

Vocational and Skills Education Status in India

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Abstract – Vocational Education is based on occupation and employment and it is the need of the hour for every country to have strong vocational education system. It can be defined as skilled based education. Vocational Education helps in Economic growth. The Indian education system recognizes the role of education and particularly Vocational Education. National Council for Vocational Training, an advisory body, was set up by the Government of India plays its important role in implementation of Vocational Education in India. Although there are lots many areas in which India is facing problems in Vocational Education Implementation. This article throws light upon scope, problem areas and government role in Vocational Education Implementation. India has one of the largest technical manpower in the world. However, compared to its population it is not significant and there is a tremendous scope of improvement in this area. In India, the emphasis has been on general education, with vocational education at the receiving end. This has resulted in large number of educated people remaining unemployed. This phenomenon has now been recognized by the planners and hence there is a greater thrust on vocationalisation of education.

Keywords: Vocational Education, Occupation, Skilled, Economic growth, Advisory Body, Implementation.

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INTRODUCTION

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an important element of the nation's education initiative. In order for Vocational Education to play its part effectively in the changing national context and for India to enjoy the fruits of the demographic dividend, there is an urgent need to redefine the critical elements of imparting vocational education and training to make them flexible, contemporary, relevant, inclusive and creative. The Government is well aware of the important role of Vocational education and has already taken a number of important initiatives in this area.

As education has been considered the most effective tool of developmental strategies our government is trying to educate almost all the people mainly living in rural areas through the massive programme of Adult Education. The idea behind this is that through education unskilled workers will be skilled, peasants will be trained in new cropping, they will be able to adopt new methods of farming and educated persons after achieving new methods and skills will evolve strategies for self-employment. Although the idea of rural development through education has been existing in the country since the beginning of the century, yet no satisfactory response could ever be achieved. Mahatma Gandhi raised the slogan of literacy during 30's he motivated our country men to propagate and extend the slogan of mass literacy into interior parts. He bestowed the idea of Basic education

with a view to enable our rural youth for self-employment. Since the achievement of Independence, literacy and education have been gaining importance as a means of country's development strategies were formed by the Government and voluntary agencies, but no concrete and satisfactory outcome could be seen.

Table 1: Literacy Rate in India (1951 to 2001)

Census year	% Literate (Total)	Male	Female	Male-Female Gap in literacy Rate
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.98	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	39.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16	21.69

The progress of literacy rates in India since 1951 is listed in the above table while the rates for the years 1951, 1961 and 1971 census related to the population in the five years plus Category, those for 1981, 1991

and 2001 relate to the population which is seven years and above. The literacy rates for the country as a whole increased from 18.33 percent in 1951 to 65.38 percent in 2001, with literacy rate for male at 75.85% and that for female at 54.16 percent. The literacy rate recorded an increase of 13.17 percentage points from 1991 to 2001, the highest increase in any one decade. An encouraging feature is that the growth rate of literacy has been higher in case of females at 14.87 percent then for male 11.72 percent during this decade. The gap in male-female literacy rates has decreased from 24.84 percentage points in 1991 to 21.70 percentage points in 2001. The rate of growth of literacy in the decade ending 2001 has been higher in the rural areas, at 14.7 percent as compared to the 7.2 percent increase in urban areas despite these improvements; literacy in urban areas was 80.3 percent and that in rural areas 59.4 percent.

The industrial and labour market trends clearly indicate the necessity of strengthening of vocational education in India. The introduction of vocational education at secondary level through bivalent schools and SSC (vocational) will enable us to broaden the vocational education base at secondary level of education. A clear pathway for vocational students to enter higher education streams is the way to move forward.

BACKGROUND OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN INDIA:

Vocational education in India refers specifically to vocational courses offered in school Grades 11 and 12 under a centrally sponsored scheme termed 'Vocationalisation of Secondary Education'. The Vocational Education Program (VEP) was started in 1976-77 under the programme of Vocationalisation of Higher Secondary Education in general education institutions. The National Working Group on Vocationalisation of Education (Kulandaiswamy Committee, 1985) reviewed the Vocational Education Programme in the country and developed guidelines for the expansion of the programme. Its recommendations led to the development of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) on Vocationalisation of Secondary Education, which started being implemented from 1988. Its purpose is to "enhance individual employability, reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower and provide an alternative for those pursuing higher education without particular interest or purpose. Vocational education falls under the purview of the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD). The All-India Council for Vocational Education (AICVE), under MHRD, is responsible for planning, guiding and coordinating the program at the national level. State Councils for Vocational Education (SCVE) perform similar functions at the state level.

