learning Outcomes

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**Abstract – The content for vocational training is highly contextual in the sense that it varies in every country, industry, and trade. Therefore, unlike other streams of education, this content cannot be easily replicated from other sources. Even if the content is taken from an existing source, a significant amount of effort and money will have to be invested in making it relevant for the desired skills in an alternate scenario.**

**In order to recruit trainees from institutes, every industry needs to know the relevance, and level, of the skills imparted. Institutes need to devise an independent, impartial skills assessment mechanism which accurately reflects learners' skill levels. The absence of a fail-proof mechanism can prove unsuccessful in terms of inspiring the recruiting industry, making the business unsustainable in the long run.**

**Keywords: Education, Vocational Training, Growth**

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is similar to manufacturing in the sense that unutilized capacity is a sunk cost. There are many factors which come into play while scheduling training sessions, e.g. the availability of trainers (especially part-timers), the employment of students while undergoing training, the parallel operation of multiple streams and batches, the optimum utilization of theory, practical infrastructure and jobs. With scarce resources, ensuring the highest churn is the key to operational efficiency.

Students are selected into the vocational stream on the basis of performance in Grade 10 examinations. In most states, students are streamed into vocational education on the basis of state-level standardized examinations in Grade 10. While a comparison of student performance in this examination for those going into different streams has not been done, the premium placed on general secondary and higher education by students and their parents, leads one to believe that students joining the vocational system are those who perform poorly in the Grade 10 examination.

Qualifications of teachers are similar to those of general secondary school teachers. Full-time teachers need to have a master's degree, and are often the same as teachers who teach general subjects. In addition, part-time teachers are also hired by institutions to teach specific courses - these

individuals are usually hired on the basis of their professional expertise in a particular field.

The outcomes of the vocational education should be judged in the same labor market terms in which the program was justified. However, there are very few evaluations that allow this to be done. A study by the Operational Research Group in 1998 reported only 28 percent graduates of vocational education were gainfully employed.

PSSCIVE's reports on the program appear to be case studies demonstrating the employment outcomes for selected individuals. No conclusions can be drawn about the overall outcomes; or whether alternatives could be worthwhile (for example, whether courses could be constructed and delivered in other ways).

No conclusions can be drawn as to whether the courses are relevant to the labor market. In fact, even vocational students appear intent on entering higher education rather than entering the labor market. Overwhelmingly, students who get through to Grades 11 and 12 want to proceed to further education and the very low intake into degree vocational courses shows they are not easily diverted to the vocational stream.

The Steering Committee on Secondary, Higher and Technical Education set up for the Tenth Five-Year Plan recommended that the vocational education at

the secondary school level, polytechnic education and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) should come under one department of the state government for better networking, linkages, focused targeting and optimal utilization of resources. An outlay of Rs. 350 Crore has been allocated for the Centrally sponsored scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education in the Tenth Plan. The Tenth Plan also focuses on evolving new policies for the Vocational Education sector. The absence of vertical mobility has also been addressed in the Plan.

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND ITS LEARNING OUTCOMES

Despite strong recommendations in the Tenth Five Year Plan, the recommendations were not implemented in the sector of Vocational Education, Training and Skill development as envisaged. The Government of India at the national level is also in the process of establishing a "National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework". As a part of its Eleventh Plan Policy, Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) had set up an inter-ministerial group which includes representatives of State Governments to develop guidelines for such a National Framework.

The unified system of national qualification will cover schools, vocational education and training institutions and higher education sector. NVEQF will be based on nationally recognized occupational standards which details listing of all major activities that a worker must perform in the occupation or competency standards - a detailed listing of the knowledge, skills and attitude that a worker should possess to perform a task written by the particular employment-led sector skills council.

The National Skill Development Policy has an ambitious plan to skill about 12-15 million youth each year. As part of this policy and to ensure execution, the Government of India has setup the National Skill Development Mission (under the aegis of the Hon.ble Prime minister of India), the Coordination Committee and the National Skill Development Corporation. The Policy amongst other things proposes to establish a National Vocational Education Qualification Framework.

National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF): The NVEQF is a recently-launched initiative which is to be implemented in polytechnics, engineering colleges, and other institutions, across the country. A seven level certification program, starting from 9th standard/grade, will be initiated in the various vocational training disciplines, culminating in a degree at the end of the seventh year. Since this framework is sector-specific, special focus is given to high-employment generating sectors like IT, Media and Entertainment, Automobile, Construction, Retail,

Tourism, etc. The program is expected to cater to at least five million students. This model is followed by most countries which have a robust vocational training infrastructure and where vocational training skills are accepted by the masses.

The Modular Employable Scheme (MES): It is being implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Employment as part of their Skill Development Initiative (SDI). The key objective of MES is to recognize and certify the prior learning of existing workers.

MES offers short-term modular courses to school dropouts and existing wage earners and facilitates certification for skills and learning gained informally. The key features of MES include the identification of a "minimum skill set" that can ensure gainful employment, the utilization of existing infrastructure, the creation of flexible delivery mechanisms, and the certification of skills acquired informally. MES targets training 1 million people over the next five years, using around 200 modules to meet industry demand.

National Service Scheme (NSS): The NSS has been proposed as an agent of change which engages students in skill development projects alongside other stakeholders in the society like academia, industry, and social organizations like NGOs and foundations. The pilot is expected to cover 30,000 students over a three-year period, eventually impacting 3.2 million students across universities, colleges, and secondary schools in the country.

