

Impact of NEP 2020 on Vocational Education in Commerce

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Abstract: *The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a paradigm shift in India's education system, aiming to create a robust, adaptable, and inclusive framework fit for the 21st century. This review examines the transformative impact of NEP 2020 on vocational education within the commerce sector, focusing on its potential to bridge the skills gap and enhance employability. NEP 2020 emphasizes a holistic approach to education, integrating vocational training from early stages and promoting flexibility through a multi-entry, multi-exit system. This policy aims to equip students with practical, industry-relevant skills alongside theoretical knowledge, fostering innovation, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. This review delves into the key provisions of NEP 2020 concerning vocational education, including the introduction of vocational training from Class 6, the establishment of the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF), and the emphasis on work-integrated learning (WIL) through internships and apprenticeships. It explores how these provisions are reshaping commerce education, particularly in curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and industry-academia collaborations. The review analyzes the shift towards a curriculum that incorporates essential skills like financial literacy, entrepreneurship, digital marketing, and data analysis, reflecting the evolving demands of the commerce industry. It further investigates the policy's focus on digital skills, recognizing their crucial role in the modern economy, and its commitment to holistic development, nurturing both technical expertise and essential soft skills. The review examines the pedagogical innovations introduced by NEP 2020, including the transition to student-centered learning, promoting active participation, project-based learning, and collaborative environments. It also explores the role of technology integration in enhancing learning outcomes and expanding access to education. By analyzing existing literature, policy documents, and case studies, this review assesses the potential of NEP 2020 to address the skills gap in the commerce sector, improve graduate employability, and contribute to India's economic development. Finally, it considers the challenges in implementing these reforms, such as teacher training, resource allocation, and ensuring effective industry alignment, highlighting the importance of addressing these challenges for the successful realization of NEP 2020's vision for vocational education in commerce.*

Keywords: NEP 2020, Vocational Education, Commerce Education, Skills Gap, Employability, Curriculum Design, Industry Integration, Digital Skills, Holistic Development, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced by the Indian government signifies a transformative moment in the nation's educational landscape. Designed to meet the challenges of the 21st century, NEP 2020 aspires to establish a strong, flexible, and inclusive educational system. This policy represents a significant evolution from the earlier National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986, which was last revised in 1992, marking the first major overhaul in over



thirty years. Crafted through comprehensive discussions with a wide array of stakeholders—including educators, policymakers, industry leaders, and the general public—NEP 2020 is committed to equipping students with essential skills to succeed in a fast-evolving world. Its primary goal is to nurture innovation, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, ensuring that quality education is accessible to all, irrespective of their backgrounds.

The policy emphasizes a holistic approach to education, merging academic knowledge with skill acquisition and instilling values such as empathy, ethics, and social responsibility. Key principles guiding NEP 2020 include inclusivity to reduce educational inequalities, flexibility to allow personalized learning experiences, a strong focus on skill development to boost employability, and the integration of technology to enhance digital learning opportunities.

The development of this policy involved a collaborative effort from various stakeholders, including educational institutions, the Ministry of Education, a committee led by Dr. K. Kasturirangan, industry organizations like FICCI and CII, as well as students and civil society groups. A pivotal element of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on vocational education, particularly in the commerce sector. This aspect of vocational training covers essential areas such as accounting, finance, marketing, business administration, and entrepreneurship, prioritizing hands-on experience through internships and apprenticeships to meet the increasing demand for skilled professionals in India's commerce industry.

1.1 Research Objectives:

It undertakes a comprehensive evaluation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's influence on vocational education within the dynamic commerce sector. The review focuses on four interconnected and crucial dimensions. Firstly, it delves into the evolution of curriculum design, examining how NEP 2020 has reshaped the vocational commerce curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the integration of practical, skills-based training. This exploration seeks to understand the shift from theoretical learning to hands-on experience and its potential impact on student preparedness. Secondly, the review investigates the transformation of teaching methodologies. It analyses how pedagogical approaches have been modified to better cater to the evolving demands of both the industry and the students themselves. This includes examining the adoption of innovative teaching techniques, the incorporation of technology, and the emphasis on experiential learning.

