

Need of Vocational Education at the Lower Secondary Level (with special reference to Shillong, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya, India)

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ABSTRACT

Vocational Education is based on occupation and employment. It can be defined as skilled based education. Vocational education helps and develops both the individual and society in many aspects. In today's present world where unemployment and job seekers are at a high peak, students need to get a type of education which teaches them not only academic subjects but as well as skill based education. This type of skill based education is necessary for students when they are at the lower secondary level. Though vocationalization of education is being implemented at the higher secondary level but it is being neglected and ignored at the lower secondary level. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to have strong vocational education system in India especially at the lower secondary level. Thus the paper focuses on the need of vocational education at the lower secondary level with special reference to Shillong, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya, India.

Keywords: Vocational Education, skilled based education, unemployment, lower secondary level.

INTRODUCTION

Vocational Education is a type of education which is based on occupation and employment. It is also known as career and technical education (CTE) or technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Vocational education also prepares the learners for career in manual or practical activities. It is the process of developing the skills set of an individual so as to meet the requirements of the society. 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.

Role of Vocational Education:

Vocational education plays an important role in enhancing the skill and ability of the learners. It aims to prepare students for a specific profession, vocation or career. It teaches students the skills that will help them get or do a job. Vocational education enables students to become more responsible and mature towards their work and profession. Students are able to select their own career soon after completing their schooling. It provides opportunity to those students who do not have aptitude for higher studies. It also helps students of low socio-economic group to earn money while learning at the same time which can support their needs.

Statement of the problem:

In today's present world where unemployment and job seekers are at a high peak, students need to get a type of education which teaches them not only academic subjects but as well as skill based education. If teachers are able to teach and impart skill based education to students it will enable them to work and become self employed by earning their livelihoods with dignity in the future. Vocationalisation of secondary education at +2 level was implemented since 1988 under the Centrally sponsored scheme which was again revised in 1992-93, but not at the lower secondary level. Many people today are searching for holistic education to their children at the early ages so that their kids can develop not only academically but also the ability to survive in this modern world. This type of education is said to begin during childhood. Thus vocational education is part of holistic education which can be introduced at the early stage especially at the lower secondary level so that students can recognize their talent and abilities at the right time and be able to do what they want in life.

Significance of the study:

Each and every individual is unique and different from one another be it in their physique, aptitude, intelligence etc. Furthermore, students in the classroom also have different abilities and aptitudes. Some students are highly intellectual; some are average and low in their ability. However, if students get the opportunity to learn and have basic knowledge about a type of skill based education at the lower level, it will enable them to know their skill and ability and at the same time choose their own career at a very young age. Eventually, it will also pave the way for such students who are not capable to continue in their academic subjects after their X standard will be able to opt for the skill based education which has been taught at school. The NEP 2020 has also recommended the exposure of vocational education at early ages in middle and secondary school (NEP Para 16.4). Thus, the study focuses on the need of vocational education at the secondary level of class IX and X with special reference to Shillong, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya, India.

Objectives of the study:

1. To find out the availability of vocational education at the lower secondary schools of Shillong.
2. To examine the need of vocational education at the lower secondary schools of Shillong.
3. To evaluate the impact if more courses of vocational education is introduced at the lower secondary schools of Shillong.
4. To suggest measures and recommendations whereby more courses of vocational education will be able to start out at the lower secondary schools of Shillong.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Dr. Vijay. P. Geol (2011)¹ had conducted a study on “Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Tvet) System in India for Sustainable Development”. 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 [a] large number of educated people remaining unemployed. This phenomenon has now been recognised by the planners and hence there is a greater thrust on vocationalisation of 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 Institutes 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 marginalised sections of the society, including women, get adequate representation in these courses. It can thus be hoped that [technical and vocational education and training] TVET will play a major role in improving the lives of the people of India.

Tushar Agarwal (2012)² had done a study on “Vocational education and training in India: Challenges, Status and labour market outcome”. The paper provides an overview of vocational education and training (VET) system in India, and discusses various challenges and difficulties in the Indian VET system. The paper also examines labour market outcomes of vocational graduates and compares these with those of general secondary graduates using a large-scale nationally representative household survey. We find quite a high rate of unemployment (11%) for VET holders in the age group 15–29 years. Although unemployment rate of VET holders is higher than the overall unemployment rate in the same age group, the rate is lower than that for general secondary graduates. It is shown that average daily wages are higher, both for regular and casual workers, for VET holders. There has been a considerable increase in the number of Industrial Training Institutes/Centres in the last decades, but the coverage of the system is disparate in terms of institutes’ vis-à-vis states.

