

ANALYSIS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 (INDIA) AND ITS PROVISIONS IN NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION 2023 (INDIA) AT SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

Vocational Education is of paramount importance in a developing country like India owing to the requirement of endowing the workforce with practical skill and technical knowledge thus enabling them to enhance the individual capacity of sustaining themselves as well as contribute to the national development. The National Education Policy 2020 has recommended systematic exposure to vocational education from middle stage of schooling, removal of rigid demarcation between vocational and academic courses, inclusivity of students of all types, training of teachers and teacher educator to impart vocational education, involvement of local artisans and craftsmen for vocational education, enhanced use of digital mode, practical and real-life experiences, internship and apprenticeship, improved structure of assessment etc. in order to improve the status of vocational education in India.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023 (NCFSE 2023) provides a sound foundation for implementation of the recommendations of National Education Policy 2020. The NCFSE 2023 supports the recommendation of starting vocational education from middle stage of schooling by incorporation of vocational education from class 6. The National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) will ensure vocational training of the students. The stress on more practical and real-life experience of National Education Policy 2020 has been supported by NCFSE 2023 through more experiential learning experiences. It also advocates improvement of vocational skills through outside class experiences, internships and apprenticeship. The provision of training of teachers and teacher educators for vocational education has been given in NCFSE 2023. The NCFSE 2023 addresses the assessment need of vocational education which is more complex due to its practical nature. The students from diverse backgrounds and disabilities have been given due consideration in NCFSE 2023 in accordance with National Education Policy 2020. Thus NCFSE 2023 has provided a strong foundation for implementation of the recommendations of National Education Policy 2020, to ensure the better future development of the country.

Keywords: Vocational Education, National Education Policy 2020 (India), National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023 (India), Senior Secondary Level

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education is also known as Vocational Education and Training (VET) as well as Career and Technical Education (CTE) in India through which knowledge and skills are developed in an individual that will facilitate his/her career in jobs of manual or practical nature. As techniques are taught to an individual to make him expert in a technology, therefore, this education is also known as technical education. [1] The vocational education is finding emphasis due to numerous benefits for enhancing human development like- imparting practical skill, preparing for career or industries; preparation for jobs in the contemporary job market which are focusing on technology, healthcare and skilled trades; contributing to economic development of the individual and the nation; enhancing job security; provision of entrepreneurial skills; job satisfaction as well as practical problem solving. [5]. The vocational education has multiple benefits at the national level which comprises of increase in proportion of skilled labor, improved economic condition, reduction of poverty and unemployment problems, enhanced productivity as well as playing a significant role in technology advancement. [2]. According to Draft of National Education Policy (2019), "Vocational education is extremely vital for our country to run efficiently and properly, and thus it is beneficial to increasingly incorporate elements of vocational education into the school curriculum to expose children to its utility and its value as art. Indeed, some exposure

to practical vocational-style training is always fun for young students, and for many students it may offer a glimpse of future professions while for others it would at the very least help teach and reinforce the dignity of all labour.” Considering the importance of vocational education, The NCFSE 2023 suggests development of prevocational capacities in children at the foundational and preparatory stages, development of vocational capacities in the middle stage in schools which includes grades 6,7, & 8 while at secondary stage, the NCFSE stresses on exposure to multi-skill foundation courses to improve the vocational skills and employability. [3] The NCFSE has given weightage to practical implementation to the recommendations of NEP 2020, of which one is integration of vocational education in all the schools. [3]

RECOMMENDATION ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

NEP 2020 in **its fundamental principles** established for guidance of education system as well as individual educational institution has stressed that no strict separation should exist between vocational and academic streams

NEP 2020 has stated in its report in **chapter -3 ‘Curtailling Dropout Rated and Ensuring Universal Access to Education at All Levels’** in sub section 3.1 that although enrollment has improved at elementary level of education but data after grade 5 shows a significant dropout and the situation is highly alarming for secondary and higher secondary level of education. The report states that quality holistic education including vocational education must be provided from preschool level to Grade-12 with universal access and opportunity in order to curb the dropout rates and ensure 100 % Gross Enrolment Ratio from preschool to secondary level by 2030.

