

NEP 2020: A comprehensive framework to create a perfect harmony through vocational education in India and its challenges

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ABSTRACT

The NEP 2020 is a wide policy document that broadly discusses the transformation of vocational education. The model of instructing vocational education in India functions at two levels: theoretical part vocational education (theory) and training (practical). Along with mainstream secondary education, students are taught the theoretical part of vocational training through subjects like SUPW, which has proven to be ineffective and an additional burden. The vocational prime is one of the most vital need for every student. The perfect decision at the right moment can change the whole life of a person and his specialized environment. If proper vocational guidance is provided to the students based on their interest in a particular talent, they can utilize their energies in the right direction, and this will increase their efficacy. India is second most populous country with 18 % of world's population residing after China. More than half (60 %) of India's population falls within the working age category of 15-59 years and about a quarter (27.5 percent) in the youth category of 15-29 years. India's demographic prominence can translate into a demographic dividend only when these human resources takes shape of a productive quality workforce through interventions in healthcare, education, skill training and creation of sustainable employment opportunities, failing which the supposed demographic advantage could turn into a demographic disaster.

Keywords- vocational, demographic dividend, skills, guidance

INTRODUCTION

There is a relationship between social progress, democracy and harmony. In the 21st century the word democracy has become narrow and its changed form is damaging the harmony of the country. Democracy can be maintained with the help of social progress at each level of society. It means socially stable people will be aware about their real needs and unsocial elements cannot misguide them in the wrong direction. The prime objective of the NEP is to devise and implement proper solutions to its own problems that are in harmony with different programs and initiatives of Government of India – make in India, skill India, start-up India and latest being atma-nirbhar India. NEP also gives emphasis to knowledge economy in terms of promoting cultural heritage.

With the beginning of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, vocational education has gained vital attention. It addresses the major challenges and issues of vocational education in India. The NEP 2020 is a broad policy document that widely discusses the makeover of vocational education (Shubhangi Raman, 2020). Five building blocks of this policy i.e., Access, equity, affordability, accountability, and quality have been considered to build the new education system in India to create a perfect harmony with the principles of United Nations' (UN) 2030 agenda for sustainable development (Kumar K., Prakash A. & Singh K. 2020). The model of imparting vocational education in India operates at two levels: vocational education (theory) and training (practical). Along with the mainstream secondary education, students are taught the theoretical part of vocational training through subjects like SUPW, which has proven to be ineffective and an additional burden (Agrawal and Kumar 2014). The interlinkage of demand and supply of vocational education is very weak and it discards the theoretical part of the training and gives attention to the practical knowledge of the students. The policy focuses

on generation of employment rather than getting job. It also focuses on getting vocational education into mainstream education, as recommended by consecutive commissions on education over the years.

The NEP 2020 highlights the issues that teachers, especially at higher secondary levels, are not completely skilled so that they are not able to generate employment. They rather pay more attention towards the completion of the syllabus only. There is no proper framed curriculum and the curriculum is limited only upto the introduction of vocational education and is unable to cope up with its implementation. In other words it can be said that the learning taxonomy which should be initiated through knowledge till creativity and should include remember, understanding, apply analysis, evaluation and create is able to complete only one or two of its steps i.e either understanding or remember and comprehension etc. The existing system, therefore, fails to attract students from taking up vocational courses in future. Even if students opt to pursue vocational courses at higher education level, there are no proper admission criteria for vocational education qualifications, which constraints the vertical mobility in this education system (Raman and Majumdar 2020). Apart from the mismanaged structure, vocational schooling creates a sense of 'second class' citizenship in society (Tilak and Jhandyala 1988). A person pursuing a vocational course is considered inferior to those students opting for mainstream higher education avenues.

The vocational prime is one of the most vital need for every student. The perfect decision at the right moment can change the whole life of a person and his specialized environment. If proper vocational guidance is provided to the students based on their interest in a particular talent, they can utilize their energies in the right direction, and this will increase their efficacy (Gupta A., 2019). In other words this is a present ability, on the bases of it is decided that an individual would fully success in that particular area in future. The plan of education involves both nature and needs of man in harmonious programme (Tagore R., 1917). There are several global issues like unemployment, women unempowerment, health issues, violence, climate changes and many more. Institutions' responsibility is to promote the acquiring knowledge through independent efforts and critical examination of the ideas. Institutions should try to solve these issues through education along with proper training (Kumari A., Kumari N. 2021). Interest has an indirect power and leaves impact over higher secondary students, and give them time to pay attention for research and intervention. This is the time when these students must be given proper guidance which will provide them stability, position and mental satisfaction in the coming future. Researchers must also pay attention on vocationalisation on the basis of gender differences, family background, living environment etc. It is found from the reviews that the pattern of vocational interests was properly stable in grades 8–12 for males and females. (Terence et al. 2005). In the post- Independence period, a major concern of the Government of India and of the States has been to give increasing attention to education as a factor vital to national progress and security. Problems of educational reconstruction were reviewed by several commissions and committees, notably the University Education Commission (1948-49) and the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) (Ministry of Education 1966).

India is the second most populous country with 18 % of world's population residing after China. More than half (60 %) of India's population falls within the working age category of 15-59 years and about a quarter (27.5 percent) in the youth category of 15-29 years (Census of India, 2011). The figures today reflect that India has the world's largest youth population comprising around one –fifth of the total world youth population. India's demographic status can translate into a demographic dividend only when these human resources takes shape of a productive quality workforce through interventions in healthcare, education, skill training and creation of sustainable employment opportunities, failure of which could turn the supposed demographic advantage into a demographic disaster. Demographic dividend has significantly contributed to overall economic growth of various countries.