Nagarajan Akshay et.al (2012)³ conducted a study on “MoVE: Mobile vocational education for rural India”. The aim of the paper is to present the design of a project that involves deployment of computerized vocational training courses comprised of multimedia enhanced video lectures, virtual reality games and low cost haptic device based simulations built on mobile-learning platforms and delivered using automobile units. These

¹Dr. Vijay.P.Geol (2011) ., “Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Tvet) System in India for Sustainable Development”. *UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training*. Bonn, Germany. (google scholar)

²Tushar Agarwal (2012)., “Vocational education and training in India: Challenges, Status and labour market outcome”. *Journal of vocational education and training*. volume 64, 2012 Issue-4, pg no.453-474. (Print)

³Nagarajan Akshay et.al (2012)., “MoVE: Mobile vocational education for rural India”. *IEEE International Conference on Technology Enhanced Education (ICTEE)*. IEEE, DOI: [10.1109/ICTEE.2012.6208644](https://doi.org/10.1109/ICTEE.2012.6208644)

mobile vocational education units are developed as a model to make vocational education and training more accessible to the rural and tribal populations of India. The paper gives an overview of the design of the mobile vocational education units and details the architecture and communication interface for the m-learning application. It further describes the software architecture of the vocational education application that is specifically designed to easily scale across various vocational trades and languages of delivery provide flexibility and increase accessibility for vocational training.

Kusum Kaushik (2014)⁴ conducted a study on “vocational education in India”. The study identified some of the problems for vocational education implementation in India such as high drop-out rate at Secondary level, it is presently offered at Grade 11, 12th, private & industry participation is lacking, less number of vocational institutes in the country, not adequate number of trained faculty, vocationalization at all levels has not been successful, lacking of new sectors of vocational education and skills training, Acute shortage of skilled instructors and teachers in the country, lack of opportunities for continuous skill up-gradation, current education system is non-responsive to the skill demands of the existing and future industry leading to a supply-demand gap on various counts. Outside the school system, relevant vocational training centers are ill-equipped to handle the demand and are accessible to only a selected number of students who have passed at least level 10 and 10+. 12, huge demand-supply skill gap. 90% of the jobs in India are "skill based"; entailing the requirement of vocational training. It is estimated that only 5% of the youth in India are vocationally trained, Most of the Vocational Education Training Institutes are characterized by structurally rigid and outdated centralized syllabi that do not have much sync with the prevailing market conditions, absence of monitoring committee.

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Shireesh Pal Singh, Sumita Grover et.al (2015)⁵ has conducted a study on “Vocational Education in Higher Secondary Schools”. The study was done in Bhopal. For the study ten schools where vocational courses are running, selected by investigators randomly. Data were collected with the help of various tools like questionnaire and interview schedules. There are 31 Govt Higher Secondary Schools in Bhopal District, and only 13 Higher Secondary Schools are conducting vocational courses. There is only one vocational Higher Secondary School in

⁴Kusum Kaushik (2014)., “vocational education in India”. *International Journal of Education and Information Studies*. ISSN 2277-3169 Volume 4, Number 1 (2014), pp. 55-58 © Research India Publications (www.ripublication.com)

⁵Shireesh Pal Singh, Sumita Grover et.al (2015)., “Vocational Education in Higher Secondary Schools”. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. ISSN 2039-9340 (print), volume-6, Number 1 September (2015). MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy
Doi:10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n5p455

Bhopal District, which is situated in the rural area. There are more than one hundred Non-Government Higher Secondary Schools in Bhopal District. Not even a single Non-Government Higher Secondary Schools in conducting vocational courses. Results of the study reveal that there is a need to strengthen vocational education in the region.

An article on “Vocationalisation of Higher Education” written in Greater Kashmir Newspaper by Dr. Khursheed Ahmad Butt (2021)⁶ wrote that Kashmir has been famous throughout the world as much for its craftsmanship skills as for its physical charm and natural beauty. The craftsmanship skills continued passing on from generation to generation but this age old industry of the state, which was enjoying prestige and unique place in the market, has lost lot of its sheen for varied reasons. But the most worrying aspect has been that the new generation is reluctant from taking-up these traditional vocations. There have been concerted efforts from the govt. to regain the past glory of this historical treasure. These efforts can be supplemented further through vocational education by encouraging the educated youth to get involved in this treasure trove by using modern means and methods of business. HEIs would need to design such courses on handicrafts in a manner that will educate the enterprising youth about the various crafts, their entrepreneurial potential and help them in taking these crafts to a different level of design development and marketing practices.

The study of vocational education in higher secondary schools of Bhopal division Bhopal Division comprises of Bhopal, Raisen, Vidhisha, Sehore and Rajgarh districts. Vocational Courses were introduced for the first time in 1988. According to the figures of 1996-1997 Vocational Courses introduced in thirty-one schools of Bhopal division. For study ten schools where vocational courses are running, selected by investigators randomly. Data collected with the help of various tools like questionnaire and interview the study of vocational education in higher secondary schools of Bhopal division Bhopal Division comprises of Bhopal, Raisen, Vidhisha

Many studies had been done on vocational education for various aspects. However, there were no such studies on vocational education at the lower secondary level. Thus the investigator wants to study on the need of vocational education at the lower secondary level.

METHODOLOGY

The investigator had used descriptive method in the present study.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises of 4 number of schools located in Shillong, East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya.

Sample of the study

The investigator had selected 40 students of class 9, 4 number of Principals/Head of the institutions and 15 numbers of teachers who are teaching at the lower secondary level from 4 different schools. Simple random sampling was used for the selection of students and purposive sampling was used for the selection of schools i.e., 2 numbers of schools under Meghalaya Board of School Education (MBOSE), 1 number of schools under Central Board of School Education (CBSE) and another 1 number of schools under Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE).

