

Background Note

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1. INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy 2020 proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of education, including the educational structure, regulations and governance, to create a new system which is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century students. According to the policy, by 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education, for which a clear action plan with targets and timelines are to be developed. The policy aims to overcome the social status hierarchy associated with vocational education and integration of vocational education into mainstream education in all educational institutions in a phased manner. Beginning with vocational exposure at early ages in middle and secondary school, quality vocational education will be integrated smoothly into school and higher education. Every child will learn at least one vocation and is exposed to several more. This would lead to emphasizing the dignity of labour and importance of various vocations involving Indian arts and artisanship. By 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education, for which a clear action plan.

Vocational education will be integrated in the educational offerings of all secondary schools in a phased manner over the next decade. The development of vocational capacities will go hand-in-hand with the development of 'academic' or other capacities. To achieve this objective, secondary schools will have to collaborate with Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), Polytechnics, Local Industry, etc. Skill labs will also be set up and created in the schools in a Hub and Spoke model, which will allow other schools to use the facility. Higher education institutions will offer vocational education either on their own or in partnership with industry and other institutions.

The Ministry of Education is organizing *ShikshakParva* 2021-22 from 5th to 17th September, 2021 on the theme “Quality and Sustainable Schools-Learnings from Schools in India”. During the Shiksha Parva, ten (10) webinars will be held on various sub- themes. One of the sub-themes is “Re-imagining the Vocational Education and Skill Building”.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

- No hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc. in order to eliminate harmful hierarchies among, and silos between different areas of learning. (NEP 2020: Principles)

- A concerted national effort will be made to ensure universal access and afford opportunity to all children of the country to obtain quality holistic education—including vocational education - from pre-school to Grade 12. (NEP Para 3.1)
- The Secondary Stage will comprise of four years of multidisciplinary study, building on the subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style of the middle stage, but with greater depth, attention to life aspirations, flexibility and student choice of subjects. In particular, students would continue to have the option of exiting after Grade 10 and re-entering in the next phase to pursue vocational or any other courses available in Grades 11- 12, including at a more specialized school, if so desired. (NEP Para 4.2)
- Students will be given increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study, particularly in secondary school - including subjects in physical education, the arts and crafts, and vocational skills – so that they can design their own paths of study and life plans. (NEP Para 4.9)
- Integration of vocational education programmes into mainstream education in a phased manner, including beginning with vocational exposure at early ages in middle and secondary school. (NEP Para 16.4)
- ‘Lok Vidya’, i.e., important vocational knowledge developed in India, will be made accessible to students through integration into vocational education courses. (NEP Para 16.5)
- Vocational education will be integrated into all school and higher education institutions in a phased manner over the next decade. Focus areas for vocational education will be chosen based on skills gap analysis and mapping of local opportunities. Ministry of Human Resource Development (renamed as Ministry of Education) 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. (NEP Para 16.6)
- Individual institutions that are early adopters must innovate to find models and practices that work and then share these with other institutions through mechanisms set up by NCIVE, so as to help extend the reach of vocational education. Different models of vocational education, and apprenticeships, will also be experimented by higher education institutions. Incubation centres will be set up in higher education institutions in partnership with industries. (NEP Para 16.7)
- The National Skills Qualifications Framework will be detailed further for each discipline vocation and profession. Further, Indian standards will be aligned with the International Standard Classification of Occupations maintained by the International Labour Organization. This Framework will provide the basis for recognition of prior learning. Through this, dropouts from the formal system will be reintegrated by aligning their practical experience with the relevant level of the Framework. The credit-based Framework will also facilitate mobility across ‘general’ and vocational education. (NEP Para 16.8)

3. WAY FORWARD

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 heralds the potentially explosive growth of vocational education in the country since it requires all educational institutions to integrate vocational education into their offerings. This will bring in a very large number of schools, colleges and universities into the fold of potential Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers during the coming decade and making VET available to millions of students.

