

National Educational Policy-2020 and Vocational Education in Jharkhand

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ABSTRACT

In India, every fifth person is an adolescent and can contribute to social, economic, and political advancement. Vocational education equips students with the skills they need in today's technological era. Vocational education and training (VET) offers direct learning experiences for specialised skill acquisition. In VET, a student engages actively and becomes competent at doing an organisational task. After finishing vocational courses, students are prepared for their intended careers. They enjoy an advantage over their peers, who are not exposed to vocational education due to the vocational training they receive. Vocational education helps students obtain relevant, productive skills while still in school. This paper discusses vocational education and skill development in Jharkhand. The authors have described government initiatives for vocational education and skill training at the school level to leverage the demographic dividend and avoid skills shortage in Jharkhand. To fulfil the goals established in the New Education Policy 2020, the state needs meticulous planning and mission configuration immediately. This provides us with enormous advantages, particularly in education (<https://www.ibef.org/industry/education-sector-india>). This is even though our country has a significant shortage of skilled and educated human capital. To bridge the gap, the Federal Government paper suggests that all vocational and skill development courses should be consolidated under one State Vocational Committee to coordinate all related activities across the state.

Keywords: *National Education Policy 2020, vocational education, vocational training, skill development, youth population, employability, Jharkhand*

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INTRODUCTION

With approximately 580 million youth, India has the largest population in the age group 5-24 years. Every fifth Indian is between 10 and 19 years of age, and every third is between 10 and 24. There are more than 250 million school-going students in our country. This demographic dividend has made it mandatory to upskill tertiary and school students to inculcate life-coping skills through vocational education and training. By so doing, even school dropouts can chart out decent life while contributing to the country's GDP. With this fact, the National Education Policy 2020, a transformative document accepted by the central government, greatly emphasizes vocational education (GOI, 2020). Vocational education shapes a nation's economic, social, and technological landscape (Veeraiah, 2017).

Economic considerations primarily drive the expansion of higher education, while equity concerns stem from a focus on social justice. Ensuring equity in access to higher education is an inclusive concept, and government policies play a crucial role in promoting it. Various important aspects of higher education in India, including the diversity of institutions, regional disparities in access to higher education, differences in public and private expenditure on higher education across states, promising practices such as the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in higher education, the quality of higher education institutions, and the higher education policies implemented in India deeply impact the vocational education (Maiti & Jana, 2022). The work ethics and competencies of teachers also contribute to development of a society significantly.

As such, the concept of vocational education was first propounded by Gandhi ji in his innovative formulation through Basic Education (Nai Taleem) for inclusive and sustainable national development (Gandhi, 1937). It was based on the cardinal principle that intellectual training rooted in action and imparted in craft helped develop better human beings. The Gandhian way of education promoted sync between hand, head, and heart, i.e., the body, mind, and soul; it visualised that Indian education should promote an understanding of the meaning of life through opportunities for learning to all---oppressed and marginalised, rural and poor, challenged and disadvantaged, women and isolated. These views found expression in the recommendations of Education Commission (GOI, 1964-66) but later put on backburner due to realignment of national priorities towards science and technology based development. However, it continues to be relevant even now, though significant changes have occurred over this period (Paranjpe, 2008; Ahmed & Garg, 2010).

Vocational rehabilitation for individuals with intellectual disability has drawn attention of the policymakers (Ghosh, Sinha, & Poddar, 2016). Intellectual disability, as defined in the DSM-5, is characterized by deficiencies in overall cognitive abilities. These abilities encompass skills such as planning, problem-solving, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning, and learning from experience. These cognitive functions are crucial for individuals to adjust optimally in various aspects of their lives. When these functions are impaired, it leads to deficits in adaptive functioning, resulting in the individual's inability to meet the requirements for personal responsibility, social integration, and occupational independence. There are

substantial impairments in communication, basic self-care skills, academic aptitude, daily living activities, and active social participation.

The Education Commission (GOI, 1964-66) forcefully put the concept of vocational education for secondary-level students to equip them with life-coping skills and develop entrepreneurship. But this policy failed to pick up in our schools and colleges because the programme became more academic, unlike in the ITIs and Diploma awarding institutions, where the hands-on experience was an integral component of the curriculum. Also, adequate intellectual and financial support was found lacking. Moreover, over time, such students began to be seen as 'second rate.' National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recently reiterated the emphasis on vocational education. It is particularly significant for an educationally challenged and essentially rural state like Jharkhand, which is mineral rich but inhabited chiefly by tribal people, who are invariably poor, oppressed, and educationally disadvantaged. Jharkhand was carved out of Southern Bihar in 2000.