Courses are offered in six disciplines. The Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute for Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), responsible for developing the courses, has listed 104 and has developed course materials for only a quarter of those. The six disciplines are:

- Agriculture (for example: veterinary pharmacist/technician; watershed Management)
- Business and commerce (for example: taxation practices; stenography)
- Humanities (for example: classical dance; entrepreneurship)
- Engineering and technology (for example: lineman; cost effective building technology)
- Home science (for example: textile design; gerontology)
- Health and para-medical skills (for example: x-ray technician; health/sanitary inspector)

It is difficult to tell from the titles of the courses what their content might actually be. In many cases, similar courses are offered in other systems particularly in vocational training centers and through informal training mechanisms but with completely different course durations.

There is little capacity in vocational education and even that is under-utilized. MHRD's original intention was to place 25 percent of all Grade 11-12 students into vocational courses by the year 2000. This has not happened. Only 6,800 schools have received grants and the total enrollment reported is only about 5 percent at most. In fact, this figure more closely approximates the capacity of schools to offer vocational education rather than enrollments. More recent information suggests that the enrollment figure is less than three percent of the students attending Grades 11-12. Slightly incomplete data from PSSCIVE show a total capacity of about 846,100 places for vocational education in all but 4 states (which account for 95 percent of the country's population). The weighted average capacity utilization of the schools receiving grants is about 42 percent. This implies that between 350,000 to 400,000 students are enrolled in vocational education, which works out to less than 3 percent of the 14 million students or more in Grades 11 and 12. It would also imply that less than one percent of students who had entered Grade 1 over the last decade or so would have eventually participated in vocational education.

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. Evidence of this comes from a study in Kerala. Vocational education students in Kerala are required to take English and a general foundation course. Those wishing to preserve the possibility of proceeding to higher education must also select other general subjects from a range of options. They *all* do so even though it means taking on a considerable additional work burden. The study comments, "with the exception of a few vocational trades that have a certain employment potential and that are therefore highly in demand by the public, most of the courses cannot provide - under the present financial, material and human resources - any adequate preparation for their former participants to face the world of work".

There seems to be limited private sector involvement in running the system. The private sector is

represented in the Joint Council for Vocational Education, but it seems to be only marginally involved in setting course contents and curricula and in managing the vocational schools.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES:

Attempts to restructure the Indian education have been made over a period of time. However, the vocational education system has remained terminal in nature. The students pursuing courses in the vocational streams do not have an option of vertical mobility into degree programs in their chosen Vocational sector. This coupled with other reasons of quality, standardization, recognition and fragmentation have led to the failure of various vocational schemes introduced at both National and State level.

Vocational Education, Training and Skill Development have been emphasized upon in various National plans and policies at the national level. The details of various plans and policies are given in subsequent paragraphs.

GOVERNMENT ROLE AND INITIATIVES FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA:

Only in recent years has the government realized the enormity of the challenge and endeavored to overcome the same through various initiatives. Under the Prime Minister's National Skill Development Mission, the government has launched an initiative to train 500 million people by the year 2022. Further, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) was created in order to streamline the identification and mapping of skills requirements, facilitate private participation through grants, gap funding, etc.

- 1) **NSDA:** The NSDA comprises the PM's National Council on Skill Development (NCSD), the National Skill Development Coordination Board (NSDCB) and the NSDC. It oversees and directs the efforts taken vis-à-vis skill development by both the government and the private sector, in a bid to fulfill the skilling target set under the 12th Five Year Plan.
- 2) **Sector Skill Councils (SSC):** SSCs are initiatives born out of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). In addition to facilitating capacity building, the SSCs also define the structure, levels, and benchmarks of training for each industry. This will help achieve consistency in the imparted training, aside from ensuring an ease of employment, and a portability of skills.