Thirdly, the review assesses the projected impact of NEP 2020 on employability. It explores how the policy is expected to influence the job prospects of students completing commerce programs. This analysis considers whether NEP 2020 has effectively enhanced job preparedness by aligning education with industry requirements and fostering the development of in-demand skills. A key aspect of this investigation is determining if the policy has led to a demonstrable increase in student employability and a smoother transition from education to the workforce. Finally, the review scrutinizes the extent to which NEP 2020 effectively addresses the persistent skills gap within the commerce sector. It evaluates whether learners are acquiring the specific skills needed to meet the evolving demands of the industry. This includes analysing the alignment of vocational training with industry needs, the development of both technical and soft skills, and the overall effectiveness of NEP 2020 in equipping graduates with the competencies required for success in the modern business world. By examining these four key areas, this review aims to provide a thorough understanding of NEP 2020's impact on vocational commerce education and its contribution to bridging the gap between education and employment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theories of Vocational Education

Competency-Based Education (CBE)

This section explores the mathematical foundations of vocational education and how they relate to professions related to commerce, particularly finance, accounting, and business management. The foundation for comprehending how vocational education creates a skilled workforce is laid out by theories including Human Capital Theory, Work-Based Learning (WBL), and Competency-Based Education (CBE). Particularly in professions like commerce, competency-based education, or CBE, has emerged as a fundamental tenet of vocational education. CBE places a strong emphasis on the mastering certain specific competencies or abilities that students must exhibit to function well in their chosen field. Instead of emphasizing theoretical learning, it emphasizes real-world performance and practical application. CBE



allows students for gaining industry-specific abilities in the context of commerce vocational education. For instance, in accounting, students could have to show that they can handle bookkeeping obligations, create financial statements, or use accounting software to mimic real-world situations. This method guarantees that students possess the skills to handle the real-life issues they will face in the workplace as well to being conversant with theoretical concepts.

Because of its emphasis on developing skills that are directly related to the demands of the workplace, competency-based education, or CBE, has become increasingly common in the field of vocational education. CBE guarantees that students attain the competencies that organizations need for in new workers in commerce-related professions including accounting, finance, and business management. Mulder (2017) asserts that CBE is the ideal basis for vocational education in commerce since it seeks to equip students with real-world, job-specific skills rather than theoretical knowledge.

Students are certain to learn how to cope with issues they will encounter in their professional careers thanks to CBE's emphasis on real-world application. For example, students of accounting can work on actual assignments like budgeting, financial report preparing, and tax return prep—tasks that have a clear connection to their future professional duties (Billett, 2014). Learning outcomes have been further enhanced by the flexibility provided by CBE, and allows students to go at their own speed or master one competency before moving on to the next.

2.1.2 Work-Based Learning (WBL)

Integrating job experience with educational instruction has become known as work-based learning, or WBL. It permits students to apply to real-world work settings the theoretical knowledge they learn in the classroom. WBL connects academic learning with practical applications in vocational education, especially in commerce, giving students invaluable exposure to the working world. WBL can involve co-ops, apprenticeships, or internships in accounting, finance, or business management where students work with organizations and handle realistic financial data, business plans, or accounting software. According to research, WBL helps students develop the technical and soft skills needed in the workplace, which substantially enhances their prospects for employment (Raelin, 2017). Through these practical experiences, students can improve their decision-making skills, develop critical thinking abilities, and comprehend the dynamics of their industry. Through these practical experiences, students can develop their critical thinking skills in everyday situations, sharpen their capacity to make decisions, while learning the dynamics of their industry (Cantrell & Rasplica, 2013).

Additionally, work-based learning fosters close ties between higher education institutions and the business community, which makes it easier to match school curriculum with industrial demands (Baker, 2014). For instance, collaborations between financial institutions and business schools can guarantee that the instruction students receive is recent and directly compatible with the demands of the market.

