

# The Role of Vocational Education in NEP 2020: Pathways to Skill Development and Employment

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## Abstract

By emphasising skill-based learning to bridge the gap between knowledge and practical application, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 transforms India's education system. Recognising these issues, the strategy attempts to provide students with vital skills to improve employability and help them choose careers. NEP 2020 wants to turn India's young into global resources via innovation, curiosity, and hands-on learning. By integrating vocational education at all levels, the approach ensures that every student graduates with a skill. Skill development is anticipated to eliminate unemployment and advance the country. Additionally, NEP 2020 prioritizes teacher training programs to enhance the quality of vocational education and align curricula with national skill standards. The adoption of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) further extends vocational education opportunities to marginalized communities, school dropouts, and rural populations. By offering skill-based courses in fields such as agriculture, IT, healthcare, and manufacturing, ODL provides flexible and inclusive learning pathways beyond traditional classroom settings.

*Keywords: National Education Policy (NEP 2020), Skill development, Vocational education, Open and Distance Learning (ODL), Technical and vocational education and training (TVET), etc.*

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## 1 Introduction

In the development of India's educational system, "the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020" represents a critical turning point with broad ramifications for many aspects of the system. Among other things, NEP 2020 emphasises vocational education once again as an important part of the nation's educational

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system [1]. The necessity for a holistic approach to career advising and counselling is also highlighted by this change, which reflects a wider understanding of the value of practical skills in preparing students for the workforce. Counsellors have become more and more important in this regard, helping students make the transition into the working world and guiding them through the many options offered by vocational education [2]. This essay examines how NEP 2020 has affected vocational education in a variety of ways and how counsellors' roles in this field have changed. It explores the main aspects of NEP 2020 concerning vocational education and looks at how they affect project creation, skill training programmes, and industrial cooperation [3]. Additionally, it looks at the chances and difficulties that come with putting these laws into practice, especially when it comes to providing counselling and encouraging student participation. With vocational education becoming more and more prominent in the educational debate, counsellors are in a unique position to help students choose fulfilling career paths and grow holistically. Beyond providing typical academic advice, counsellors are increasingly being used for complete career advising, skill evaluation, and industry contact [4].

#### **A. Vocational Education**

Vocational education gives students the abilities and information required to succeed in certain trades, careers, or jobs. 'Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)', career education, or technical education are other names for this kind of education that equips students for immediate work in their areas of choice [5]. The primary objective of vocational education is to offer students with the necessary abilities, know-how, and proficiency to succeed as professionals, technicians, or artisans in their chosen fields. A vast array of courses and professions are included in vocational education, including engineering, technology, healthcare, hospitality, and the arts [6]. Numerous formats are available, including as online courses, community colleges, vocational schools, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training. Vocational education has several advantages, such as producing highly sought-after marketable skills, lowering unemployment rates, and promoting economic expansion [7]. Enhancing people's ability to adopt socially beneficial behaviours is one way that vocational education fosters socioeconomic growth. It aids in a person's interpersonal relationships and communication skills development [8].

#### **B. Vocational Education in India**

The National Education Policy 2020 states that by 2025, over 50% of students in the school and university systems will have had exposure to vocational education, with precise plans for implementation within predetermined deadlines and goals [9]. By embracing Indian artisanship and diverse kinds of art, this strategy will promote a vision that highlights the dignity of the Indian workforce. With a well-defined plan of action, students at the higher education institution may progress towards vocational education after the policy is put into effect in 2025. According to the policy, all postsecondary educational establishments will gradually include vocational education into their regular curricula. NEP 2020 fosters the growth of additional academic characteristics while including skill development via vocational education, including practical training, to improve abilities and capacities [10]. In order to meet the goals of NEP 2020, universities will need to work with industrial units, polytechnic institutions, and Industrial Training institutions (ITI). The next 10 years will see the systematic implementation of vocational

education as an integrated education strategy in schools and other higher education institutions [11]. By 2025, about half of all students shall participate in vocational training, under the recently adopted National Education Policy (NEP). In India, programs for career development and vocational training are created and coordinated by "the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)" [12].

### **C. Importance of Vocational Education**

The key to understanding the difference between educational knowledge and practical abilities is the value of vocational education [8].

- It aids in closing the skills gap that exists between school and the workforce.
- It enables students to get real-world experience and expertise in the field of their choice.
- It encourages the development of skills.
- It improves employability skills by teaching students the methods and approaches that are particularly necessary for their line of employment.
- It facilitates the process of selecting a certain career path or makes the process of choosing a career path simpler.
- It aids in identifying one's own abilities and enhancing those abilities.
- Provides a fresh educational opportunity and may possibly aid in raising their performance levels.
- It has useful uses.
- Students benefit from having a clear notion of what they want to study and pursue in the future.
- It enables a person to become self-sufficient and accountable.
- As a result, education leads to steady employment.

## **2 Literature Review**

(Mandal, 2024) [12] This article explores the policy's efforts to improve vocational training, the difficulties in putting it into practice, and its possible effects on employability. Vocational education plays a significant role in meeting the needs of the unorganised sector by producing a trained and productive workforce via a variety of options. The significance of offering young self-employment options via a variety of vocational courses is emphasised by NEP 2020. Vocational education, according to NEP 2020, refers to educational programs designed to get people ready for certain jobs or skill sets. It mostly focusses on real-world knowledge and experiential learning that are directly relevant to working in a business. Vocational education in India is expected to grow in the NEP 2020, creating a trained workforce force for both the industrial and informal sectors.