A missing link in the debate on the impact of population on economic growth is the effect of age structure (Bloom & Williamson 1998). A positive and significant relationship is established between growth rate and share of working age population (Bloom and Canning (2004). Japan, Ireland and Taiwan are examples of countries who have taken this advantage of demographic dividend. The advantages that are associated with Demographic Dividend are:- enhanced economic growth, increased labor force, increase in savings rate (which is channelized back in various welfare and infrastructural developments), improved standard of living, less number of dependent population, increased fiscal space and increased urbanization.

Now, the challenges that are associated with demographic dividend are-

- Unbalanced Demography between states and regions which may induce population shifts and migrations and can have social and political consequences
- Lack of skills in working group because of improper training which is not sufficient to create harmony through vocational education
- Jobless growth (As per the NSSO Periodic Labour Force Survey 2017-18, India's labour force participation rate for the age-group 15-59 years is around 53%, that is, around half of the working age population is jobless)

- Low Human Development Parameters (India ranks 130 out of 189 countries in UNDP's Human Development Index, which is alarming). Therefore, **health and education parameters need to be improved substantially** to make the Indian workforce efficient and skilled.
- Informal Nature of Economy (89% of work force is in informal sector)

An assessment by the National Institute of Open Schooling highlights that only 2% of the total population in between 15-29 years of age have received formal vocational training, and only 8% have received non-formal vocational training. (Jena S.S.,2012).The12th Five-Year Plan (2012–2017) estimates indicate that fewer than 5% of the Indian workforce between the age of 19-24 received formal vocational education (Raman S. & Majumdar K., 2020). Vocational education has been a subject of lots of planning and debates for more than a century perceived by many commissions and committees that were setup pre and post-independence. In 1854, for the first time introducing vocational education at secondary school level was recommended by Wood's Dispatch. The report of the Education Commission (Kothari Commission 1964-66) made national development the chief concern of education."The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms as pointed out by the Education Commission (1964-65). The Commission suggested restructuring of education into a uniform pattern of education called 10+2+3 pattern all over the country implying 10 years of general undifferentiated education for all, with diversification into academic and vocational streams at the +2 level. It gives priority in the plans of educational reconstruction to the Work Experience Programme (WEP) in general education up to middle level (Class 1 to 8) and Vocationalization of Education Programme (VEP) at the secondary school level.

The National Working Group on Vocationalization of Education, Ministry of Education, led by Kulandaiswamy (1985) undertook extensive review of vocational education in the country. The group noted that despite the priority accorded to this programme in the report of Kothari Commission as well as in the successive five year plans, the implementation of the programme had remained weak. Because of inadequate resources, lack of proper management structure, technical inexpertise and inadequate teacher preparation, the result had not been matching with expectations. Keeping in view the shortcomings, the group provided guidelines for the development of the programme. It formulated the concept of Vocationalization at different levels and recommended the linkages required among different agencies running vocational programmes, setting up of a well-knit management system, an action plan for promotion of Vocationalization in the country and liberal financial assistance for achievement of targets fixed. Since then many committees have recommended and made remarkable contribution to the subject. The major challenge that persists is employability.

Perception of vocational education in the National Education Policy 2020

To overcome the situation of social stigma attached to vocationalisation, the NEP 2020 recommended:

1. Integration of vocational education programme with mainstream education.
2. The teaching of vocational courses from class 6th, mostly in the form of internship and based on practical knowledge.
3. GER(gross enrollment ratio) must be increased to increase the number of students pursuing vocational education.
4. To ensure that every student should study atleast one vocational course.
5. To provide adequate resource facilities regarding vocational skills' training like library, science labs, computer labs, skill labs, playgrounds, sports equipment and facilities, etc.
6. . Vocational education will be chosen based on skills gap analysis and mapping of local opportunities.
7. MHRD will constitute a National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE), consisting of experts in vocational education and representatives from across Ministries, in collaboration with industry, to oversee this effort

The salient features of the policy

1. Recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres
2. Flexibility, so that learners have the ability to choose their learning path and programmes, and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests.
3. Multidisciplinary and a holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge
4. Creativity and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation
5. Life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience
6. Curricular Integration of essential subjects, skills, and capacities
7. Digitalized pedagogy and the classroom
8. Equipping teachers with latest technology and education methodology

RESULTS

The NEP 2020 is a welcome move for the countrymen and it tried to emphasize on holistic multidisciplinary education for future nation's stakeholders. The result indicates a wide gap between vocational training and the related learning goals in the curriculum, which supports our finding that vocational courses are not framed properly. Implementation of vocational courses in mainstream schools is very challenging because of lack of trained and competent teachers. Further, NEP 2020 enhances teachers' new capability and performances like introducing mentor-mentee relationship, performing like a facilitator and guide, promoting blended learning, constructivist action which increases the work load but in the present education system, teachers' salary is not appropriate with their accountabilities. So, it may generate more unsatisfied environment for the teachers. In vocationalisation, satisfaction role is very important and in present scenario administrator lacks to promote good and motivational management system. Teaching being a dynamic activity, teachers' proficiency depends on the attitude they possess for the profession. The positive attitude helps teachers to develop their competency as a teacher and learner friendly environment in the classroom (Kavitha S. & Venkateswaran R., 2015). Democracy and harmony are inter-connected and employment plays a vital role in maintaining its inter-connection. Despite of several challenges, NEP 2020 is trying its best to introduce vocational education in a newer and more efficient way so that it can help in the economic growth, increasing employment and self-dependency and also help to maintain the peace and harmony even after the increasing population in India.

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