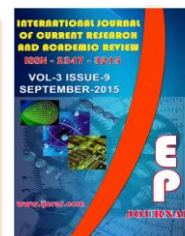




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Challenges and Opportunities of Vocational Education in Skill Development

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A B S T R A C T

Skill development is a major challenge for the present government in order to address the huge population by making them employable. It has been decided that skill development should be linked to policy in economic employment and social development area. Hence skill development is a prominent agenda of the present government to improve economy through productivity. Skill development is a major challenge for the present government in order to address the huge population by making them employable. The target fixed by the government to produce 500 million skilled workers by 2022 can enable our country to supply skilled work force to the globe. By utilizing the service of skilled workers not only the productivity will increase but also the living standard of our citizen will improve proportionately.

Introduction

“All education is in a sense vocational, vocational for living”.

- John Newsom

“The ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job is skill”.

- ILO

Skill development means productive capacity of a person acquired through all levels of training and education. The education may be formal, informal. The training may be on-the-job or off-the-job

which enables an individual to become fully productive (Gill and Dar, 2000).

This skill can enable the person to adopt the capacity to meet the changing demand and opportunities of the economy and labor market. Skill development comprise all those in the labor force who are working in organized and unorganized sector. The current skill development capacity for India is 3.1 million labor force. India has targeted to produce 500 million of skilled people by 2022.

This indicates the importance of skilled labor force for our country. Hence skill development is a prominent agenda of the present government to improve economy through productivity. Skill development is a major challenge for the present government in order to address the huge population by making them employable. It has been decided that skill development should be linked to policy in economic employment and social development area (Clarke, 2005).

Vocational education system in our country has been considered as a outdated procedure due to non-fulfillment of the requirement of either industry or the government. As vocational courses are offered in school level with the general course of the institution, the main aim of this education system is to prepare the students to enter into employment market in different areas like agriculture, business and commerce, home science, health, para medical skills, fitter, welding and electrician etc in order to have gainful employment opportunity.

The policy makers decide to make vocational education more vibrant in order to create skilled labor force in the country. In order to achieve 500 million skilled labor force by 2022 vocational education is the only way out to meet the requirement of changing employment situation.

The objectives of this study include highlighting the prevailing vocational education system. Problems related to vocational education. Also to suggest potential options available to improve the vocational education and to know the benefit of skill development through vocational education.

Methodology

This article is analytical in character. The study is based on secondary data. The data

are collected from text books, periodicals, journals, literature review, content analysis, e-articles, newspapers and websites.

Performance of vocational education

While India has improved its performance in education, but not in a position to increase the skills to meet the demand of employability. Hence acquiring skill is essential. So the performance of vocational education should be improved as vocational education provides skills.

A careful attention should be made that those skills are not outdated and do not meet the industry requirement. In order to highlight the performance of present vocational system the following points should be analyzed

Enroll less than three percent of the students: The present vocational course is offered to the students of upper secondary level. In some of the institution the vocational course is provided to the students with other general course. In total the enrollment figure is less than 3% of the total student mass.

Vocational students intent for higher education: Most of the students who have got through vocational education stream are interested in higher education rather than utilize their vocational knowledge in labor market. Hence low level of gainful employment for these students.

Vocational education does not match the requirement of industry. Most of the industry people need young workers with academic skill than vocational skill. On the other hand due to less training exposure the vocational students have less skill potential which can fulfill the requirement of the present industry.

Remedial measures

Reform of vocational education

It is suggested that for a successful vocational education system the course curriculum should be re-structured in order to make it more industry oriented.

More industry training programmes should be introduced in vocational course:-In order to improve institution-industry interface more and apprenticeship training system should be introduced in vocational institutions.

NCVT (National Council for vocational Training) should be transformed into an independent authority:- It is suggested that the NCVT should be transformed into an independent body for test and supervise the skill, certification and accreditation of vocational institutions. All SCVT(State Council for Vocational Training) should be accountable to NCVT.

Problems of vocational education

Some of the major problems of the present vocational education system has been outlined below:-

Infrastructure:- All the vocational institutions face accrued problem of infrastructural facility. Very few vocational institutions have updated infrastructure and training facility which can enable the students to be skillful in a particular trade. Computerized laboratory facility is a far away phenomenon for vocational institutions students.

Finance:-Funding to vocational institutions is one of the major difficulty in state level. No attention is paid to state level vocational institution to have an innovative funding system. On the other hand there is no clear

picture regarding the trends in financing. There is no separate funding system to vocational institution rather the financial pattern is attached to secondary education. Due to ineffective funding model most of the vocational centers are not in a position to engage qualified and experienced training personnel who can provide skillful training to the students. Students fees structure in ITIs are comparatively low and retained by the respective state governments. As a result the institutions functionaries have no financial incentives to meet the labor market needs. Though unit cost is high expenditure on critical training remain low as maximum portion of funds are utilized as salary.