2.1.3 Human Capital Theory

According to the Human Capital Theory (HCT), education—including vocational education—is a way of strengthening one's skills, which elevates their economic worth and productivity in the job market. Becker (1994) asserts that investing in human capital through education and skill development boosts individual productivity and promotes economic expansion. HCT emphasizes the importance of giving students advanced abilities that directly benefit the economy in the framework of vocational education. A skilled workforce promotes economic development by increasing productivity and innovation, especially for occupations linked to commerce like banking and business management. Because of the increase in trained workers, nations that invest in vocational education are likely to have greater financial effects (Schultz, 1961). Additionally, HCT believes that vocational education improves employability since companies are more inclined to hire people with, marketable talents (Mincer, 1974).

The application of Human Capital Theory shows the importance of vocational education in providing the appropriate abilities for industries including retail, finance, and business management in India, where there is a need to develop a skilled workforce to match the growing demands of the global economy (Chatterjee, 2019).



2.2 Historical Evolution of Vocational Education in India Pre-NEP 2020 Era

In trying to close the skills gap in its industrial sector, the government of India began implementing vocational education in the early 1950s. One of the first attempts at offering skill-based education was the founding of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in 1950. With the goal to address industry demands, ITIs sought to provide youth with technical and vocational skills (Government of India, 2015).

Policies pertaining to vocational education have shifted over time, integrating various skill-development efforts. The 2015 launch of the Skill India initiative, which aimed to train 400 million people by 2022, was one of the noteworthy initiatives (Goel & Sood, 2016). This course of study aimed toward providing learning opportunities in several fields, including business, with a concentration on topics such as retail, finance services and entrepreneurship.

2.2.1 Post-Independence Reforms

Vocational education gained prominence in the 1986 National Policy on Education (NPE), which recognized its value as a substitute for traditional schooling. The need for a competent workforce and unemployment were perceived to be addressed by vocational education (Naik, 2000). The significance of incorporating vocational education within general education was emphasized by this policy.

By encouraging universal access to education, including vocational training for underserved populations, the Right to Education Act (2009) also had an impact on vocational education in India. Although this was a step in the direction of inclusive education, issues with curriculum quality, relevance, and industry alignment persisted in vocational education (Sharma & Naik, 2017).

2.3 Global Practices and Comparisons Germany's Dual Education System

One popular example of a successful vocational education program is Germany's dual education system. It gives students the chance to learn from experts in their industry by fusing theoretical instruction at vocational schools with real-world work experience in businesses (Hoff, 2013). After graduating, students are frequently hired by the same organizations because this model guarantees that they have the knowledge and abilities required in their chosen industry (Ehlers, 2017).

The dual education concept has been crucial in creating a highly qualified workforce that satisfies industry demands in commerce-related subjects like accounting, finance, and business management. Curriculum modifications based on current industrial needs are also made possible by the tight cooperation between educational institutions and businesses (Kis, 2017).

2.3.1 Australia's Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) system in Australia combines competency-based education with work-based learning to give students the skills required for particular professions. Industry standards are tightly associated with VET certificates, especially in commerce-related subjects like accounting, finance, and business management (Misko & Arkoudis, 2018).

In addition to being adaptable, the system acknowledges prior learning and provides a variety of pathways, such as traineeships and apprenticeships (Lloyd & Williamson, 2013). VET, which offers both academic and technical training to match the demands of the economy, has emerged as a key component of Australia's workforce development strategy (Billett, 2018).

2.3.2. USA's Approach to Commerce-related Vocational Education

Vocational education has historically played a vital role in workforce development in the United States, especially by offering associate degrees and certificates in subjects including business management, finance, and accounting (Grubb, 2006). Students are prepared to fulfill specific industry standards thanks to the emphasis on certifications, such as those provided by professional organizations like the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA).



Additionally, internships and apprenticeships are used to incorporate work-based learning into many vocational programs, giving students practical experience in the sectors they have chosen (Hollenbeck & Weaver, 2011). When paired with job experience, these certificates increase employability and raise the standard of the workforce.