For a country of the size of India, implementing recommendations NEP-2020 in respect of vocational education and technology-based teaching-learning at all levels is a formidable challenge in the Covid-19 shattered economy. This is although our dynamic Prime Minister is overseeing its implementation. As such, it is too early to draw any meaningful conclusion on the impact of this policy, but optimistically speaking; it is hoped that it will not meet the fate of earlier policies for lack of finances, infrastructure, or implementation strategy, particularly in institutions in rural India.

As is well understood, in the knowledge era, the global economy needs a modern, adaptive, and efficient workforce. For such reasons, skill development helps increase employment chances and improves individuals' quality of life and living standards. However, unskilled youth struggle for suitable employment or get low-wage work with fewer possibilities. There is a finite probability that their supervisors may believe they are no longer required as they age.

According to the Kothari Commission (1964-66) Report, vocationalisation of secondary education can align education with productivity by emphasising agricultural and technological education at the secondary school level. In 1977-78, NCERT recommended vocationalising 10+2 education. As per National Policy on Education (1986), the public and private sectors were responsible for establishing vocational courses or institutions. However, the government had to take extraordinary measures to cater to women, pupils from rural and tribal areas, and underprivileged parts of society (IBEF, n.d.).

The National Policy on Education, 2020, emphasises reforming India's educational system. The NEP 2020 has a global vision and strives to make India a knowledge powerhouse by ensuring quality education for all. It is undeniable that every child should learn at least one vocational skill and be exposed to many more in school. By 2025, at least 50% of students in schools and colleges are expected to have access to vocational education. The essential features of vocational education and training must be revised immediately to make it more relevant, widespread, and innovative (Social Progress Trust, n.d.).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gupta et al. (2012) studied determinants of women empowerment in the Ranchi town. Primary data were obtained from 200 women from various socio-religious groups and their empowerment status was measured. The study indicated that empowering women required an education that boosted employability. Improving women's education and workforce engagement through vocational training and entrepreneurship is vital for national reconstruction and growth.

Sangeeta (2019) surveyed 200 high school students in Jharkhand for their knowledge about jobs. This study compared gender, type of school, and parental jobs. 60% of high school students had average job knowledge and 30% had low knowledge. However, only, and 10% students had high information about jobs. The boys worked harder. CBSE schools had better vocational understanding than state boards. The researcher recommended that education stakeholders must work together to help students develop professionally and boost national productivity (GOI, n.d.).

Khushnuma Sheyam (2020) studied vocational education in Jharkhand (with particular reference from 2014-18). Government-run vocational schools and colleges taught students technical skills and other occupations. Given the surge in vocational courses, the authors wanted to see if they were producing jobs as expected. Researchers used primary and secondary data to link schooling with job rates. Due to Jharkhand's weak placement cell, vocational education had a limited impact on employment in the period under reference. Educated unemployment is a serious problem. Knowledgeable people waste time and money not knowing what to do (Gupta & Srivastava, 2012).

Saurav Kumar (2021) analysed higher education in Jharkhand and its effects on youth and employment using Nilamber-Pitamber University as a case study. Three hundred sixty college students responded to online survey to give primary data. This study highlighted how the state's poor education affects youth and jobs. Students showed preference for government careers (73.89%). If their issues are not resolved soon, the state may face a demographic calamity since students cannot access government employment and lack corporate skills.

THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This research aims to examine the schemes of vocational education and skill development offered in Jharkhand, and identify the challenges faced by all stakeholders in their implementation. Vocational education was expected to address skills gap, reduce unemployment, and foster economic growth. By focusing on vocational education in Jharkhand, we can gain insights into the specific initiatives and programs designed to equip individuals with practical skills to enhance their employability in the state.

Jharkhand, known for its rich mineral resources, is India's important industrial and economic hub. However, the effective implementation of vocational education programs in the state is essential for maximizing the potential of its workforce and promoting sustainable development.