Resource mobilisation: This is another problematic area for vocational institutions. It is suggested that the involvement of employer and student in the financing of training. But it can only be possible when the outcome of the training system will meet the expectation of the employer.

Students fees should be more realistic so that the training cost can realized by the students. Some firms may also asked to bear some of the training cost so that the skill on training can be utilized by those firms in future.

So far allocation of resources are concerned it is learnt that adhoc resource allocation should stop. All vocational institutions should allocate resources on the basis of transparent funding formulae based on skill development. At the same time an comprehensive fund allocation system should be followed for all vocational institutions.

Options to improve vocational education system in order to produce skilled workforce

The following measures should be undertaken in order to improve the

vocational education pattern so that skill development can be the outcome. The policy makers should reform the entire vocational education pattern in order to make it more demand responsive. For this it is necessary to involve private sector participation in curriculum design to strengthen vocational education component. The role of NCVT should be broad and specific in terms of training. There should be a single independent vocational training coordination agency which will be responsible for coordinating the training, financing, curriculum development, supervise skills, certification and accreditation. All the SCVT should be the Nodal centre for NCVT.

Training programme of the vocational institutions should be market oriented. Traditional training procedure should be by passed in order to provide update and industry need based training procedure. Autonomy should be given to vocational institutions to impart and introduce short term training courses so that the skill of the trainers will improve. More and more private sector vocational education institutions should be permitted in order to impart public sector need training programme to fulfill the gap between skilled trainee and unskilled trainee. More emphasis should be given for unorganized training sector. Workers in informal sector should be provided more training to improve the level of skill and employability. On the job training and off the job training formulae should be adopted in vocational institutions to improve the skill of the workers.

Aim and objectives of skill development

The mission of skill development is to empower of all individuals through improved skill, knowledge, national and internationally acclaimed qualification. At the same time a decent employment which

ensure competitiveness as well as productivity in the global market. With this mission national skill development initiative has been introduced in our country by the present government. Accordingly a national policy on skill development has been introduced in parliament with the following aims and objectives.

- A] Enhance the individual employability and ability to adopt changing technology and labor market demands.
- B] It can improve the productivity as well as living standards of the people.
- C] Enable to strengthen the competitiveness of the people for globalization.
- D] Attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in skill development.

Objectives

- A] It can create opportunity for all individuals to acquire skill, especially the youth of our country.
- B] It can develop a qualitative skilled work force according to the emerging employment market condition.
- C] It can establish a flexible mechanism which can react to a wide range of stake holders of the country.
- D] It can able to provide an effective coordination between central and state agencies as well as public and private agencies in connection with employment generation.

Scope

- A] ITI, ITC, vocational schools, technical institutions like polytechnic and degree colleges can develop institutions based skill.
- B] Enterprise can provide both formal and informal apprenticeship training to the employees.

C] There will be enough scope for self employment and entrepreneurial development among the educated youth.

D] Adult learning retaining of retired employees and the scope of lifelong training can be possible.

E] E-learning and web based learning and distance learning system can also be adopted by all enterprise.

Benefits of skill development

The following are some of the benefits of skill development which are narrated below

1. Skill development is the key to improving access to decent employment opportunity of an individual.
2. Quality skill development can enable the country to meet global competitiveness in the era of liberalization.
3. Soft skill and entrepreneurship skill development will lead to promotion of self employment in the country.
4. Shortage of skills in world population age, our country has the advantage of supplying skilled personnel to the world at large.
5. Vocational training utilized for skill development will be relevant to the requirements of national and international market employment.
6. Labor market Information (LMI) will provide accurate information regarding the skill potential of both organized and unorganized sector of the economy.

Conclusion

The conclusions derived from the article are mentioned below

1. Vocational education and training plays a key role in skill development of the individuals.
2. Infrastructure facility, availability of finance and resource mobilization are

some of the constraints in improvement of vocational education of our country.

3. NCVT should be restructured in order to have quality vocational education and industry oriented training should be the basis of skill development.
4. The aims and objectives of skill development should be to improve employability and enable to employee to compete with world market.
5. Skill development should provide scope for soft skill and entrepreneurial skill in order to improve self-employability in our country.
6. The target fixed by the government to produce 500 million skilled workers by 2022 can enable our country to supply skilled work force to the globe.
7. By utilizing the service of skilled workers not only the productivity will increase but also the living standard of our citizen will improve proportionately.

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