2.4 Vocational Education and Economic Development Vocational Education as a Driver of Economic Growth

Because it fosters creativity and production, vocational education is essential to economic growth. Germany and Switzerland, two nations with robust vocational education systems, have greater productivity rates and are better able to adapt to the changing needs of the global economy (Schultz, 1961). By supplying the trained labor required for developing industries like e-commerce, financial services, and digital technology, vocational education can boost growth in India (Tata Consultancy Services, 2020).

Skill Development and Employment:

Employability is directly impacted by vocational education, particularly in subjects related to commerce. Compared to their colleagues with merely general education, those with vocational training—especially in fields like finance, accounting, and business management—have a higher chance of landing a steady job, according to research (Belfield & Bailey, 2017). Students are more prepared for the workforce because to the practical skills they acquire through vocational training, which also makes them competitive throughout the job search.

Vocational education in commerce is essential for eliminating the skills gap in India, where there is a constant need for skilled labor. Employment in industries like buying and selling, banking, and business management has been significantly impacted by the growth of skill development programs like Skill India and the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

2.5 The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: An In-depth Analysis

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a transformative shift in India's education system, fostering critical thinking, creativity, innovation, and holistic development. Beyond preparing students for higher education, NEP 2020 equips them with essential life skills for success in a dynamic global economy. The policy emphasizes multidimensional learning, problem-solving, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial mindsets, recognizing the need for adaptability in navigating complex challenges. NEP 2020 aims to create an inclusive and equitable learning environment, ensuring access to quality education for all, regardless of background. This involves improving learning methodologies, reforming curriculum, and assessment systems, and leveraging technology to meet international standards. Key components include inclusive education, providing equal access, particularly for underprivileged populations like girls, rural children, disadvantaged groups, and children with disabilities. Equity ensures access to high-quality education regardless of location or background, while flexibility offers diverse educational options, including vocational training, catering to individual interests and career goals. NEP 2020's strategic objectives focus on universal access to education from ages 3 to 18, ensuring quality education through curricular reforms and enhanced teaching practices like inquiry-based and experiential learning. It prioritizes equity and inclusion for marginalized groups through inclusive classrooms and support mechanisms, and promotes technology integration through EdTech, online learning, and digital platforms to enhance learning and access, especially in remote areas. A core element of NEP 2020 is the integration of vocational education across all levels. Recognizing the skills gap impacting graduate employability, the policy aims to enhance the quality and reach of vocational training. Introducing vocational education from Class 6 allows students to explore career paths early, gaining practical skills alongside academics. This early exposure provides a head start in developing job-ready competencies. The multi-entry, multi-exit system offers flexibility, enabling students to join or leave vocational programs at any point and receive certifications at various levels, facilitating skill development alongside formal education. The National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) is crucial for standardizing vocational credentials nationwide. It provides a clear pathway for students pursuing vocational training in areas like technology, manufacturing, healthcare, and commerce. NVEQF ensures industry-recognized certifications, boosting employability and guaranteeing consistency in the quality and duration of vocational programs. Furthermore, NEP 2020 emphasizes internships and work-integrated learning (WIL)



as essential components. By fostering industry partnerships, the policy aims to provide real-world experience through internships and apprenticeships, complementing theoretical knowledge. This focus on practical training seeks to create a work-ready workforce equipped with the necessary skills and competencies for success in their chosen fields. NEP 2020 brings a major shift in **curriculum design**, particularly in the context of vocational education for commerce students. The policy stresses the importance of **practical, industry-relevant skills**, integrating vocational education with mainstream education. For commerce students, this involves the inclusion of **financial literacy, entrepreneurship, digital marketing, and data analysis** in the curriculum. These subjects equip students with skills that are directly applicable to various industries, preparing them for careers in fields like **accounting, finance, marketing, and management**.