In subsection 3.5 of chapter 3, it is stated that National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and State Open Schools will be enabled to facilitate education of those children who are not able to attend a physical school and in addition to academic courses, these schools will have provision of vocational education, adult literacy and life enrichment programs.

NEP 2020 has stated in its report in **chapter -4 ‘Curriculum and Pedagogy in Schools: Learning should be Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable, and Engaging’** states under **‘Restructuring school curriculum and pedagogy in a new 5+3+3+4 design’** in sub section 4.2 that the students may leave the school and re-enter to pursue vocational education or other courses available in Grades 11-12, and also have option to continue this education with more specialized schools.

In chapter 4 under **‘Empower students through flexibility in courses choices’** sub section 4.9 states that secondary level students will have option to choose art and crafts and vocational skills related subjects in additions to other academic subjects but there will be no distinction between vocational or academic streams. Sub section 4.10 stresses on States to search for innovative methods of aiming greater flexibility and exposure to more subjects including vocational, sports, languages, humanities, arts, sciences subjects.

In chapter 4 under **‘Curricular Integration of Essential Subjects, Skills and, Capacities’** sub section 4.23 states that in order to become successful, innovative, productive, adaptable individuals, certain subjects, skills and capacities must be learnt under which in additions to other options, vocational exposure and skills is also required. It further states in sub section 4.26 that experience of vocational crafts must be given in Grades 6-8 with internship provision for students of Grades 6-12 under local vocational experts. Provision of vocational courses through online mode should be made available as well as 10 – day bagless periods to be extended throughout the year for enrichment activities including vocational crafts. Visits to local artists and craftsmen to be arranged for greater exposure.

In chapter 4 under **‘Transforming Assessment for Student Development’** sub section 4.42 states that there will be at least two high quality common aptitude test in addition to specialized subject exams in sciences, humanities, languages, arts, and vocational subjects conducted through National Testing Agency (NTA) for entrance in universities. The students will be able to take test and get admission in programmes which are in accordance with their interest and talents after university assesses student’s individual subject portfolio.

NEP 2020 has stated in its report in **chapter -5 ‘Teachers’** in sub section 5.5 that adequate number of teacher be recruited in a school or schools complex to teach various subjects specially arts, physical education, vocational education, and languages and consideration to be given to sharing of teachers across schools in accordance with policy of State/UT governments.

Further in the chapter-5 under sub section 5.6, it is recommended that the local eminent persons or experts to be hired by schools or school complexes in subjects such as traditional local arts, vocational crafts, entrepreneurship, agriculture etc. to preserve local knowledge and professions and promote them.

In chapter 5 under **‘Professional Standards for Teachers’** sub section 5.20 states that National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) to be developed by NCTE under the ‘General Education Council (GEC) in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, organizations in teacher preparation and development, bodies in vocational education, higher education

institutions, and also teachers at all the levels and of all the regions. The standards will specify the expectations from teachers at all the levels and competencies required for a particular stage.’ The standard will influence performance appraisal and pre-service teacher education programmes. These professional standards will be reviewed and revised after every 10 years starting from 2030.

In chapter 5 under ‘**Approach to Teacher Education**’ sub section 5.25 states that local persons with expertise in Indian knowledge, skills, and local professions can be exposed to short teacher education program which will be available at BITEs, DIETs or at school complexes.

Further under this heading, sub section 5.28 recommends NCFTE 2021 to be formulated by NCTE and NCERT on the principles of NEP 2020 which will also state the requirements of teacher education curricula for vocational education.

NEP 2020 has stated in its report in **chapter -6 ‘Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning for All’** in sub section 6.8 that no discrimination based on gender or socio-economically disadvantaged group will be practiced in access to education including vocational education.