- 3) **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.
- 4) **Aligning Secondary and Vocational Education:** This initiative, in conjunction with the NVEQF, provides greater mobility to students through providing multiple points of entry and exit, and flexibility in choosing modules (of vocational education), according to the students' aptitude. For the pilot phase in 2011, Haryana was selected with the target of benefitting 4,000 students across 40 schools in the state. Since its introduction, this scheme has reached about 1 million students in 9,619 schools.
- 5) **PPP Model:** In 2007-08, the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGET) proposed the upgrading of 1,396 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) through PPPs. However, the impact of the scheme is yet to be ascertained.
- 6) **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.
- 7) **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.

- 8) **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.

Key Highlights of the Year 2012-13: Both the government as well as apex bodies within the vocational system have taken several positive steps in the right direction, and achieved such milestones as:

- The NSDC approved 42 project proposals worth INR 617.82 Crore
- The cumulative NSDC funding stands at INR 1859.45 Crore for 100 projects
- 25 SSCs were set up
- An incentive of INR 10,000 will be given to individuals, who have completed their training successfully, corresponding to an annual budget allocation of INR 1,000 Crore
- Advocacy was the major agenda in terms of making vocational training an aspiration, and much has happened in this space. A yearlong advocacy campaign on skills will be run by the advertising agency O&M
- Vocational training has been brought into the negative list of service tax to make it more affordable
- INR 500 Crore has been allotted in the budget for fiscal 2014 towards skill development
- A Special Industry initiative, Udaan, was started in Jammu and Kashmir, to train 40,000 employees within 5 years.

As of September 2013, 1,850 trainees have joined the training program

- District-level skill-gap studies were commissioned in 13 states
- Third-party monitoring was introduced to ensure a reliable inflow of information from private partners
- World Skills Competition was brought into the limelight to reward people excelling in the field thereby making vocational training aspiration
- The NSDC engaged with the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank to make them participate in skilling India
- The training programmes would be on the lines of international level so that the youths of our country can not only meet the domestic demands but also of other countries like the US, Japan, China, Germany, Russia and those in the West Asia.
- Another remarkable feature of the 'Skill India' programme would be to create a hallmark called 'Rural India Skill', so as to standardize and certify the training process.
- Tailor-made, need-based programmes would be initiated for specific age groups which can be like language and communication skills, life and positive thinking skills, personality development skills, management skills, behavioral skills, including job and employability skills.
- The course methodology of 'Skill India' would be innovative, which would include games, group discussions, brainstorming sessions, practical experiences, case studies etc.

The target of skilling 7.3 million people in fiscal 2013-14 was accepted by various Central Government ministries, and also by the NSDC. However, by the end of June 2013, only 10% of the target was achieved.

PM's Initiative: After 'Digital India' and 'Make in India', the NaMo Government is to launch yet another programme. This one is a revised version of programmes launched earlier under the skill development policy. This new programme, called 'Skill India', is supposed to be a multi-skill programme. It will be launched in March 2015. Like all other programmes, 'Skill India' too is a dream project of Mr. Narendra Modi and the work to launch this programme has already been initiated.

Objectives of 'Skill India': The main goal is to create opportunities, space and scope for the development of the talents of the Indian youth and to develop more of those sectors which have already been put under skill development for the last so many years and also to identify new sectors for skill development. The new programme aims at providing training and skill development to 500 million youth of our country by 2020, covering each and every village. Various schemes are also proposed to achieve this objective.

Features of 'Skill India':

- The emphasis is to skill the youths in such a way so that they get employment and also improve entrepreneurship.
- Provides training, support and guidance for all occupations that were of traditional type like carpenters, cobblers, welders, blacksmiths, masons, nurses, tailors, weavers etc.
- More emphasis will be given on new areas like real estate, construction, transportation, textile, gem industry, jewellery designing, banking, tourism and various other sectors, where skill development is inadequate or nil.

Advantages of Skill India: 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.

To sum up: What shape 'Skill India' will take and what it will do only time can tell. But no doubt it seems to be a good initiative – providing skills to people, especially because India is one of the few countries all across the world whose working age population will be very high, few years down the line, going by its ever-increasing growth of population, as per the World Bank.

