# Youth Empowerment through Skill-Based Education Under NEP 2020: A Text-Based Analysis

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**Abstract- Upon completion of formal education more than often students aspire to enter into the productive workforce of the country and start becoming income earners. Formal education is not merely an exchange of information from trainers or instructors to the learners, rather it should provision for an all-round development of learners to make them future-ready. Concept of Holistic Development also highlights the significance of the skill development of the learners so as to make them more competent in the practical application of the concepts learned during formal education. It focuses mainly on imparting practical skills that can be applied on occupational level by the students.**

**The National Education Policy 2020 gives a new hope to the aspirations of making our youth self-dependent by the virtue of Skill Development, which would lead India on the way of becoming "Atmanirbhar". The concept of the Holistic Development of Students through Vocational courses to eventually impart them with essential life-skills is at the core of the National Education Policy 2020.**

**Keywords: Workforce, Holistic Development, Skilling, Atmanirbhar, Vocational Education.**

## INTRODUCTION

Education in India is a topic which is given attention in discussions at home, policy making in administration, and expenditure criteria in state and union budget In the year 2020 India also saw a silver lining in the face of a new and updated National Education Policy 2020. Experts and academicians from Vice- Chancellors of Universities to the people in industries saw it as a Game-Changer for Indian Education. Recommendations of National Education Policy 2020 mainly focused on the problems at hand like unemployment, extinction of regional local languages, out of date educational structures and regimes followed in India, rigidity of the Indian Education system to name a few

This study is mainly focused on the concept of "Vocational Education and its probable contributions towards Youth Empowerment". In this regard it is articulate enough to highlight that New National Education Policy 2020 is not an introduction to the concept and curriculum of the "Vocational Education" in India, rather it is more appropriate to term it as a revamped presentation of it. The NEP 2020 document itself prescribes, "Mainstreaming of the Vocational Education in India" as its plan of action. The two main reasons that failed the vocational education in India are identified to be Mismanaged organization and implementation of the vocational education curriculum and second is the social stigma attached to the Vocational Education Courses in India.

Academician and scholar Phillip foster, gave the concept of the "Vocational School Fallacy" which explains that those who are trained in the vocational skills opt out of the available Blue-Collar jobs for pursuing higher education so that they can gain access to the White-Collar jobs. Similar orientations can be observed among the Indian students, as rather than getting engaged in as workforce of the economy Indian students prefer to study for extended intervals so that they become eligible according to the Job-specifications of the big or multinational companies. This is eventually resulting in alarming rates of unemployment followed by unutilized Indian Demographic Dividend.

In India education is managed at all the three levels of administration but for vocational Education following are the responsible agencies that manage and implement the vocational education.

- Ministry of Human Resource Development
- Ministry of Labour

- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
- National Skill Development Council

It is also noteworthy at this point that a total of 3,000 crores of the total Union Budget of 2020-21 is allocated towards the "Skill Development" endeavor relative to the 1,000 Crores allocation under the Union Budget of 2015-16. Although the allocation has increased reflecting the increased orientation towards skill development among the Indian Regime but the sufficiency of these funds considering the Demographic Dividend of India is still questionable. This study is an effort to analyze the various aspects that are provisioned under the new National Education Policy 2020 which aid the organization and implementation of the Vocational Education Curriculum among Indian students.

## OBJECTIVES

- Highlight the need of "Skill Development" achievable through vocational education.
- Pointing and listing the efforts made by NEP2020 towards establishing a framework for successful administration of vocational education in India.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Pathak (2020) attempted to assess the National education Policy with respect to Vocational Education along with contrasting the new NEP (2020) with the previous education policy on the aspect of the Vocational Education. This would be significant for tracing the path of the advancement that the Indian education system has so far achieved, and the shortcoming that would require diligence to overcome Kumar, Prakash and Singh (2020) started by highlighting the 34 years gap in the introduction and implementation of the New National Education Policy 2020 and updating as per the environment dynamics. It also discussed the comprehensive framework for Vocational and Technical education and most importantly the five founding pillars of the NEP 2020. Dixit (2020) defined the Vocational education prescribed by the NEP 2020, as following the roadmap of the "Nai Talim" conceptualized by Mahatma Gandhi in 1937. Concepts and the potential challenges in the efficient implementation of the concept of the Vocational Education from primary to Higher education is discussed.