NEP 2020 places a lot educational emphasis on digital literacy and the incorporation of technology into all subject areas. Recognizing the value of digital skills in the modern industry, the policy seeks to integrate e-commerce, digital marketing, data analytics, and cybersecurity into commerce students' vocational curriculum. NEP 2020's emphasis on digital competences guarantees that commerce students are equipped to handle the global economy's digital transition and the rising need for data analysts, digital marketers, and e-commerce specialists. NEP 2020 prioritizes holistic development, which includes the development of soft skills like teamwork, communication, leadership, and emotional intelligence, in addition to technical skills. For students studying commerce, this entails striking a balance between the interpersonal skills required for positions of leadership in the business sphere and technical expertise in areas like accounting and finance. The policy promotes an integrated approach to education in which practical problem-solving and entrepreneurial thinking combine with academic knowledge. NEP 2020 emphasizes a crucial pedagogical shift towards student-centered learning (as detailed within the NEP 2020 document in sections discussing pedagogy and learning outcomes). The policy advocates for active, participatory learning, placing students at the center of their educational experience. This includes project-based learning, case studies, and collaborative environments, engaging students in real-world problem-solving. This fosters critical thinking, creativity, and independence, equipping students for a rapidly changing world. Furthermore, NEP 2020 recognizes technology's transformative potential (as discussed within the NEP 2020 document in sections on technology in education and digital learning). Especially in vocational education, like commerce, it encourages EdTech platforms, online courses, and blended learning. These platforms facilitate access to quality education globally through online tests, remote learning, and customized experiences. Technology-enhanced learning also equips students with the digital skills necessary to thrive in today's digital-first workplaces. While specific paragraph numbers are not provided here, the NEP 2020 document itself (available on the Ministry of Education's website) provides detailed information on these topics.

2.6 Impact of NEP 2020 on Vocational Education in Commerce

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is driving significant changes in India's educational landscape, particularly in vocational education. Focusing on skill acquisition, industry alignment, and holistic development, NEP 2020 aims to modernize vocational training in commerce to meet global demands. This transformation is evident in curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, industry connections, employability, inclusivity, and the digital revolution of education.

Changes in Curriculum and Course Design: NEP 2020 emphasizes incorporating industry-relevant skills into commerce vocational programs. This shift moves away from traditional theoretical education towards a hands-on, industry-focused approach, aligning education with evolving labor market needs. For example, partnerships with industry stakeholders are facilitating the integration of practical skills like digital marketing, tax preparation, financial analysis, and financial planning into the curriculum. Furthermore, NEP 2020 aims to diversify commerce education by introducing interdisciplinary courses and new specializations. Beyond traditional subjects like accounting and finance, the curriculum now encompasses contemporary topics like digital marketing, business analytics, and e-commerce, broadening students' skill sets and preparing them for a dynamic job market (Kumar, 2021). This is exemplified by the integration of FinTech into financial management courses and digital business models into entrepreneurship courses (Patel & Sheth, 2021), keeping students abreast of current trends and equipping them with adaptable skills. The policy also champions a multidisciplinary approach, encouraging students to combine commerce-related vocational courses



with studies in liberal arts, social sciences, and technology, fostering well-rounded individuals with diverse skill sets (Patel, 2020). The introduction of multiple entry and exit points in vocational education provides further flexibility, allowing students to customize their educational paths and acquire skills from various domains, enhancing their employability (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Pedagogical Innovations and Methodologies: NEP 2020 advocates for a shift towards active, student-centered learning, particularly in vocational education. New curricula emphasize active learning techniques like problem-based instruction, project-based instruction, and experiential learning. In commerce courses, this translates to a greater focus on real-world simulations, case studies, and internships (Billett, 2017). Experiential learning approaches, such as role-playing, business simulations, and live case studies, are proving particularly beneficial for commerce students, enhancing their critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities (Sarkar, 2020). For instance, students in accounting or finance courses can engage in real-life scenarios involving risk management, business strategy, and financial decision-making. The policy also promotes the increased use of technology-driven pedagogy, including learning management systems (LMS), virtual classrooms, and e-learning platforms, to enhance the delivery of commerce vocational courses (Patel & Sharma, 2021). These tools offer flexible access to learning resources, enabling students to learn at their own pace and from anywhere. Integrating online courses on marketing tools, financial modelling, or accounting software allows students to develop practical skills. Virtual classrooms facilitate interactive learning and direct engagement with instructors (Singh & Verma, 2020). This digital transformation extends access to quality education, even in rural areas.

