

Vocational education in India- Issues and challenges: A rational analysis

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Abstract

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an important element of the nation's Education initiative. Vocational education & skill development both go hand in hand and are interrelated to each other. It is related to productivity. Vocational education prepares individuals for jobs 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. In India there is a need of vocational education which enhances skill development as it is very low in percentage as compare to higher education. The Indian education system recognizes the role of education and particularly vocational education. The report of the Indian Education Commission (Kothari Commission (1964-66), set a number of goals to be pursued; one of them was "to vocationalize secondary 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. The paper discuss about the challenges faced in the successful implementation of vocational education. The present paper also looks into the insight of existing policies and initiatives taken by the Government of India to increase the quality of vocational education & skill development in India.

Keywords: VET (vocational education training), skill development, implementation, initiatives

Introduction

India is among the countries with the lowest proportion of trained youth in the world. One of the weaknesses of Indian education system is that it does not gives due importance to vocational education. As a result there is a mismatch between the skilled manpower required and skilled manpower available. Every year, various colleges churn out millions of graduates who do not have the specific skill sets required by the market. This has resulted in a situation where on the one hand there are scores of unemployed graduates and on the other hand there is a huge shortage of skilled workers.

To rectify this situation vocational education need to be promoted in a big way. Vocational and technical education, according to Yusuf (2006) ^[15], is a form of education that seeks to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupations. This type of education provides the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment. Odogwu (2005) ^[9] describes vocational education as a type of education which emphasizes preparation and participation in an occupation of social value. Contrasted with general education, vocational education is skill-oriented and trains both the head and the hands (Oranu, 2009) ^[11].

Vocational education can be defined as the education that is based on occupation and employment. Vocational Education is also known as career and technical education (CTE) or technical and vocational education and training (TVET). It is education within vocational schools that prepares students for specific trades, crafts and careers at various levels in all spheres of life. It involves various practical activities. It is sometimes referred as technical education because the trainee directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques

related to technology, skill and scientific technique to span all aspects of the trade.

Need of Vocational Education

Vocational education and Training (VET) is an important element of the nation's education initiative. Vocational education consists basically of practical courses through which one gains skills and experience directly linked to a career in future. 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 many employers expecting new employees to have all the practical skills they need to start work and also for those who have to support their families immediately after senior secondary education.

Vocational courses are typically more practical and skills-based than academic degrees. Vocational education has to be viewed from different multi-layered practices. One is of course the hands on training component. The other is employment generation and sustainability. If you know exactly what you want to do in your career and it requires practical skills, then vocational learning is important. There are thousands of skills based training options out there and in today's technical world, even an engineering graduate is supposed to have some technical skills apart from the degree possessed by him or her i.e. in the form of certification etc.

Policies and Initiatives

The government is well aware of the important role of vocational education and has already taken a number of important initiatives in this area and here we discuss some of

the policies and initiatives taken by the government of India in this regard:

1. Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Vocationization of Secondary Education

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Vocationization of Secondary Education was launched in year 1988. The Scheme envisaged selection of vocational courses on the basis of assessment of manpower needs. The main objectives of the scheme, as spelt out in the National Policy on Education 1986, were to provide diversification of educational opportunities so as to enhance individual employability, reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower and to provide an alternative for those pursuing higher education. Vocational Education was made a distinct stream intended to prepare students for identified occupations spanning several areas of activities.

2. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)

CBSE is offering 34 Vocational courses consisting of 107 subjects in its about 500 governments and government aided schools across the country. During the academic session 2007-08, Financial Market Management was introduced as vocational package in class 11. CBSE launched three new vocational courses, namely, "Hospitality and Tourism," "Mass Media Studies & Media Production" and "Geospatial Technology" from the academic session 2010-11. CBSE is making efforts to introduce more such courses in collaboration with relevant industry/organization, and has facilities for joint certification.

3. National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)

NIOS offers 82 vocational education courses through its accredited vocational Institutes which include Government Institutes, NGOs and Registered Societies. 1063 Accredited Vocational Institute (AVI) provides training to neo literates up to pre-degree level.

4. Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)

JSS have evolved from the erstwhile Shramik Vidyapeeths to meet the educational and vocational training needs of illiterate and neo literate adults and young people in urban and rural India. Jan Shikshan Sansthans are set up by voluntary agencies, which are provided financial assistance for taking up vocational training programmes for illiterate and neo-literate persons, people belonging to socio-economically weaker sections, disadvantaged groups, unskilled and unemployed youth in the age group of 15-35 years. Within all these groups the Jan Shikshan Sansthans are expected to give priority to women. A total number of 271 JSSs have been sanctioned in different parts of the country.

5. Craftsmen training in it is

DGE&T in Ministry of Labour & Employment conducts vocational training courses through 8,306 ITIs/ITCs (2140 Government ITIs & 6166 Pvt. ITCs) in 114 trades for school leavers. Duration of training courses varies from 6 months to 3 years and students with Classes 8 to 12 pass qualification can seek admission in these courses. The responsibility of opening of the ITIs and introduction of trades in ITIs rests with the

respective State Governments. Efforts are made to update/revise curricula of courses offered by DGE&T regularly in consultation with the industry and State/UT Government to ensure that training is aligned to market needs & employment oriented. Each upgraded ITI covered under the above scheme would cater to the need of one Industrial Sector with active involvement of concerned Industry in all aspects of training.

6. National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVEQF)

The National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF), which has been launched by AICTE and Ministry of HRD mainly focuses on general education element into vocational education and vice versa. It bring the vocational education program in schools that will offer new career choices to students and make them better prepared for the world of work. Through NVEQF, Ministry aims to develop the skills and competencies of students opting for vocational courses.

7. Skill India

Skill India is a campaign launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 July 2015 which aim to train over 40 crore people in India in different skills by 2022. It includes various initiatives of the government like "National Skill Development Mission", "National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015", "Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)" and the "Skill Loan scheme".

8. Udaan

Udaan is a special industry initiative for Jammu & Kashmir in the nature of partnership between the corporates of India and Ministry of Home Affairs and implemented by National Skill Development Corporation. The programme aims to provide skills training and enhance the employability of unemployed youth of J&K. The Scheme covers graduates, post graduates and three year engineering diploma holders. It has two objectives: (i) To provide an exposure to the unemployed graduates to the best of Corporate India and (ii) To provide Corporate India, an exposure to the rich talent pool available in the State.

Issues and Challenges

However, although a lot has been achieved in physical terms, a number of problems have been witnessed at the field level. Through, the study of the prevalent vocational education system in India the following problem areas have been identified:

- Irrelevance of courses leading to a mismatch between the labour market needs and the training skills.
- Lack of focus on emerging areas of industrial development.
- Inadequate syllabi being followed in schools and use of obsolete equipments.
- Inadequate practical training skills acquired by the students which are not useful in practical life.
- Lack of social acceptability,
- Lack of employment opportunities, and overall poor enrolment in vocational stream in such schools.

- Lack of industrial Participation.
- Outdated training modules and inadequate courses.
- Unsuitable medium of instruction.
- Lack of Practicals knowledge.

Apart from that there is a lot of variation among the various programs in terms of duration, target group, entry qualifications, testing and certification, curriculum, etc. which has resulted in problems related to recognition of qualifications, equivalence and vertical mobility.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for the successful implementation of vocational education:

- Adequate infrastructure should be provided in schools, and schools also should be properly equipped for teaching and learning.
- Adequate enlightenment campaigns should be carried out in order to educate the society about the importance of technical and vocational education.
- There should be industrial participation in vocational schools and also there should be an arrangement for students to visit the industrial areas.
- Professional and experienced teachers should be employed to teach vocational and technical subjects.
- Regular training programs in the form of seminars, conferences, in-service training programs, short courses and workshops should be organized at regular intervals to simulate teachers' interest in vocational and technical subjects.
- Contemporary instructional materials should be provided.
- Vocational subjects should be taught by using up-to-date modules.

Conclusion

Vocational education plays a vital role in human resource development of the country by creating skilled manpower, enhancing industrial productivity and improving the quality of life. 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 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 many employers expecting new employees to have all the practical skills. It can strengthen any country's employment and same way its economy. India being a developing country has come a long way to enhance and implement vocational education. The Government is well aware of the important role of vocational education and has already taken a number of important initiatives in this area. In order for vocational education to play its role effectively in the changing national context and for India to enjoy the fruits of the technical fields, 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.

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