



ISHITA BHATTACHARJEE M.Ed. Student, School of Education, Pondicherry University, Puducherry	VOCATIONALISATION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW
	ABSTRACT Indian Education system has gone through a series of development since its colonial period. It has constantly oscillated between recommendations and proposals of certain commissions and committees, always trying to be responsive to the needs of the contemporary society. Because our society and its subsystems are so dynamic, we had been constantly been differing in our needs from time to time. This paper deals in detail the changes our country went through in the vocational education at the secondary stage from pre-colonial to colonial to post-colonial India. It would also be concluding on where are we at in the contemporary era in the field of vocational education and skill development.

Introduction

The term "Vocation" derived from Latin vocātiō, meaning "a call, summons", etymologically, means an occupation to which an individual has been drawn or for which he has been trained. The incorporation of the term vocation in education system regenerates a disorientation amid the two very discrete and diverse concepts "vocational education" and "vocationalisation of education". While vocational education limits itself to a vocation specific separate stream, vocationalisation of education makes allusion to the idea of providing generic vocational courses which are not specific to the occupation. Since, evolution of the education system of the country, we have been constantly moving back and forth between these two approaches in secondary education system.

The Historical Perspective

Education, in the pre-colonial India, was not strongly developed. The country was engaged in territorial disputes. Emergence of the period of renaissance period and other developments of the 14th, 15th and 16th century in Europe led to the exploration of new lands and movement of people. This was the time when Asia and later, India witnessed the arrival of missionaries. Sooner, British occupied a larger part of India and felt the need to communicate to its masses and its appointed officials. This compelled the British Government to make English as compulsory criteria. Thus, education in Colonial India emerged as a need to meet the demands of an alien administration (CRRID, 1985). This move of the British Government can be conceived as a substantial step towards providing a vocational touch to our education system. Later,

Woods despatch of 1854 also recognised the necessity of equipping the people with an education of "such a character as may be practically useful to the people of India in their different spheres of life." In 1929, it was observed by Hartog Committee that secondary education commission was facing a great waste of efforts due to huge failure in Matriculation examination. The committee attributed the failure to the laxness of promotions from one class to other in the earlier stages and gigantic focus on university education at large. In order to revamp the prevailing defect in secondary education, the committee recommended the introduction of diversified courses in the middle schools. Diversification was done in a fashion that it meets the need of majority of students. "It proposed the diversion of more students towards industrial or commerce career at the end of the middle stage" (Aggarwal, 1993). However, the recommendations of the committee could not be achieved very efficiently due to economic disparities. The desired educational standard could not be upheld. The country felt the absence of satisfactory and proper vocational education. Consequently, two experts A. Abbott and S.H. Woodwere invited by the government to devise a curriculum for vocational education. For the same they toured Punjab, Delhi, UP and a report was submitted by them which became the base for sergeant report (1944).

The Sergeant report recommended for need based vocational education. It stressed that all the vocational education. It stressed that all the vocational areas would be equally considered while planning. A complete hierarchy of vocational institutions parallel with the hierarchy of institutions imparting general education. Along the lines of its recommendations, vocational education was to be made

at par with literary and science education and it was to be treated complementary to the other types of education. It was also proposed the establishment of vocational education advisor's council. Moreover, it came up with the idea of establishing separate schools for general education and vocational education. It is further added that the vocational schools needed to be of two types: Junior vocational schools, 3 year course after class VIII and senior vocational schools, 2 year after class XI. The recommendation of Abott and Wood led to the emergence of a new type of technical institution called Polytechnic (Bhatti, 2015). The provinces also started technical, commercial or Agricultural high schools conducting non literary courses.

In 1937, the Indian education system was equipped with another committee. The Zakir Hussain Committee with Zakir Hussain as its chairman. It concentrated on Gandhian philosophy of Basic Education. Vocationalisation of education was strongly supported by Gandhi 'Every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as it done today but scientifically. This is to say, the child should learn the why and wherefore of every process' (Ali, 1999). Zakir Hussain Committee proposed for a craft centered curriculum. It accentuated that "the process of education should centre around some form of manual productive work."

Considering the environment of the child, it adopted resolutions based on Gandhi's philosophy of basic education (Ghosh, 2000). It recommended the physical environment, the social environment and craftwork as the foci for the curriculum. It also sensed the need for qualified teachers for successful implementation of the policy. The Sergeant Report also known by the C.A.B.E was submitted to prepare a comprehensive scheme for educational reform in India. As a result of its suggestions and recommendations, committee of polytechnic school and AITEC were established in Delhi.

Vocationalisation after Independence

The reach and coverage of education continued to evolve, diversify and extend even after independence. We were at the era of "THE DIVIDE, INDIA AND BHARAT". It was a divide between the educated and the illiterate, the rural and the urban, the successful and the unemployed, the organised factory worker and the landless labourers.

