

NATIONAL BUILDING THROUGH TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) PROBLEMS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The unemployment ratio in India has acquired dangerous proportions. This has made us realize that it will be futile exercise to spend time and energy on academic courses. Academic courses do not equip our children for a job. As a result, today, there is a tendency among students to join some technical educational institutions rather than joining some academic courses. They have begun to acknowledge the importance of technical education to secure a decent job. Students find it much safer and better to choose a technical course instead of some academic courses. They also find that the acquisition of a technical qualification coupled with a little bit of experience in a particular vocation would fetch them a lucrative job either in India or abroad. Government has also introduced vocational education both at the school and college levels. In the context of the Government of India proposing a New Education Commission that is expected to lay more stress on vocational education in the country to meet the growing need for skilled manpower, the author take a critical look at the prevailing vocational education in the country and suggest measures to make it more meaningful and effective.

KEYWORDS: *Technical Vocational Education, TVET*

INTRODUCTION

India has the third largest system of education in the world. It is no longer a mere constitutional obligation to provide free and compulsory school education to all the children in India; in fact, education, now, is a fundamental right of every child. Simple general education may not be a good means of livelihood. Hence, the vocationalization of education at all levels of knowledge acquisition has attained importance in India. Vocational education refers not only to the development of specialized skills but also to the development of a positive attitude to work and the dignity of labour.

Vocational education and training has been given importance throughout the history of education in India. Even in ancient Gurukula system, the shishya (disciple) was expected to earn his livelihood by way of manual work- work and education were integrated and imparted by the Guru (the preceptor) to his shishyas (disciples).

Though the nation in its policy pronouncements and in its planning throughout has emphasized on vocational education, it could not obtain the desired result. In view of the unsatisfactory implementation of vocational education, an attempt has been made to study the present status of vocational education in India and identify the challenges in the light of its philosophy, policy perspectives, its integration with general education, and finally the relevance and employability of the vocational stream.

AN OVERVIEW

The phrase “Vocational Education”, in its broadest sense encompasses education and skill development at all levels from post-primary to tertiary education both through formal and non-formal programs. The UNESCO in its recommendation of 1974 on Technical and Vocational Education defined it as a “comprehensive term embracing those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life”. In the beginning, the progress of implementation of vocational education was slow because of various reasons such as inadequate resources, lack of proper management structure and inadequate teacher preparation. The program got new impetus from the National Policy on Education (NPE-1986). The ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of Vocationalization of Secondary Education in 1988 under which are so vital for the implementation of the program.

The following are the objectives of the Vocational Education program:

- To fulfill the national goals of development and the removal of unemployment and poverty.
- To impart education relevant to increased production and productivity, economic development and individual prosperity.
- To meet the need for skilled and middle-level manpower for the growing sectors of economy, both organized and unorganized.
- To attract sizable segment of population to varied vocational courses so as to reduce the rush to general education courses of universities and institutions for higher learning.
- To prepare students for self-reliance and gainful self-employment.

Vocational and technical education contributes substantially to the socioeconomic development of the country as a whole. The development substance of the industrial sector is entirely dependent upon the availability of trained manpower to perform the multidimensional activities needed to keep the wheel of industry running. Thus the Vocational and Technical Education Development aims towards making available these trained vocationally and technically qualified hands to serve the industry and society. Equality of educational opportunities and preparing highly skilled workforce for enterprises widely, with excellence is also the objective of vocational and Technical Education. Vocational and Technical Education system thus has to be flexible enough to adapt to rapid change. The precise aim of the system is to develop and transfer of technology to user systems.

For the developing countries, the growth of vocational and technical manpower is extremely important, as it is the practitioners of these professions who create the wealth of the country and hence the welfare of the country. For the healthy growth of the profession proper policies are necessary to educate and guide the growth of vocational and technical education.

One of the biggest problems faced is the confusion and stress faced by the young vocational and technical education aspirants, which may undermine the delicate equilibrium among meritocracy, affordability and equity. The role of high quality teachers, facilities for research and industry-institute interaction need hardly be emphasized. The role of

modern technology in the use of efficient delivery systems for the vocational and technical education needs to be assessed fully and exploited.

Challenges before Vocational Education

It is obvious that no one is happy with what is going on in the name of vocationalization of education in India. This is not very particular to vocational education; it is a case with the education as a whole. Though we are doing a lot and can confidently say that we have achieved so many things, we are yet not in a position to make the people happy with what is going on in the name of education in the country. As education itself is such a subject it is very difficult to satisfy people because the expectations are always multiplying. Though we are struggling hard, we find that it is not possible to satisfy the people, and they are not happy. In the same way vocationalization of education is also such a subject that whenever we share an idea of vocationalization of education, people will say: where is it? What have we achieved? When critically look at our culture and our ancient knowledge, vocationalization of education is not different from education as such, but may be a different form.