Further under this heading in sub section 6.11, NEP 2020 aims to make provisions for assistive devices, appropriate technology-based tools and language-appropriate teaching-learning materials to facilitate integration of children with disabilities into classrooms.

NEP 2020 has stated in its report in **chapter -7 ‘Efficient Resourcing and Effective Governance through School Complexes/Clusters’** in sub section 7.5 to group or rationalize schools through innovative methods by State/UT governments with objective to have ‘adequate number of counselors/trained social workers and teachers (maybe shared), adequate resources, a sense of community between teachers, students and schools, cooperation and support across schools for education of children with disabilities and better governance of schools’.

Further under this heading in sub section 7.9, NEP 2020 recommends that plan known as School Complex/Cluster Development Plans (SCDPs) be made on the basis of School Development Plans (SDPs) with provision of plans for all the institutions associated with it including vocational education institutions. These SCDPs are to be made by Principals and teachers of school complex by cooperation of SCMC (School Complex Management Committee).

SUGGESTIONS RELATED TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NCFSE 2023 DEVELOPED BASED ON OBJECTIVES OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 envisages a modifies structure in school education with a pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages of 3-19 in place of 10+2 structure.

The National Curriculum Framework guides the development of curricula to be followed in the education institutions. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023 developed on the basis of vision of National Education Policy 2020 in order to enable its implementation has presented a detailed discussion of curriculum in its representation at all the above-mentioned four stages (Foundation Stage-3 to 8 years, Preparatory Stage- 8-11 years, Middle Stage-11-14 years and Secondary Stage-11-14 years).

In the past, Vocational Education has not been given due importance in the school education. Vocational education is not preferably taken up by students, the teachers are not prepared adequately to educate in this course, the assessment procedure is inadequate, the facilities and infrastructure for vocational education are lacking in educational institutions which is another hindrance in acquisition of vocational skills. Moreover, there is no coordination between vocational courses offered in these institutions and actual world of work.

The NCF-SE 2023 based on NEP 2020 has tried to counter all the above-mentioned challenges through various chapters given in its 5 parts

The **introduction** mentions that the NCFSE 2023 is integrative and holistic as it integrates vocational education in all the schools

NCF mentions that 8 volumes will be published to make NCFSE understandable to the teachers and others concerned with education to facilitate its implementation, of which 7 will focus on curricular areas with vocational education being one of them and 8th volume will be on ‘School Culture and Processes’.

In Part-A (Approach) Chapter 1 ‘Aims and Curricular Areas of School Education’ under sub section 1.2.2 ‘Aims of School Education for this NCF’ mentions that vocational education facilitates an individual to become a productive member of the society who not only supports himself financially, but also provides economic opportunities in the society.

Under sub section 1.4.3, 'Curricular Areas' it is mentioned in point no. 6 'Interdisciplinary Areas' that vocational education is important due to its specific aims of improvement of health and well-being as well as facilitating economic participation. While point no. 8 'Vocational Education' stresses on the capacity of making one-self supportive and economic participation as well as development of positive attitude towards physical work and becoming sensitive to dignity of labor. It also highlights that NEP 2020 advocates giving vocational exposure and development of vocational skills right from early stages to the level of higher education.

In Part-A (Approach) Chapter 2 'School Stages - Logic and Design' Under sub Section 2.4.4 'Secondary Stage' it is stated that the secondary stage consists of 4 years of multidisciplinary study and at this stage vocational education will be an important part of the curriculum in addition to other subjects.

Sub section 2.4.4.2 'Design of Grades 11 and 12' vocational education is suggested to prepare students for the world of work in the chosen vocation as well as vocational education must be aligned to the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF). Sub section 2.4.4.3 'Implications for Secondary Schools' the secondary schools are to offer at least one curricular area from each of the three given categories in which the last one is concerned with Arts or Sports or Vocational Education indicating the importance of this course.

