

## Historical Background Of Vocationalisation Of Education In India

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### Introduction

The foundation for attaining full human potential is Education. Economic development, social fairness, equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation are all accelerated by having access to high-quality education. The development of science and technology, which was made possible by the abundance of both material and human capital, is largely responsible for the advancement of our country. These resources are abundant in our nation, but it is crucial that they be used properly. Vocational education must be promoted and expanded in order to do this. The provision of vocational education that gives people proficiency in "technical know-how" is currently urgently needed. Vocational education focuses on training individuals for specific occupations, directly contributing to productivity. It prepares learners for employment, offers substantial job opportunities, and broadens perspectives. Additionally, it fosters a sense of dignity in labor and aids in optimizing the country's material resources.

When vocational education is integrated with general education, it is referred to as the vocationalization of education. This approach introduces practical and manual skills into the general education framework. Vocationalization of education involves imparting training in specific vocations alongside general education at the secondary and higher secondary levels.

### Meaning of Vocationalisation of Education

The system of education focused on production and vocation has existed in our country since the Vedic period. However, it gained prominence during the British era when greater emphasis was placed on this form of education. Initially, Christian missionaries introduced handicraft education at the primary level.

The Wood's Despatch marked the announcement of a new national educational policy, which prioritized vocational education as a means to address unemployment, fulfill the need for skilled craftsmen in industries, and enhance the economic conditions of Indians. As part of this initiative, separate vocational education institutes were established to provide specialized training and develop.

### Aims and Objectives of Vocationalisation of Education

- Encourage students to have a positive outlook on life and work.
- Increase students' employability by giving them job-oriented skills.
- Minimize the gap between the supply and demand for skilled labor.
- Offer another choice for students who might not want to continue their study without an obvious curiosity or objective.
- Students should be prepared for their chosen careers in a variety of sectors.

- Set up a strong emphasis on developing the mindset, know-how, and abilities necessary for self-employment and entrepreneurship.
- Provide chances for women, students from rural and tribal areas, and other underprivileged groups to have their needs met.
- Through appropriate bridge courses, offer opportunities for job progression, professional development, and lateral admission into general, technical, or professional education.

### **Historical Background of Vocationalisation of Education**

Vocational education equips individuals with skills in productive work, distribution systems, or other vocations, enabling them to earn their livelihood. A look at world history reveals that India was a pioneer in establishing educational institutions.

- **Vedic Period (2500 BC to 500 BC)**

During the Vedic era, a flourishing educational system emerged. Gurukuls provided education in agriculture, herding, gem identification, valuation, and commerce. Skills and crafts education, however, were imparted at home or in specific guilds.

- **Buddhist Period (500 BC to 1200 AD)**

The succeeding Buddhist era marked significant progress in production, crafts, and commerce. Buddhist viharas and monasteries offered education in various crafts and vocational skills. Ayurveda saw remarkable development, with specialized education provided in contemporary universities. Notable figures such as Dhanvantari, Charvak, Jeevak, and Sushrut emerged during this period.

- **Medieval Period (1200 AD to 1700 AD)**

With the arrival of Muslim rulers, vocational skills and crafts further developed. These rulers brought new crafts and techniques to India. Madrasas became centers of learning for these crafts and vocations, contributing to progress in fields like textiles, metalwork, and more.

- **Colonial Period (1700 AD to 1900 AD)**

A new era began in 1613 with the arrival of English traders and the founding of the East India Company. Primary schools with an emphasis on language, math, and handicrafts were brought about by Christian missionaries. The Company increased its power following its triumphs in the Battle of Plassey (1757) and the Battle of Buxar (1764). The British government assumed direct control of the seized regions after the uprising in 1857.

During the English period (1700–1900), European languages, literature, and sciences were introduced. Modern educational institutions such as colleges, universities, and agricultural, engineering, and medical colleges were established. This era not only laid the foundation for vocational education but also expanded its scope, integrating modern advancements with traditional practices.

### **Recommendations for Vocationalisation of Education**

The evolution of vocational education in India has been shaped by various commissions and policies over time.

- **Hunter Commission (1882)**

At the secondary level, the Hunter Commission, also known as the Indian

Education Commission, suggested implementing two different curricula:

- (a) Literary curriculum
- (b) Vocational curriculum

- **Wood and Abbot Report (1937)**

This report echoed the recommendations of the Hunter Commission, advocating for both literary and vocational education streams.

- **Sergeant Plan (1944)**

The plan refined the earlier recommendations, renaming the two curricula as literary and technical curricula.

- **Post-Independence Reforms**

After gaining independence in 1947, India initiated widespread changes across various sectors, including education.

- **Secondary Education Commission (1952–53)**

This commission proposed running diversified courses at the secondary level and transforming general secondary schools into multipurpose schools. While the government attempted to implement these changes, success was limited.

- **National Education Commission (1964–66)**

This commission replaced the concept of diversification with the vocationalization of secondary education. It recommended introducing work experience at the secondary level (classes 9 and 10) and offering a general curriculum for talented students at the +2 level alongside vocational courses for general students. The commission suggested practical exposure for students through workshops, vocational institutions, agricultural farms, and industrial institutions during their work experience.

- **National Education Policy (1986)**

The significance of systematic, thoroughly planned out, and strictly enforced vocational education programs was underlined by this policy and its updated formulations.

- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**

The integration of vocational education with general education was a major goal of the NEP 2020. In order to help students gain skills that are relevant to the industry, increase their employability, and improve the standard of education generally, it placed a strong emphasis on mainstreaming vocational education. By bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, this integration seeks to match education with the demands of contemporary industry.