Gandhi point out that that Vocational Education is for any particular section of the society or that it is only a bread-winning activity. He made it clear that education is to be integrated and one should learn only through vacation. Not only Gandhi, even Tagore emphatically stated the focus may be on art but at the same time art should also facilitate the individual to earn his livelihood. However, he overemphasized art and explained the role of art in the human development or man-making process with a caution that craft should not be excluded. With such a strong cultural and philosophical basis of Vocational Education, the question remains: why have we failed? Even in the western countries vocationalization is an inherent mechanism of their education. The Western education systems have integrated successfully whereas we even while adopting their models failed to integrate and incorporate vocationalisation into our system.

Bread winning is not the purpose of life. Man will not live by bread alone. Indian thought clearly and categorically states that the purpose of life is of two dimensions i.e., existential dimension and the essential dimension. The existential dimension has something to do with our bread-winning exercise. That is not the end of life. The end of life is something like a quest to realize the essence. So here also the integration of vocation and means of fulfillment should be the important dimensions of education. Therefore, unless we exist we can't ensure the realization of the essence. First of all, we have to ensure existence i.e., make it possible by way of creating some skill or by way of creating some confidence in the individual; then, s/he can proceed further in order to realize the essence of life.

But, unfortunately, our education is not in a position to meet either the existential needs or the essential needs. We go on imparting the same education. The grim fact is that the successive plans of education have failed to enable the children to satisfy either the existential needs or the essential needs. These are basic questions. They are not new. We go on debating unfortunately failing to work out a strategy to overcome these problems. It may be argued that no problem of education can be solved in its entirety. Yet we have to strive to solve it to the extent possible.

In India about 7 crore children are out school, and only 8-10% of children in that age group go to +2 level. 90-95% of the above 8-10% students after passing +2 enroll for one or the other field of higher education. In Japan only 44% where everyone completes secondary education. Rest of them settles in some work. What about the 7 crore children who are out of school? What if all these 7 crore children opt for schooling?

Sri Aurobindo has stated that the vital energy present in us will be used for some destructive purpose, unless we provide a channel for this energy to undertake some constructive work. This is what is happening today. Students often join terrorist groups and indulge in destructive activities. We have failed to channel the youth through proper education to overcome the social problems and to develop a harmonious society. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to go for vocationalization of education. We should not confine Vocational Education to a particular skill or to a particular level. Right from the schooling we should incorporate some skill development in the curriculum. Work Experience should be integrated in the schooling as a whole.

Vocational Education in Teacher Presentation

At present, in India there is no formal teacher-training program for teachers teaching Vocational Education. In the formal academic field also there is no structured program for teacher training in Work Education. Then, how can we ensure that the teachers of vocational subjects or those who teach Vocational Education are successful? And how can Vocational Education succeed in the country? If ITI or Polytechnic degree holders are appointed to teach Vocational Education, they cannot integrate the skill with the content they teach at +2 level. So the NCERT and NCTE should immediately work out the details for teacher education program for Vocational teachers. The integration of skill development is an integral part of our educational activity. Without, we will not have harmony in the society. It is imperative to create and strengthen an agency that can take Vocational Education policy to the ground level.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The SCERT'S focus is more on environmental education or population education but not on Vocational Education. If we neglect Vocational Education, we will be doing great harm to the future of our country. So, in all streams and at each and every level, it is important to integrate Vocational Education into the mainstream education system. We have to promote a positive approach to Vocational Education in the community to get wider acceptability of time and resources, we have to change the approach. No individual should be allowed to go for higher education without passing through a 2 year period of work in some service sector, so that s/he can develop love for work. The future of our society will be shaped by people who love to work, and enjoy doing work. This should become an integral part of education to do justice to the future of our society in the context of education.

In view of challenges facing the existing system, some changes are required to strengthen the Vocational Education and Training Program. The following are the measures required in Vocational Education and Training System.

- The training programs/qualifications will have to be provided through schools, polytechnics, it is and other educational and training institutions with flexible duration, as per the requirements of the vocation/trade/industry.
- To cater to the changing skills requirements of the local, national and global labor market, the programs are required to be dynamic and there should be built-in-mechanism for continuous scanning of market needs, fast development of training courses and integration thereof in the qualification framework.
- The success of vocational education and training program depends upon developing close linkages with relevant industries/users/organizations. The industries/users/organizations in each sector of the economy will be an integral part of the new program involved at all stages of the implementation of the program, from development of job profiles, selection of curriculum and instructional materials, imparting of training and testing of skills, etc.

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