Tholath, Ramasubramaniam, and Xavier (2021) started with socio-economic implications of the policies adopted by the political system of India. It describes NEP 2020, as GOI's vision of inclusive development and accessible education by providing learning opportunities which would be relatively flexible. An attempt is made to compare NEP 2020 with UNESCO's Educational Policy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF NEP 2020

New National Education Policy 2020 is an elaborate document on updates of the existing flawed concepts, though termed as a "Game-changer for the Indian Education System" is no more than a retrospection of the existing concepts of the Indian Education System. Vocational Education specifically was not a new concept introduced by NEP 2020 rather it was a revamping of it based on the various data and findings of the programs like "Skill India" and "PMKVY". Following are some policy recommendations related to the "Vocational Education in India" given by the new National Education Policy 2020.

1. The new National Education Policy 2020 is based on five foundational pillars, namely, access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability. Along with these some basic principles are recommended like flexibility in Indian Education System, Emphasis on conceptual clarity rather than rote learning, Multi-disciplinary and Holistic Education, Formative assessment pattern of evaluation.
2. The new Education Policy 2020 is drawn parallel to the UNESCO's education policy, and it also aligns with the 4th Sustainable Development Goal that is "Quality Education" under Education 2030 Agenda, UNESCO (2017) which defines that education must be Inclusive, Equitable, Effective and relevant.
3. NEP 2020gives the most crucial policy recommendation for Vocational Education as – integration of the Vocational Educational regime with all the other conventional forms of education administered in India, right from the Primary level.
   It would serve both the purposes of mainstreaming the Vocational Education and

working against the social stigma attached to the Vocational Training programs. An urgent need of change in perception is required for the Vocational education and skilling programs to become successful.

4. NEP 2020 also talks about discarding the theoretical teaching and emphasizing more on he practical aspect of the Vocational Training curriculums, through Laboratory Training, Apprenticeships, Internships etc.

5. For the purpose of Integration of the vocational training programs with conventional educational programs, creation of a national committee is suggested.

    5.1. The establishment of such National Council would be done under the aegis of Ministry of Human Resource Development in collaboration with Industries.

    5.2. The main tasks of such committee would be to perform "Skill Gap Analysis" and "Mapping of the Local Opportunities" so that integration of Vocational education can be made in an efficient manner, as the data of the previous programs also highlighted the main lags to be very less enrollment and low rates of employment post formal training in vocational courses.

    5.3. The committee would be means to finding and removing the causes of demotivation and negative inclination towards the vocational education courses in Indian Education System.

6. Creation of "Incubation Centers" in every Higher Education Institute in India is recommended. The said Incubation Center would be established in collaboration with the industries, so that the skilled learners and learners with entrepreneurial inclinations could be given chances to enter in Country's productive workforce

7. More emphasis to be given on technical education has been prescribed by the NEP 2020, along with the traditional educational programs. For this rigid demarcation of various educational courses and subject streams is relaxed and multi-disciplinary as well as inter-disciplinary education is encouraged.

8. New paradigm in the face of "Internet based, e-Learning" is identified. This can be perceived as an "Adaptive Digital Transformation".

9. It emphasizes on the re-integration of drop-outs or bringing them back in the mainstream education through vocational or skill-based trainings under the Credit Based National Skill Qualification Framework (2013). The suggested CBNSQ framework would be useful for the assessment of prior learning of the drop-out learners, so that they can be functionally assigned back the level from where their training should start.

10. NEP 2020 aims to raise GER (Gross Enrollment Ratio) to 50% to make India prepared for the 21$^{st}$ century requirement of the workforce of an economy that is developing at a double-digit growth rate.

11. Some common clusters can be observed in the word clouds of both the NEP 2020 of India and UNESCO's education Policy like "Objectives, Process, Components, Sectors and Stakeholders".

12. In case of the NEP 2020 it is worth observing that the word "National" is given more weight to reflect an idea of India being a single cohesive entity even though there are many separation barriers present.

13. The terms development and employment are given a parallel weightage in NEP 2020 document as UNESCO's education policy document. The word or idea of sustainability in educational perspective is looked over and not given much heed in the new National Education Policy 2020 document released by Indian Authorities.

14. There is a presence of two unique ideas which are given significant weight that are; Regulators and Concerns.

    14.1. Governing Bodies and Accreditation are the main factors that comprise the cluster of Regulators. The cluster is important in the sense that the quality of education provided by the educational institutes are governed by the regulatory bodies and their recommendations & Regulations. Accreditation is also awarded on the basis of fulfilling the prescribed criteria by the educational institutions and maintenance of the quality of education.