### **1.1. Vocational Education in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**

Vocational education has gained prominence since the NEP 2020 was introduced, which addressed long-standing proposals by numerous educational committees and emphasized its integration into mainstream education. This all-encompassing policy seeks to combine academic pursuits with vocational training while modernizing the educational system to satisfy the demands of learners in the twenty-first century.

Key Highlights of Vocational Education under NEP 2020

#### **1. Mainstreaming Vocational Education**

- Over the course of the decade that follows, vocational education will be gradually and methodically incorporated into regular schooling.
  - It is anticipated that at least 50% of students will have experience in the workforce by 2025, both in school and in higher education.
  - Throughout their education, every student will learn at least one vocation and be exposed to a number of others.
2. **No Hard Separation**
    - The policy eliminates the divide between vocational and academic streams, promoting equal importance for both.
  3. **Experiential Learning and Early Exposure**
    - **Grades 6 to 8:** Students will participate in 10 bagless days annually to explore a vocation of their choice. They will also engage in experiential learning activities designed to provide hands-on exposure to vocational crafts through fun courses.
    - **Skill Labs:** Schools will establish skill labs in a **Hub and Spoke** model to facilitate vocational training. These facilities will be accessible to other schools as well.
  4. **Vocational Training at the Secondary Stage**
    - **Grades 9 to 12:** Students aged 15–18 will undergo training in at least one vocation, with the option to pursue additional vocations based on their interests.
    - The four-year secondary education phase will enable students to gain progressive expertise in chosen vocations, offering flexibility in the number of courses undertaken.
  5. **Teacher Recruitment and Training**
    - The NEP emphasizes the recruitment of adequate vocational subject teachers for schools and school complexes.
    - Local experts or master instructors will be hired for teaching traditional arts, vocational crafts, entrepreneurship, agriculture, and other subjects requiring specialized local expertise.

The NEP 2020's focus on integrating vocational education with mainstream learning aims to equip students with industry-relevant skills, foster self-reliance, and bridge the gap between academic and practical knowledge. Through initiatives like hands-on training, exposure to multiple vocations, and the establishment of skill labs, the policy envisions a dynamic and inclusive education system tailored to the demands of the modern world.

#### **Highlights of NEP – 2020 in Vocationalisation of Education**

- **Holistic Approach:** Academic and vocational streams, extracurricular and curricular activities, and the arts and sciences are unlikely to remain rigidly separated.
- **Secondary Stage Structure:** A span of four years of multidisciplinary study with a focus on subject-oriented learning will make up the secondary stage. After completing Grade 10, students will have the option to leave and return at a later time to pursue vocational or other courses offered in Grades 11 and 12.

- **Flexibility and Choice:** Students will have more options when it comes to subjects like physical education, arts and crafts, and vocational skills, especially at the secondary level. Students will be able to customize their educational pathways and life goals because to this flexibility.
- **Phased Integration of Vocational Education:** Along with early vocational exposure in middle and secondary school, vocational education will be gradually included into regular education.
- **Accessible Vocational Knowledge:** Key vocational knowledge will be incorporated into vocational education courses, with all school and higher education institutions adopting vocational programs over the next decade.
- **Innovative Practices:** Early vocational education adoption will foster innovation and the creation of successful models and procedures. The National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCIVE) has built methods to disseminate these advances to other institutions.
- **Experimentation with Models:** Higher education institutions will explore and experiment with various models of vocational education and apprenticeships.
- **Industry Partnerships and Incubation Centers:** In order to encourage hands-on learning and entrepreneurship, incubation centers will be set up in higher education institutions in partnership with businesses.
- **National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF):** Further details about the NSQF will be provided for particular fields, occupations, and professions. The transition between general and vocational education streams will be made easier by a credit-based system.

#### **Challenges to Overcome:**

- **Inadequate Teacher Training:** Many teachers, particularly at the higher secondary level, lack the necessary skills to teach vocational courses. There is a pressing need for adequately trained and skilled educators in this field.
- **Fragmented Curriculum:** The curriculum for vocational courses at the school level is disjointed and lacks depth. Currently, students are only given a basic introduction to various vocational fields, which often fails to ignite genuine interest in vocational education. This gap deters students from pursuing vocational courses in the future and needs immediate attention.
- **Perception Issues:** Vocational education often carries a stigma of being "second-class" schooling. Students opting for vocational courses are frequently perceived as less academically capable compared to those pursuing mainstream higher education. This perception fosters an inferiority complex among vocational students, which must be addressed sensitively.
- **Mismatch with Labour Market Needs:** There is a disconnect between the vocational courses offered and the skills demanded by the labor market. Ensuring course relevance and aligning training with industry requirements is essential.
- **Low Enrollment Rates:** Vocational streams suffer from poor enrollment, which highlights the need for greater awareness. Enhanced efforts in publicity, advertising, and career counseling are required to attract more students to vocational education.

## Conclusion

Vocational training emphasizes the development of technical and practical skills tailored for specific jobs or trades. Unlike traditional formal education, which primarily imparts theoretical knowledge, vocational training focuses on hands-on expertise and real-world applications. Exploring diverse vocational training options is crucial for career growth and professional development. The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** has the capacity to include vocational education with regular schooling, hence revolutionizing it in India. All educational establishments, including colleges, universities, and schools, are required by this regulation to include vocational education in their curricula. Consequently, over the next ten years, a large number of institutions will offer Vocational Education and Training (VET), greatly increasing its reach. By mainstreaming vocational education, the NEP 2020 aims to make it accessible to millions of students, equipping them with the skills needed for diverse industries. This integration is expected to catalyze unprecedented growth in vocational education, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and industry requirements, and fostering a skilled and self-reliant workforce.

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