(Monika Sharma et al., 2024) [8] Instruction, particularly vocational education, is seen in India. The Indian government's 'National Council for Professional Training' is crucial to vocational education in India. However, India has Professional Education Implementation problems in several regions. With the

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NEP 2020, vocational education has received the attention it needs. The broad NEP 2020 strategy paper covers vocational education reform. Successive education commissioners advised mainstreaming vocational education, which the policy does. The vocational education sector has grown very slowly and stagnantly. This article examines NEP 2020's vocational education difficulties and potential.

(Saharia & Mazumdar, 2024) [13] Practical skills and career training from vocational education help students bridge the gap between education and job. The lack of a vocational education system in India contributes to high unemployment. According to the 12th Five-Year Plan (2012–2017), just 5% of 19-24-year-old Indian workers have vocational training. USA: 52%, Germany: 75%, South Korea: 96%. These data show how urgently vocational education must be expanded in India. Thus, the current paper critically analyses the National Education Policy, 2020's ideas, new approaches, and strategies to improve vocational education in India.

(Sahajahan Ali, 2024) [14] Analysis of skill-based education under the NEP 2020 framework, including current status, future prospects, government efforts, difficulties, and methods. NEP 2020 combines practical and theoretical skills to equip India's young for 21st-century jobs. To succeed and maintain skill-based education efforts, the research emphasises tackling social stereotypes, improving curriculum development, developing industrial engagement, upgrading infrastructure, and promoting equal access. The report sheds light on these elements to influence policy assessment, execution, and reform, boosting India's development and global competitiveness.

(Patel & Agrawal, 2024) [15] Vocational education provides the foundation for skill development and produces competent students who can make a substantial contribution to a country's self-reliance. In order to create Aatmanirbhar Bharat (a self-sufficient India), the NEP 2020 has called for the introduction of vocational education starting in sixth grade, taking into account the demands of the twenty-first century. In order to support students' holistic development, NEP 2020 has also placed a strong focus on experiential learning. A self-sufficient India may result from vocational education's ability to provide a good learning environment where students can develop the skills necessary for personal development. The researchers have really attempted to list the importance of skill development and vocational education in NEP 2020 in order to create a trained labour force that would help India establish a knowledge-based economy and provide the groundwork for Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India).

(Gedar & Yadav, 2023) [16] Seeks to determine the employment to unemployment ratio of young people graduated from the current educational system with a higher degree. A supplementary approach is used to acquire data for this descriptive research. Several learners from the vocational education system lacked defined paths to higher education, which prevented them from having any vertical mobility at all. This issue is addressed by 'the National Skills Qualifications' Framework. According to the paper's conclusion, skill-based development will be crucial to the advancement of the country and act as a bridge between knowledge and its real-world application. This will ensure that every student graduates with a working knowledge of at least one skill, which will reduce unemployment.

(Lukose & Sharma, 2023) [17] To examine stakeholders' involvement in student skill-based development and the skills kids should master. This research investigates how NEP 2020 develops student skills. Skill improvement stakeholder views are also examined in the report. The research will emphasise vocational education to improve student skills in light of NEP 2020. Five literature reviews examined student skill improvement and 21st-century competencies. The role of stakeholders like parents, teachers, educators, society, higher education institutions, and statutory stakeholders like UGC and AICTE in integrating and mainstreaming student skills gave skill-based education, also known as vocational education, meaning.

(Mathur et al., 2022) [18] The creation of possibilities for lifelong learning and the transfer of necessary practical skills via high-quality vocational and technical education are the focal points of Sustainable Development Goal 4. In India, where a sizable portion of the working-age population is jobless, TVET offers enormous promise for economic mobility and growth. Despite the quick progress achieved in building a network of formal institutions offering a broad variety of skills, TVET is now scarce in India and beset by a number of problems, which have been made worse by the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic. The study conducts a thorough examination of these problems, providing a comparison with China's and Germany's effective TVET systems and investigating prospects for TVET rehabilitation in India.

(Sharma, 2022) [19] Vocational education educates individuals to stay employed and meet economic demands. A skilled-based education. Every nation needs good vocational education. Trades education boosts the economy. Vocational education is valued in India. The government-established 'National Council for Vocational Training' advises on vocational education in India. However, India has several vocational education implementation issues. In this article, we examine the issues facing vocational education in India and the new NEP 2020 strategy to increase youth employability and sustainability.

### **3 Conclusion**

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) introduces a transformative vision for vocational education in India, integrating skill development into the mainstream education system. Recognising the critical role of vocational education in addressing the demands of both the formal and informal sectors, the policy aims to equip students with industry-relevant skills, enhancing their employability and self-sufficiency. By promoting vocational training at all educational levels, NEP 2020 ensures that learners acquire practical competencies, reducing the perception of vocational education as inferior to academic pathways. A key emphasis of NEP 2020 is the development of 21st-century skills, including creativity, collaboration, and essential life skills, to prepare students for dynamic work environments. The policy also focuses on strengthening teacher training programs to improve the quality of vocational education and align curricula with national skill standards. The introduction of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) further expands access to vocational training, particularly for marginalised communities, school dropouts, and individuals in rural areas. By offering skill-based courses in fields such as agriculture, IT, healthcare, and manufacturing, ODL enables flexible learning opportunities beyond traditional classroom settings.

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