It was analysed that the problem of unemployment could be solved through large national development programs. But for the programs to give relatively more

returns, we needed more skilled labourers. In such a context, an education system was required which would build their capacity to act. The planners, administrators, intellectuals, educators etc. then came up to the question of whether to provide vocational education or to vocationalise our education system. Along these lines, the educational reconstruction continued inevitably. In March 1952, C.A.B.E stated "A system of education cannot be considered basic education in the real sense unless it provides an integrated course, including both the junior and secondary stages and places adequate emphasis on craft work in both its educational and productive aspects. In 1952-53, the secondary education commission was appointed under the chairmanship of Mudaliar to review on the existing condition of secondary education of the country and made necessary recommendation. It observed that "Secondary Education is a complete unit by itself and not merely a preparatory stage, that at the end of this period, the student should be in a position, if he wishes, to enter on the responsibilities of life and take up some useful vocations". It advocated the need for diversification of courses. For diversification of courses, multipurpose schools were to be established as agricultural schools, technical schools, commercial schools etc. Horticulture and animal husbandry was also to be provided as allied subjects in agricultural education. Technical schools were given prime importance in the vocationalisation of secondary education. A close cooperational relationship was seen as a very essential step towards better functioning of the technical schools. Proper apprenticeship was to be provided along these lines. As a consequence of these recommendations, the secondary education in various states began to take a new shape. Not much of the recommendation could be accomplished because of insufficient financial support. Kothari Commission, headed by D.S. Kothari came into existence in 1964 and submitted its report in 1966. It suggested to relate education to work and recommended vocational education for both lower and higher secondary stage (Aggrawal, 1993). It suggested the introduction of work experience (which includes manual work, production experience etc.) and social service as integral parts of general education. It ascertained the role of vocationalisation of secondary education in facilitating the transition of youth from the world of school to the world of work and life. It also recommended that the vocationalisation should conform broadly to the

requirements of the developing economy and work opportunities. The ideas of SUPW and WORK EXPERIENCE evolved during the commission. It mentioned “we visualise the future trend of school education to be towards a fruitful mingling of general and vocational education, containing some elements of pre-vocational and technical education., in its turn, having all elements of general education. In the kind of society in which we will be living increasingly in the coming years a complete separation between the two will be not only undesirable but impossible”. Although implementation of SUPW and work experience was a failure. The shortcomings in the implementation of the recommendations of Kothari commission was reviewed by the NPE 1986 and consequently NPE 1986 came up with new policies and initiatives. The NPE 1986 adopted by the parliament in 1986, was reviewed by the Ramamurti Committee. A committee was further set up at the request of CABE under the chairmanship of Janardhana Reddy to consider the modifications in NPE as stressed by the Ramamurti Committee. This Committee submitted its report in January 1992 and came to be known as POA (1992). POA stressed on systematically planned, well organised and rigorously implemented programmes of vocational education. The vision, it pointed out for vocationalisation of secondary education, was development of healthy attitude towards work, enhancement of individual employability, reduction of mismatch between the demand and supply of skilled manpower and to provide an alternative for those intending to pursue higher education without particular interest or purpose. It recommended to provide generic vocational courses (not common to specific occupation) to the pupils of higher secondary education. In addition, vocation specific courses were also to be introduced after secondary stage. Health related vocational courses were also to be implemented.

In addition to these, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for vocationalisation of secondary education was launched in the year 1988. The scheme was envisaged to select vocational courses on the basis of manpower needs. This scheme’s focus was on the lines of the recommendation of the NPE 1986. It provided broader guidelines for management, structure, curriculum design, infrastructure development, vocational surveys, instructional material, training school, industry linkage, examination and certification, modification of recruitment rules. Under the scheme 9619 schools with 21000 sections were

established. 150 vocational courses were being offered. CABE report on Universalisation of Secondary Education, 2005 also looked into the issues in vocationalisation of secondary education. It pointed that “vocational education need not be the dead end. Well performing students in the track would be proceeding to higher education”.

The Govt. of India, in 2009, came up with another ambitious plan of NSDP to skill 12-15 million each year. Consequently, the coordination committee and the national skill development corporation are set up.

National Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Policy, 2015 have contemplated that by 2022, skill development programmes would be integrated with 25% of the schools across the country. It works through National Skill Development Corporation, National Skill Development Agency and the Directorate of Training.

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PSSCIVE is a constituent unit of NCERT, working for the quality improvement of the vocational education in schools. It was established in 1973 to review the status of vocational education in the country and collaborate with other national and state organisations like CBSE, NIOS, State Boards of Education, NUEPA etc. for the betterment of the vocational education at the school level.

Vocationalisation in National Five Year Plans

In the 8th five year plan, it was targeted to divert 10% of higher secondary schools by 1995 and 25% by 2000. Subsequently, in the 9th five year plan, the focus shifted to vocationalisation and employment oriented courses, expansion and diversification of the open learning system. The major thrust area in the 10th 5 year plan was vocational education and training. It laid special attention on vocational education in order to ensure the match between the demand and supply of skills. 650 crores were allocated vocational education which included vocationalisation at all stages of education. A separate working group on vocational education was constituted in 2000 for the 10th year plan. The working group recommended the AICTE’s vocational education board to provide technical support to the school system and to establish linkage with other technical institutions.