Tools used

Constructed structured questionnaires were used for the Principals/Head of the institutions, teachers and students.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS

a) Availability of vocational education at the lower secondary schools

According to the responses from the students, teachers and Principals it is found that few vocational courses have been introduced under State Board (MBOSE) such as computer course, arts and crafts, stitching, knitting whereas 2 schools under the CBSE and ICSE Board in addition to the above courses, they have also introduced fashion designing, hospitality management, mass media and journalism at the lower secondary level. This shows that many schools in Shillong have introduced vocational courses at the lower secondary level with only few vocational courses available. Apart from these courses that are available, if the schools could also start or have photography, home science, baking, carpentry, graphic designing, electrician and technician etc in order to equip students with broader skills for better job opportunities or setting up their own business and prepare them for prospective future career.

⁶Dr. Khursheed Ahmad Butt (2021), “Vocationalisation of Higher Education”. Greater Kashmir Newspaper. Published on : 9 Apr, 2021

b) Need of vocational education at the lower secondary schools of Shillong

The findings depict that though vocational education had been introduced in the schools, students would also prefer to have more vocational courses as they felt that it will develop their skills, ability to gain more knowledge and equip students with broader skills for better job opportunities or setting up their own business and prepare them for prospective future career. Having vocational education as one of the subjects in the curriculum would help them to boost their confidence, develop their competency and able to be self dependency, teaches them to manage one's own time and also help in decreasing school dropout. Further, it will also enable students in learning experiences. Besides that it will make them aware of their career and able to receive required training. It will also able to recognize their potentiality, talent and creativity they possess. Indranil Biswas has also stated that Vocational education enables gaining skills and experiences directly linked to a career in future. (2009)⁷. The demand for skilled labour has also increased manifold in both the private and government sectors, hence vocational education helps create skilled manpower.

c) The Impact if more courses of vocational education is introduced at the lower secondary schools

The findings also shows that if more courses of vocational education is introduced at the lower secondary schools it should be made compulsory subject with choices given so that students will enjoy learning what they like to do, besides it will also develop a sense of belongingness. Getting to learn at an early stage will also make them grasp an early opportunity to explore their field of interest and have their skills accordingly otherwise it would be unfair if students are denied the opportunity to explore their skills and interest at an early stage. According to RajeshtheChairman of LabourNet Services India Limited in his article on "How vocational training in schools can introduce the world of work to students" suggested the impact of vocational education in schools if made as mandatory or an optional subject in the curriculum, would make students get to learn a new trade or a skill that can in fact help them discover their innate talent and a natural inclination towards a certain job. Students will also get to learn about dignity of labour as they get to try the manual work and learn things hands-on(2018)⁸. The main impact of having vocational education at the lower secondary stage will make students fully thrived or skilled on a particular course by the time they reach the higher level, it will also enable them to understand their skills and individual interests in various fields and make them self reliable and self confidence. Having vocational education at the lower secondary stage, would also make students enjoy their learning activities which they are passionate about, henceforth school dropout rates would be curbed and education would be wholesome meaningful and gainful.

d) Suggestions

According to the findings that have been collected from the data, some suggestions have been given by students, teachers and principals.

- i) In order to have more vocational education courses at the lower secondary stage it could subtly be integrated with other subjects
- ii) All the stake holders and policy makers can come together for proper planning to make vocational education run smoothly even at the lower secondary stage.
- iii) Vocational education should be as a subject in schools and also as part of the curriculum or as integrated course with other learning subjects so that it will enable students to develop their self-confidence, self-dependence and self-employed.
- iv) Implementation of vocational education at the lower level should be basic. For instance, gardening and then increase the standard as students go to higher level.
- v) The schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKK), India International Skill Centres (IISCs), Capacity Building Schemes and Rozgaar Mela etc are there from the Government to start or introduce vocational education at lower secondary level.
- vi) Implementing vocational education at the lower secondary level will provide practical knowledge and open new door for the weak learner too.
- vii) Highly skilled professional should be employed, infrastructure, state of art machinery and equipment should be available.

CONCLUSION

Although vocational education has been introduced in higher secondary level but at the lower secondary level many schools have not started yet. According to NEP 2020, by 2025, at least 50% of learners shall have vocational exposure through school and higher education. Every child is supposed to learn at least one vocation and be

⁷Vocational Education in India. *Report on India Science and Technology 2008*, published by NISTADS(CSIR)

7 Pages Posted: 16 Sep 2009 Last revised: 18 Dec 2009

⁸A.R.Rajesh, "How vocational training in schools can introduce the world of work to students". (2018)www.nationalnetworkskills.in

exposed to several more. The NEP 2020 stated that there will be 'no hard separation' between the 'vocational and academic streams. Universal access to all children of the country to quality holistic education - including vocational education from preschool to Grade XII will be ensured, while allowing for flexibility and choice of subjects (NCERT, NISHTHA 2.0). Hence, vocational education at the lower secondary level is very much required to enhance students the knowledge, skills and ability to recognize their potentiality, talent and creativity they possess.

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