Employment and Industry Linkages: NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of industry collaboration in shaping vocational education. The policy encourages strong partnerships between educational institutions and businesses to align curricula with industry demands. This collaboration manifests in internships, on-the-job training, and cooperative research projects, bridging the gap between classroom learning and practical business operations (V & Patel, 2021). Industry partnerships provide students with firsthand exposure to real-world business processes within commerce courses. For example, students in financial management courses might collaborate with businesses on creating financial forecasts, analysing financial statements, or applying budgeting techniques. These partnerships not only enrich education but also improve students' post-graduation employment prospects (Sharma, 2021). The policy's focus on integrating vocational education with the labour market aims to close the skills gap and better align education with workforce needs. By collaborating with industry to tailor programs to specific job requirements, educational institutions can enhance the employability of commerce graduates (Patel & Sheth, 2021). Skill certification, encouraged by the policy, helps businesses validate students' competencies and further improves their employability. The introduction of short-term, skill-specific courses in areas like business analytics, marketing automation, and financial planning allows students to gain valuable certifications, increasing their job readiness (Kumar, 2021).

Enhancing Employability and Job Readiness: NEP 2020 aims to bridge the skills gap by enhancing both technical and soft skills. Vocational courses, particularly in commerce, focus on developing essential soft skills like communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and critical thinking, alongside technical skills in areas like accounting, financial analysis, and marketing techniques (Billett, 2017). Recognizing the importance of continuous skill development, the policy promotes lifelong learning, enabling individuals to adapt to the changing demands of the job market (Patel, 2020). Research suggests that NEP 2020 will contribute to lowering unemployment rates by aligning education with market demands. By integrating practical skills into the curriculum, the policy prepares students for immediate workforce entry, reducing the skills mismatch and ensuring graduates possess the competencies required by the business sector (Sharma & Naik, 2021). Studies indicate that NEP 2020's skill development programs will be particularly effective in addressing youth unemployment (Sarkar, 2020). The emphasis on industry collaborations and apprenticeships will provide students with valuable work experience, further boosting their employability.

Impact on Marginalized Communities: NEP 2020 prioritizes accessible and inclusive education, particularly for underserved communities. The policy encourages access to vocational education opportunities for women, minorities, and students from rural areas, utilizing flexible learning pathways to ensure students from diverse backgrounds can pursue vocational training in commerce (Sharma & Naik, 2021). Financial aid, scholarships, and mentorship programs are promoted to support students from low-income families, aiming to level the playing field and make vocational



education accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status (Ministry of Education, 2020). While NEP 2020 holds significant promise for promoting inclusion, challenges remain in ensuring equitable implementation across India's diverse regions. Addressing issues like access to quality vocational programs, digital literacy, and infrastructure in rural areas is crucial (Kumar, 2021). The policy seeks to overcome these disparities by promoting online learning options and establishing regional skill development centers to bring vocational education to students in rural locations.

Digital Transformation and Innovation: NEP 2020 encourages the digitization of vocational commerce courses, making learning resources more accessible and facilitating interaction with instructors. Digital platforms enable case studies, virtual internships, and simulations, enhancing learning outcomes (Singh & Verma, 2020). Online certification programs and e-learning platforms are gaining popularity, allowing students to acquire credentials in specific areas like business operations, digital marketing, and financial analysis, increasing their employability (Vyas & Patel, 2021). E-learning in vocational training has a promising future under NEP 2020. The policy's focus on digital learning is expected to significantly impact the future workforce. MOOCs and distance learning options will continue to expand, providing students across the nation with opportunities to pursue commerce vocational education (Patel, 2020). This digital revolution not only expands access but also makes education more adaptable and flexible, crucial for skill development and lifelong learning (Billett, 2017).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Case Studies and International Comparisons