In Part-A (Approach) Chapter 3 'Approach to Learning Standards, Content, Pedagogy, Assessment across Stages' under sub section 3.2.2 'Learning Environment, Learning Material' it mentions to provide for space and materials for vocational education in addition to other facilities. In 3.4.7.2 'Changes in Board Examinations' it is mentioned that vocational education is to be assessed through high-quality tests for certifications at Grade 10 and Grade 12 with different pattern considering significant practical component in this course.

In Part-B (School Subjects/Areas) Chapter 4 'Science Education' under point 4.6.1.1 'Recommended Pedagogical Approaches and Settings' project approach is considered suitable for integrating vocational course with science thus facilitating deeper understanding as well as integration of concepts of different courses. It also permits for the learning to continue beyond the classroom.

In Part-B (School Subjects/Areas) Chapter 8 'Physical Education', Section 8.4 dealing with 'Practical Challenges at the Current Time' the concern for availability of teachers in certain subjects including vocational education has been considered a challenge due to lack of good education institutions for education and training of teachers and teacher educator.

In Part-B (School Subjects/Areas) Chapter 9 is concerned with 'Vocational Education', and the 'Aims' under section 9.1 states that vocational education allows an individual student to experience different kind of works before they decide which one is most suitable and satisfying for them in addition to preparing them for home-based work. The aims, to be achieved by all students are- 'developing an understanding and basic capacities for different forms of work', 'Preparation for specific vocations', 'Respect for dignity of labour and all vocations', 'Developing values and dispositions related to work'.

Sub section 9.2.3 stresses exposure of students to 'Multi-Skill foundation courses' to enhance vocational skills and interest. 'Three forms of work' has been identified at secondary stage- 'Engaging with Life and Nature', 'Engaging with Machines and Materials' & 'Engaging with Human Beings'. Section 9.5 stresses on Mastery of subject by the time of completion of secondary stage. This section also mentions the competency developed at secondary stage, i.e., 'Perform procedures competently through required tools/equipment'.

Pedagogy of vocational education mentioned in section 9.7 included 'real life exposure in the classroom', 'exposure visits and follow up', 'workshop setups in schools', 'internships' and 'apprenticeship'.

CONCLUSION

The NCFSE 2023 has dedicated entire chapter 9 of Part-B: School Subjects/Areas to vocational education considering its importance in the individual and national development. This will provide a sound base for the incorporation of vocational education in the school curriculum as an integral component. The recommendation of NEP-2020 for proper assessment of vocational education in addition to other subjects resulted in provision by NCFSE 2023 of high-quality assessment tools for certification at Grade 10 & Grade 12 in vocational education. The NCFSE 2023 has incorporated the recommendation of NEP 2020 to start vocational education from class 6 (start of Middle Stage). Effort has been made to make content of curriculum pertaining to vocational education relevant, aligned to the expectations of NSQF as well as capable of meeting the students' aspirations, so that it is not taken up as a last resort by the students. NCFSE 2023 also stresses on a pedagogy with experiential learning, group work, inquiry, amalgamation of theory and practice, inclusivity

and as much related to real life as possible. The suggestion of NEP 2020 for internship and apprenticeship is also incorporated in NCFSE 2023. The recommendation of NEP 2020 to involve local artisans and craftsmen as Master Instructors have been met in NCFSE 2023 to counteract the problem of shortage of teachers for vocational education. The training of teachers and teacher educators for vocational education suggested in NEP 2020 find a place in NCFSE 2023. The recommendation of NEP 2020 to utilize the digital mode for vocational education is reflected in NCFSE 2023. The suggestion of NEP 2020 to stress on providing inclusivity to all types of students also finds a place in NCFSE 2023.

The NCFSE 2023 based on NEP 2020 will provide a firm and sound ground for modification and upgradation of education system in India, thus meeting its target of “Leading towards transforming the future of India”.

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