The various challenges to VET and action to be taken to address the challenges include the following:

Challenges	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overcoming social status hierarchy associated with vocational education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organisation of awareness programmes to change the general perception and attitude towards vocational education. ➤ Vocational exposure to children from Grade VI onwards in all secondary and higher secondary schools. ➤ Information, education and communication (IEC) and media campaigns. ➤ Preparation and distribution of brochures/leaflets/pamphlets and video shows on vocational education and courses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Integrating vocational education with general education, with focus on social inclusion, gender equality and inclusive education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction of skill-based activities from pre-school to Grade XII. ➤ Reforming curricula through enhanced content of vocational knowledge and skills, better course alignment with skill standards and interdisciplinary content connections. ➤ Developing workplace-related skills and attitudes through internships and on-the-job training. ➤ Introduction of Vocational Interest Inventory in Grade VIII and Skill Based Aptitude Test (SBAT) in Grade X for guidance to the students in making informed career choice. ➤ Ensuring that qualifications are relevant to perceived social and economic needs. ➤ National Occupation Standards (NOSs) to be defined by agreed learning outcomes and applied consistently across all institutions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focus on good practices and innovations by teachers in teaching-learning. ➤ Ensuring private sector participation and funding in VET.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introducing <i>LokVidya</i> (indigenous knowledge and skills) in schools through vocational education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identifying local vocational crafts for organising internships for students on indigenous practices. ➤ Identifying local experts and conducting internship trainings for students. ➤ Community and industry partnerships for vocational exposure through informal internship programme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Facilitating horizontal mobility of vocational students in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collaborating with Industrial Training Institutes, polytechnics, local businesses, industries, hospitals, agriculture farms, local artisans and NGOs through Hub and Spoke Model for imparting skills training.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Integrating new age skills, 21st century skills and entrepreneurship education in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Integrating employability skills at all stages of school education. ➤ Integrating new technologies in VET for preparing students for Industry 4.0. ➤ Introducing vocational courses on new and emerging skill demands of the industry, such as Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and Internet of Things (IoT) will be introduced and enterprise education will be promoted from Grade 6 onwards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promoting online and open vocational education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introducing new learning methods and digital tools, like Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), Flipped learning and Virtual learning methods will be used for training teachers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Developing and implementing a holistic assessment and evaluation system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct interest assessment and aptitude test to measure special abilities or readiness for learning in various vocational areas. ➤ Measuring the achievement of learning outcomes through various tools and methods, such as checklist, group work, peer assessment, worksheets, presentations, student portfolio, etc., for 360-degree assessment and evaluation of students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fostering vertical mobility of vocational students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The courses under National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) or National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) shall provide for vertical mobility to the students with vocational subjects at school level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring professional training for preparation of quality vocational teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Developing capacity of vocational teachers in use of innovative pedagogical approaches to teaching and training. ➤ Pre-service training and short-term training courses for preparing Vocational Teachers/Trainers through online and offline mode to be offered through States Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT) and District Institutes of Educational Training (DIETs) ➤ External trainers/ experts in various vocations to be invited to train teachers at Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs), Block Resource Centres (BRCs) & DIETs. ➤ Ensuring that Vocational Training providers meet quality standards across Institutions based on common norms. ➤ Fostering innovation in training of teachers through partnerships between the VET institutions and industry or research institutions.

4. CONCLUSION

The National Education Policy 2020 has given due importance to vocational education, and capacity development of teachers to boost the employability skills and vocational skills of the learners at all levels. Quality of VET is to be enhanced by identifying, designing and development of vocational courses that meet the common norms and skills standards identified at the national level. Accreditation of vocational courses and registration of providers would also enhance the quality and sustainability of the VET programmes and it should include the process of selection and recruitment of teachers, the selection of students, the course delivery, assessment and awarding qualifications to students. The administration and management of the VET system as a whole and provision of student support services would require a strong system of capacity development of the stakeholders at all levels i.e. National, State, District and Institutional levels. Best practices in vocational education and training with focus on specific criteria which can be replicated in different institutions in the relevant areas need to be identified and shared at various levels to promote effectiveness in pedagogical and other aspects of implementation of VET.