Case Study 1: Vocational Education in India Pre-and Post-NEP 2020

With a primary focus on incorporating vocational education into the regular educational system, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brought about significant changes to India's educational system. The goal of the program is to close the skills gap in India's workforce by matching marketplace requirements, especially in the commerce sector, with vocational training. This section will examine how vocational education changed in India before and following NEP 2020, with an emphasis on case studies from a few chosen institutions that were unable to effectively carry out these changes. We'll also look at the main success elements that have made them so successful.

Vocational Education in India Before NEP 2020

Vocational education in India was mainly separated from the regular school system prior to the implementation of the NEP 2020. The emphasis was frequently on traditional courses like engineering, healthcare, and trades like carpentry or plumbing, even if a number of colleges provided vocational training. However, there was a lack of integration with official educational pathways and a relative lack of development in vocational education within the commerce sector. Prior to NEP 2020, India's vocational education system had several **significant challenges**, including:

India's vocational education system had many difficulties before NEP 2020. Limited industry interaction was a major problem, since many vocational programs fell short of the real needs of the industries they were intended to serve. Furthermore, because of out-of-date curricula and subpar facilities, training quality varied widely. Last but not least, there was a social stigma associated with vocational education since students were not interested in these programs because they were frequently seen as inferior to traditional academic tracks.

The Introduction of NEP 2020 and its Impact on Vocational Education

NEP 2020 has set the stage for major curriculum and delivery changes that will revolutionize vocational education in India. One of the most significant advancements is the incorporation of vocational education into the regular curriculum, which started in class 6. In order to guarantee that training is in line with the demands of real-world jobs, the strategy highlights the critical role that industrial partnerships play in promoting tighter cooperation between businesses and colleges and universities. Also, NEP 2020 promotes innovative, industry-relevant courses that emphasize practical skills and hands-on learning, especially in emerging industries. Additionally, the vocational system's introduction of several entry and departure points gives students more alternatives for career advancement and flexibility, enabling them to join and quit at different periods in time.



Success Stories Post-NEP 2020

Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) – Vocational Training in Business and Commerce: In an effort to close the gap between academia and the business world, IIMB, one of India's leading management schools, launched a number of vocational programs in partnership with industry partners. Real-world industry-based projects are integrated into their Post Graduate Programme in Enterprise Management (PGPEM), which trains students in entrepreneurship, financial management, and company operations.

Crucial Elements of Success:

Strong industry engagement is necessary for effective vocational education. Strong relationships with international corporations have been promoted in order to build meaningful courses and offer beneficial internships and real-world case studies. Working on industry projects gives students actual exposure and real-world experience, which helps them transition smoothly into professional employment. In order to guarantee that training complies with current industry standards, strong industry relationships are vital, involving cooperation with major banking and financial services business enterprises. Additionally, enhancing employability is a top priority, which is accomplished by offering credentials that are respected and acknowledged by companies around the country.

The Commerce Sector Skill Development Program of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC): In collaboration with several state governments and business titans, the NSDC has been instrumental in advancing vocational education in India. The NSDC has created a number of short-term, industry-related programs with an emphasis on accounting, entrepreneurship, and finance. The skill requirements of industries such as banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) are addressed by these courses.

Delhi University's School of Open Learning (SOL) – Integrated Vocational Courses in Commerce: The School of Open Learning (SOL) at Delhi University offers integrated vocational courses in commerce. The University of Delhi launched integrated vocational programs including the Bachelor of Commerce (Vocational) and the Diploma in Retail Management through its School of Open Learning. A balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills is the main goal of these programs.