The Steering Committee on secondary, higher and technical education recommended that for better networking, linkages, focussed targeting and optimum utilisation of resources; vocational education at secondary

school level, Polytechnic education and ITI should come under 1 department. It emphasised the need for strong networking of vocational schools with professional institutes and simultaneously focussed on the convergence of schemes like SSA, adult education, vocational education programmes at schools, ITIs, polytechnic etc. It also laid special attention towards appropriate training of vocational education teachers. 350 crores outlay was provided for centrally sponsored schemes of vocationalisation of secondary education. Despite its strong recommendations, the implementations were not done at high standards in the sector of vocational education as envisaged. At the national level, establishment of NVEQF (National Vocational Education Qualification Framework) was also proposed. In the 11th 5 year plan, an interministerial group had been set up by CABE for developing guidelines for the framework. In the 12th five year plan, it is recommended to include pre-vocational courses as an alternative to work education in the secondary stages. Students opting for pre-vocational courses to be encouraged for advanced vocational subjects at higher secondary. Proper training of teachers on continuous basis with latest skills and pedagogy techniques in the vocational education. It also pointed out the significance of integrating and closely aligning the vocational curriculum with the academic curriculum. It stressed on the involvement of modules on various generic and specific vocational skills for which industry should be involved. A systematic monitoring of the scheme was also focussed upon.

‘The revised scheme of vocationalisation of secondary education should be revisited based on the pilots that have been undertaken to test and to ensure that it is aligned with the new qualifications framework and industry led sector skill councils, so that vocational education doesnot become a dead end for students’ (Govt. of India, 12th five year plan, 2012).

National Policy of Education 2016

It has been again recapitulated that the incapability of the school education system to prepare a student for employment even after 12 years of schooling remains one of the major concerns of the school education system. It points out that the ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship will be taking up the major responsibility of vocational and skill education and vocation to skill education.

Where Are We At

We are in the era of skill development. This decade has witnessed the paradigm shift from vocationalisation to skill development. The specific objectives of the skill development are to enhance the employability of youth through demand driven competency based, modular vocational courses; to maintain their competitiveness through provisions of multi-entry multi-exit learning opportunities and vertical mobility/ interchangeability in qualifications; to fill the gap between educated and employable; and to reduce the dropout rate at the secondary level and decrease the pressure on academic higher education (Annual Report, MHRD, 2013-14).

NSDC has come greatly into the picture of skill development. Of the 500 million targeted to be skilled under the National Skill Development Policy 2009, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) was mandated to skill 150 million, while the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGET), under the Ministry of Labour and Employment was to skill 100 million. Currently, over 70 skill development schemes across various sectors are being implemented by over 20 Central Ministries/Departments. According to the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), there are five categories of institutions which impart vocational training in the country. These are (i) Government, (ii) Local body, (iii) Private aided, (iv) Private unaided, and (v) not known. Schemes providing vocational training in India are: The Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS), Apprenticeship Training Scheme (ATS), Crafts Instructors’ Training Scheme, Advanced Vocational Training Scheme, Foreman Training Scheme, Staff Training and Research Programme, Instructional Media Programme, Women’s Training Programme, Hi-Tech Training Programme. Other Government and private bodies providing vocational training in India are Khadi and village industries programme, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institutes (MSME-DIs), Tool Rooms and Technical Development Centers (Development Commissioner), National Small Industries Corporation’s (NSIC) offices, Incubators and Training cum Incubation Centers (TICs) set up in Public Private Partnership Mode. National level Entrepreneurship Development Institutes like National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (NIMSME) and Indian

Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati (under MoMSME), and the Entrepreneurship Development Centers (EDCs); National Manufacturing Competitive Council (NMCC, CAPART (Council for Advancement of Rural Technology), SRL, Ranchi (Society for Rural Industrialization), Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. We are also with the 'NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT MISSION' that has shifted the paradigm to skill development and also brought a lot of changes in the skill development initiatives. Twelfth plan emphasises on the "PPP" (Public Private Partnership) where both public and private enterprises collaborate in numerous terms to provide quality vocational training and skill development programmes. The "National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector" (NCEUS) has also been set up as an advisory body for the informal sector to bring about improvement in the productivity of these enterprises and for generation of large scale employment opportunities on a sustainable basis, particularly in rural areas.

Conclusion

Vocationalisation of secondary education has undergone through enormous changes from time to time. Different committees and commissions were appointed to look into the system and make necessary recommendation for its better functioning. As the country witnessed diverse circumstances, the secondary education of the country continued to evolve and its vocational system. With the emergence of knowledge economy, the vocational approach to secondary education shifted to skill development approach.

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