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.

Participation of Private Player: 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.

MADHYA PRADESH SCENARIO:

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh): Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Skill Development Centres (SDC) will be opened at all the development blocks in the state. No fees will be charged from the trainees and they will be given stipends. Chouhan was inaugurating Skill Development Centres at development block level at Model Industrial Training Institute, Govindpura here today.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that no one will remain uneducated due to paucity of funds. The government has launched several schemes and programmes for skill development. He said that education has three main objectives – knowledge, manners of citizenship and employment. Skill is vital for employment. These days, Europe is facing shortage of young population while India has the largest youth power. Educated youths are much in demand in industry sector. There is unlimited scope of employment in India as well as foreign countries.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that efforts are being made for enhancing employment opportunities by exposing youths to vocational training. Industrial Training Institutes are also being strengthened. Arrangements have been made for selection of trades as per local, national and international requirements and able trainers. Besides, such courses have also been prepared through which employment-oriented training can be imparted in short time for increasing employment opportunities. Woman domestic helps have also been benefited by these training programmes. He informed that new employment opportunities have also been created in the state. New industries being set up in the state will have to provide employment to 50 percent local people. Special facilities are extended to the industries providing 90 percent employment to the local people.

After losing job opportunities in industrial sector during the last decade when industries made huge investment, Madhya Pradesh has decided to come up with a skill development policy. It has sought support from industries, private skill development institutes, business chambers and non-government organizations to rope in private players to frame a policy for skill up-gradation of its unemployed educated youth.

The state, during the last few years, has inked deals with various power biggies which will come up in backward tribal dominated areas like Singarauli but the investment will hardly create jobs for local youth. Much-awaited Bina refinery is likely to create only 300 jobs after a huge investment of '10,000 Crore in backward districts like Sagar.

The government invited support from industries, private organizations and non-government organizations to revive its age-old ailing skill development programme. It is looking for framing rules and regulations to ascertain norms for joining hands with these institutes for skill up gradation.

"We have lost opportunities earlier and we are yet losing more in areas where investment is coming as we have dearth of skillful employable youth," said Technical Education Minister Laxmikant Sharma.

The government has formed a sub-committee of ministers which will soon submit recommendations of a national workshop on skill development organized today to the state cabinet. "The cabinet will later consider the suggestions and will announce a policy," the minister said.

Barring its few hundred age-old odd industrial training institutes (ITIs), the state has no other way to train unemployed educated youth in modern industries that requires a number of skills. "Even basic computer education training is a distant dream for many in rural

areas,” said an industrialist who owns a factory in Govindpura industrial area in Bhopal. He often employs skilled youth from other states like Maharashtra, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh.

“A fund of '100 Crore is in log-jam in government accounts as ITIs have failed to impart skillful training to local youth. How can they train a mechanic on modern eight-valve auto engines in their laboratories,” an industrialist said. The government is also looking for a breakthrough on a major issue of geographical parameters before venturing into modernization of its skill development programmes. “We need to look into matters pertaining to geographical areas; there are youth who do not want to go out of the state for skill up gradation. If we rope in private partners we will have to ensure various facilities, proper fee structure, security for female trainees,” a senior government official said.

The state has as many as three Crore unemployed educated youth, although state claims to attract investment of Rs 3.40 Crore in almost in all sectors.

CONCLUSION:

Vocational Education strengthens any country's employment and same way its economy. India being a developing world has come a long way to enhance and implement Vocational Education. Another shortcoming in the area of technical and vocational education is that till now, the number of engineers graduating is more than the diploma holders. This is creating an imbalance, as more workforces are required at the lower level. Hence more polytechnics and Institute for Industrial Training (ITIs) are being opened now. Besides, various Ministries are trying to impart vocational courses through innovative institutions, specially launched for the purpose. In doing so, the government is trying to maintain quality of these courses. Under the XIth Plan, vocationalisation of education has received a boost with more funds being allocated for the purpose. Besides, it is also being ensured that the marginalized sections of the society, including women, get adequate representation in these courses. It can thus be hoped that TVET will play a major role in improving the lives of the people of India.

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