    14.2. The cluster "Concern" includes terms like Linguistic, Metalinguistic, Disabilities, Dropout, Inclusive, Disadvantaged etc. This cluster becomes significant as it has to be unique in context to each nation. This cluster

is significant for India as well because owing to the vast population that it houses and the level of diversification present in terms of language, religion, inclinations, traditions etc. it becomes a very difficult task to provide an uniform opportunity to education to all its citizens, which is also the idea of the "Inclusive Education" and "Holistic Education" discussed elaborately in the NEP 2020 document.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

1. A study conducted in 2019 by NIOS (National Institute of Open Schooling), India whose objective was to make a probe about the reach of the Vocational Education among Indian learners, found out that only 2% of the Total Indian Population lying in the Age group of 15 to 29 year has received any form of Formal Vocational Education.
   The Non-Formal vocational training was received by a mere total of 8% of population.

2. A similar study was conducted under the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017) found that less than 5% of Indian Workforce lying between the age of 19 to 24 received some kind of Formal Vocational Training.
   Such data is significant of no real progress is being made in the field of the Vocational Education.

3. Vocational Education is not mainstream in Indian scenario and is generally opted by those who are forced to start work as early as possible so, in order to become employable, Vocational training is opted for. This implies that Vocational Training is not very successful in India.

4. Two major reasons can be observed for the failure of the Vocational Education in India, first being the mismanaged organization and implementation of the Vocational Training curriculum and second is the social stigma attached to the concept of Vocational education.
   a. Mismanagement in the organization and implementation
      Vocational Training curriculum includes only the theoretical aspects of the concepts and not much heed is given to the practical

aspect of the same, which is not favorable as the Vocational courses include skills that has to be practically implemented and thus must be learnt through practical training.
This situation is faced majorly because there is an alarming insufficiency of the competent training and teaching staff available for effective administration of such curriculum along with lack of proper infrastructure, for example training labs.

   b. Social Stigma- 2nd class citizens
      Those enrolled in the vocational training courses are generally looked down upon as a perception has been created in our minds that those who are not financially sound and are in dire need of start earning as early as possible are enrolled in the Vocational education courses. Also, it is perceived that Vocational courses are meant for either drop-out students or for those who are not well versed in traditional educational courses.

5. 75th Round of NSSO (National Sample Survey Organization of India) published following data related to the vocational educational courses;

| Enrollments in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) | |
|---|---|
| Rural Areas | 24% |
| Urban Areas | 8.3% |

   It also observed that only 15% of the total population enrolled in any formal Vocational Training Institutes of ITIs. This data is significant of the fact that urban areas are lagging far behind when it comes to the vocational training, while considering the demographics of India, rate of rural enrollments is also quite low. This given tough grounds to the reasons of failure of Vocational Education in India discussed above.

6. Results published by the "Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana" reflected that only 15% of the learners that learnt any new skill under the program got any employment. These data imply the loose ends present in the Vocational education Curriculum and redundancy of what is being followed under Indian Education system.

7. Skill India Mission, that aimed to reach and connect to 300 million youth by the year 2022 to train them in order to make them employable

could only connect with 25 Million youth by 2018, and those who were able to find jobs were somewhere between 30-50%

8. Data Analysis of PMKVY also found that when it comes to formal training of the workforce, India stands at 2.3% training levels relative to 685 of UK, 75% of Germany , 80% of Japan and a whooping 96% of South Korea.

9. When the New National Education Policy 2020 document is studied parallel to the UNESCO's Education Policy document, it is observed that "Development" and "National" are the most weighted factors in NEP 2020 document and "Development" and "Sustainability" carries the most significant weight in UNESCO's Policy. This reflects that the Indian Education Policy is drawn parallel to the UNESCO's policy, only the difference being that UNESCO's document talk of a bigger cause at an international level and Indian Document de-magnifies it to a rather micro level to suit it to India's pursuits.

10. New National Education Policy is a collection of Ideas in updated form and context. No new Ideas are suggested rather the pattern is to identify the dynamics of the environment and updates of the concepts and ideas on that basis.

11. Some common goals of NEP 2020 and UNESCO's education policy are identified as follows;
    a. Both attempts to integrate the traditional education with Vocational training starting from the primary education stage, From approximately class 6th in Indian Context.
    b. Steps are taken to rule out the rigid points of Differentiation between different forms of education and subject specialization.
    c. Common concept of "Lifelong Education" meaning education at any life-stage and Holistic Education for all round development of learners for a more equipped workforce can be identified.

12. Most important observation is that typical concepts of Indian Heritage that are History, Art and culture are also leveraged in the new National Education Policy, 20202 which becomes crucial as it prevents the concept's loss during the adaptation of the structured "Western Education System".

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