National Skill Awards (NSAs): The NSDA is proposing the launch of NSAs, or Rashtriya Kaushal Puraskar, to incentivize youth and make vocational training aspiration. These awards will also recognize skill development initiatives by such institutions as Central Ministries, State Skill Development Missions, Training Institutions, Public and Private Enterprises, and lending institutions.

It's not that we do not have any skill development programme already. The Government of India has always considered skill development as a national priority. It is just that since the ministry is new, the approach taken for skill development is also new. Earlier, the emphasis was on traditional jobs. But this time, all kinds of jobs will be given equal emphasis. Earlier, the responsibility was divided among various ministries, but this time, these are being clubbed together. The ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship will be the principal ministry which is going to coordinate with other ministries and organizations.

## DISCUSSION

The idea is to raise confidence, improve productivity and give direction through proper skill development. Skill development will enable the youths to get blue-collar jobs. Development of skills, at a young age, right at the school level, is very essential to channelize them for proper job opportunities. There should be a balanced growth in all the sectors and all jobs should be given equal importance. Every job aspirant would be given training in soft skills to lead a proper and decent life. Skill development would reach the rural and remote areas also. Corporate educational institutions, non-government organizations, Government, academic institutions, and society would help in the development of skills of the youths so that better results are achieved in the shortest time possible.

It is also high time now measures are taken to improve the physical and mental development of the youths of the country so that none of them remains unemployed and the country's unemployment problem also gets reduced. It is time to open up avenues by which the youth accepts responsibility and no one remains idle because an idle youth is a burden to the economy. The economy should concentrate on job creation and social security schemes. With this new approach towards skill development, India can definitely move forward towards its targeted results.

Some private organizations have been in the space for a long time. Among these, the more noteworthy are Nettur Technical Training Foundation which has 19 training centers, and trains over 10,000 students annually and Gedee Technical Training Institute which offers Certificate and Diploma Courses in Coimbatore. Of late, thanks to realizing the enormity of the opportunity, many new initiatives have been floated, including AISECT skills Ltd, IL&FS Skill Development Corporation, IIJT, GRAS Academy, NIIT-IFBI, Vidyanta Skill Institute, ICICI Manipal Academy, Apollo Med Skills Ltd., Centum Workskills, Hero Mindmine, CII-Edexcel, NIIT Yuva Jyoti, Future Sharp, etc. Certain international institutions are also looking to foray into India primarily through partnerships or JVs.

While the opportunity is undeniably attractive, the biggest challenge is to put together a financially viable and sustainable venture that can align business and social needs. Unlike a consumer products business, here, the raw material, production pipeline, and consumer are all scattered. Further, since each of them is an independent, thinking human, it is not easy to find them on common ground, especially when the output is as diverse as human skills. The changes happening at the structural level, towards making business easier, have their own lifecycle, but the time has arrived to take advantage of this opportunity and get a head start. Although the dynamics in the current scenario

are very different and will evolve rapidly, the expectation is that things will gradually get easier.

As any educational setup requires huge investment, this is the biggest deterrent for most entrepreneurs with great ideas. The solution can be to either lease spare capacity from existing educational institutions, or franchise the business, thereby reducing not only the investment but also the operational micromanagement required in running one's own setup. This also facilitates rapid up-scaling, which is the key to participating in this business. The decision also depends on whether the business is to be established closer to industrial hubs where, while economies of scale can be realized, recruiting learners can be a challenge. The alternative to this is going to the learner, through a spreadout model, in which case it would be easier to reach the masses but would be an uphill task to place them in suitable industry positions and get them to migrate.

Education is known to be a negative working capital business, primarily because the student pays before the education provider incurs expenditure on training him. In this case though, a fair amount of preoperative work is required before the training cycle sets in. Also, given the low price points for such training, the default on training fee is unaffordable. Even if the training is funded or subsidized by the government in certain cases, the institute will need a robust process to maintain the funds flow.

Recruiting a student is among the biggest initial challenges. The first task would be to break through the mindset that work which requires manual skills is ordinary. Next, the student will need counseling on the utility of the training in terms of providing a prosperous and productive future. Even in the semiurban regions of the country, we can see people waiting for years in the hope of getting a desk job. In such circumstances, it is essential for businesses to find a model which inspires credibility and trust in what the institute is delivering.

In practice-oriented vocational training, the industry connect is the strongest pillar. It can help in not just saving capital expenditure in practical labs, via working out an apprenticeship/trainee arrangement with local industry participants, but can also be a good source of part-time trainers. However, this culture is not as prevalent in India, due to which entrepreneurs targeting this area will have to be prepared to establish such connections themselves.

Trainers being central to a training business, sourcing a good trainer, deploying him/her at the required location, and creating an environment conducive to training is the third challenge. In traditional academics, it may be difficult to think of a trainer being paid more than his/her counterpart

in the industry but, in this case, this may well be a reality. At the same time, the advantage in this stream of education is that it does not take years to create a trainer and parttime trainers, sourced from the industry, can also be deployed.

## CONCLUSION

The sphere of vocation education has developed its own ecosystem of publicly-privately funded training programmes for the needful candidates. The whole cycle of centre setup-mobilization-training-certification placement has brought a productive change in the roll-out figures and especially in the quality of skilled individuals. The Private players have proven themselves working abreast the government agencies and have successfully delivering constant success.

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