By studying the schemes and initiatives in place, it is possible to evaluate their alignment with the needs of local industries, the relevance of the curriculum, the quality of training provided, and the availability of necessary infrastructure and resources.

Through this research, we seek to provide valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of vocational education in Jharkhand. The findings will contribute to the existing knowledge on vocational education and skill development, offering guidance for policymakers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders involved in shaping the state's vocational education policies and practices. Ultimately, the research aims to support creating a robust vocational education system that meets the needs of industries, enhances employability, and drives sustainable development in Jharkhand.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To discuss schemes of vocational education and skill development offered in Jharkhand
- To discuss problems in the implementation of vocational education in Jharkhand

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate the schemes of vocational education and skill development offered in Jharkhand, India, and identify the challenges in their implementation. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of the subject matter, providing rich insights and capturing the complexities of the research context.

DATA COLLECTION

Secondary Sources: A comprehensive review of government policies, official reports, academic literature, and relevant documents related to vocational education and skill development schemes in Jharkhand was conducted.

Primary Sources: A questionnaire was administered on all students in the sample to get information about key issues. This provided foundation of knowledge and helped identify key themes.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN JHARKHAND

The State of Jharkhand was created on November 15, 2000, and the Department of Human Resources, Government of Jharkhand, founded the Jharkhand Academic Council on September 2, 2003, to prescribe study programmes and conduct secondary and higher secondary exams. The School Education and Literacy Department established four vocational courses in 53 government schools as a pilot effort in 2015, and students responded favourably. Four initial courses were IT, medical, media management, and travel and tourism. The private agencies certified by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) organise these courses

Jharkhand is one of India's developing states, and it is attempting to improve its economy by training workers and capacity building. Jharkhand is rich in natural resources, minerals and chemicals, iron and steel, food processing, sericulture, khadi and village industries, handicraft and handloom, and tourism, and offers excellent investment possibilities.

Jharkhand is improving skill development and vocational education to compete with Skill India and Make in India. It's also striving to make the state a skill hub of India by providing skill-training platforms for its young population and fostering entrepreneurship.

- The Jharkhand Skill Development Mission Society (JSDMS) was established in 2013 as a nodal body for all skill development initiatives, including skilling, upskilling, and reskilling the youth of Jharkhand, as well as raising awareness, encouraging creative thinking, and carrying out the necessary capacity building. This society aims to improve youth employability chances and enable them to contribute to Jharkhand's and India's economic growth by reducing unemployment, underemployment, poverty, and socio-economic discrimination.
- Jharkhand's Saksham Under the JSDMS, the Kaushal Vikas Yojana (SKVY) is a unique implementation initiative of the Government of Jharkhand since 2016 to increase young people's employability potential and enable them to participate in Jharkhand and India's economic growth.
- Since June 2016, the Jharkhand Women Development Society (JWDS), an autonomous society established under the Department of Women, Child Development and Security (DWCDSS), Government of Jharkhand, has been implementing the Tejaswini Project with funding from the International Development Association (World Bank). This project aims to help adolescent girls and young women gain socio-economic independence by providing skill training in self-employment activities.
- Atal Tinkering Labs were set up in selected secondary schools in Jharkhand in 2018 under the Self-Employment and Talent Utilization (SETU) scheme of the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship (Jharkhand Skill Development Mission, n.d.).
- JSDMS created and established a web platform called 'Hunar' in 2018, to track the overall success of the schemes, manage data, and execute skill development programmes paperlessly. It also brings together all of the state government's skill development programmes on one platform (JSK India, n.d.).
- With the motto "Skilling Youth, Enabling Growth," the State Government organised the Global Skill Summit 2019 to create an excellent collaborative platform for youth, skill providers, employers, policymakers, and other thought leaders worldwide. Vocational education has already been implemented in Jharkhand for secondary and higher secondary students in over 400 schools. By 2020-21, the number of schools that offered vocational education increased from 9% to roughly 20% (World Bank, n.d.) in this period.

- The World Bank-funded Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) programme aims to develop institutional capabilities across India and provide youngsters with excellent skill training. The awarding of six districts of Jharkhand for good performance and implementation by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship of the Government of India in 2019 is a tremendous success for the State (NSDC India, n.d.).
- Kishori Shakti Yojana is a programme administered by the Department of Social Welfare of Jharkhand for the holistic development of adolescent girls (ages 11-18). This programme empowers women and improves their self-perception through skill training (Skillreporter, n.d.).

MISSIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS PER NEP 2020 IN JHARKHAND

- Exposure to vocational education for 50% school and college students by 2025 as directed in New Education Policy 2020;
- Learning of at least one vocation to be facilitated for every student;
- Organizing internship programs for students starting from grade 6;
- Collaboration with stakeholders like ITIs, polytechnics, local industries, etc.;
- Tackling obsolete curriculum, biased attitude, and unavailability of equipment;
- Skill mapping as per local needs and availability;
- Facilitating vocational education in an online mode;
- Setting up skill labs; and
- Setting up training institutes for vocational instructors.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN JHARKHAND

Only vocational education and training can make youth job-ready and lead to poverty reduction, sustainable development, and economic progress. National Knowledge Commission (2009) advocated placing vocational education under MHRD to meet skill demands. The government and Education Ministry may consider the 'Public Private Partnership' model, remote learning, and computerised vocational training. To enhance the impact of vocational education on national development, the following strategies should be considered:

a) Promote Public Perception and Awareness: Efforts must be made to change societal attitudes toward vocational education. Highlighting success stories, emphasizing its value in meeting

labour market demands, and fostering partnerships with industry leaders should help elevate the perception of vocational education and attract talented individuals.

b) **Strengthen Industry Partnerships:** Collaborations between vocational education institutions and industries should be encouraged to ensure relevance of curricula and up-to-date. Industry input in designing programmes, providing internships, and offering apprenticeships enhance the practical applicability of vocational training, aligning it with current industry requirements.

c) **Continuous Professional Development:** Encouraging vocational educators to engage in continuous professional development that ensures they remain updated with industry trends and pedagogical innovations. This enables them to deliver high-quality training and equips graduates with the skills to contribute effectively to national development.

d) **Investment in Infrastructure and Technology:** Governments and educational institutions must prioritize funding for vocational education infrastructure, modern equipment, and access to emerging technologies. Digitisation of study materials is highly recommended. Adequate investment in these areas can significantly enhance the quality of training and promote a culture of innovation within vocational education

e) **Creation of Innovation Centres:** In the knowledge era, every vocational education institution has to emphasize on training the youth to be prepared for incubating newer ideas and develop start Ups so that they become job creators rather than job seekers.

The following endeavours should help popularize the vocational education and training courses in Jharkhand:

- Enrolment of the youth population maximally to favourably use of demographic dividend in Jharkhand;
- Undertaking awareness drives for changing the perception of society towards vocational education;
- Establishment of a training institute for vocational trainers in Jharkhand;
- Involving big business houses in facilitating vocational training as their Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) activities;
- Incorporating “the minimum wage act” for the skilled workforce to improve employability and minimise wage discrimination;
- Promoting collaboration between vocational institutions and potential employment industries;
- Adequate funding for the development of infrastructure; and
- Arranging financial support for meritorious poor students by way of scholarships, free ships, study loans., etc.

CONCLUSION

Skill-based education prepares future youths for the job market and entrepreneurship. Since pre- and post-independence, several commissions, committees, and studies have suggested implementation of secondary vocational education and training. To coordinate state-wide efforts, all vocational and skill development courses have been centralised under one State Vocational Committee but it has yet to show definite positive results. It can also boost resources for skill development programmes and monitor and improve vocational education and training facilities. Vocational education has immense potential to drive national development by equipping individuals with the skills demanded by the labour market and fostering innovation and social inclusion. While challenges exist, strategic measures such as changing perceptions, strengthening industry partnerships, promoting continuous professional development, and investing in infrastructure and technology can maximize the impact of vocational education on national development. By addressing these challenges head-on, policymakers, educational institutions, and stakeholders can ensure that vocational education becomes a cornerstone of comprehensive national development strategies.

Identifying the problems and challenges faced in implementing vocational education in Jharkhand is crucial for developing effective solutions. This research highlights issues such as inadequate funding, limited access to modern technologies, a mismatch between industry demands and educational offerings, and social stigma associated with vocational education. By understanding these challenges, policymakers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders should devise strategies to overcome them and ensure successful implementation of vocational education programs in Jharkhand.

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