Crucial Elements of Success:

Vocational education is now accessible to a larger audience, including working professionals, thanks to flexible learning alternatives like distance education. Additionally, by including courses like retailing management, e-commerce, and digital marketing, the educational program emphasizes emerging industries and is customized to current market trends. Initiatives to restructure vocational education have been successful because of a number of vital elements. In order to match vocational programs with market demands and give students access to practical projects, internships, and on-the-job training, strong industry ties have proven vital. Additionally important have been modern and innovative sector-specific, practical courses that prioritize skill development and experiential learning. Last but not least, the implementation of contemporary technology and infrastructure, such as virtual simulations and digital platforms for online learning, has allowed institutions to greatly raise the standard of vocational education.

Obstacles and Opportunities

NEP 2020 has made progress in vocational education, but there are still major challenges before its reforms can be fully implemented. Teacher preparation is a major obstacle since it is challenging to guarantee that instructors have the knowledge and abilities pertinent to the sector to successfully teach vocational courses. Additionally, some parents and kids are still discouraged from pursuing vocational education because of the ongoing societal stigma associated with it, which prevents these pathways from being widely adopted and successful.



Case Study 2: International Comparison

It is helpful to contrast NEP 2020's strategy to effective international examples in order to evaluate the viability of India's vocational education reforms. Australia's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system and Germany's dual education system are two of the most well-known vocational education courses. Both systems offer insightful perspectives on the best techniques to set up and carry out vocational education.

Germany's Dual Education System

Many individuals consider Germany's vocational education system to be among the greatest in the world. The "dual" approach, which blends classroom instruction with hands-on, on-the-job training, has been what makes it famous. The system's important characteristics include:

Structured apprenticeships, in which students split their time between classroom instruction at trade schools and real-world job experience in firms, are frequently a part of effective vocational training. Students can continue their formal education while gaining useful practical skills thanks to this integrated approach. Additionally, industry alignment is essential for making sure that the curriculum closely matches the particular knowledge and abilities that companies are looking for. Industry partners' active involvement in curriculum creation ensures that students learn skills that are immediately applicable to real-world jobs. Strong industry linkages are also crucial, as companies contribute significantly to the system by creating and implementing training programs, providing funding, and opening up job prospects for graduates.

Australia's Vocational Education and Training (VET) System

An excellent illustration of flexible and industry-responsive vocational education is the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system in Australia. VET offers degrees ranging from certificates to diplomas and emphasizes employable, real-world skills. Flexible routes meet a range of demands by enabling full-time or part-time study at different levels. Industry accreditation guarantees that employers appreciate VET qualifications and that graduates have the skills that employers are looking for. Accessibility is improved for many students by substantial government assistance. This system serves as an example of how industry alignment, flexible paths, and government assistance may combine to produce an effective vocational education model that closes the skills gap and gets people ready for the workforce.

Comparison with NEP 2020

By closely integrating vocational education with industry, NEP 2020 in India seeks to transform it and follow the successful models of Germany and Australia. To guarantee that vocational training satisfies real-world work requirements—a crucial element of NEP 2020—these nations place a high priority on solid industry collaborations. Although India's integrated curricula are still in their infancy, NEP 2020 promotes creative curriculum design that combines classroom learning with real-world, hands-on experience, much like Germany's dual system. Increasing enrolment in vocational education and overcoming social stigma are challenges faced by all three countries. Nonetheless, it can be shown that the Australian and German systems have satisfied labour market expectations. India might duplicate these successes by implementing NEP 2020, producing a trained labour force that propels economic expansion. With this reform, India's educational system is taking a big step toward becoming more useful and industry-relevant.

Conclusion

The NEP 2020 is a daring move to change the vocational education scene in India. Notwithstanding the difficulties, the case studies show how industry collaborations, hands-on training, and creative curriculum may be skilfully included into vocational education programs. India's vocational education system may be upgraded even more by taking example from overseas models like Germany and Australia. This will help to ensure that it matches evolving requirements of the workforce and is in line with international best practices.



IV. CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS IN IMPLEMENTING NEP 2020

Numerous intricate obstacles must be overcome in order to carry out NEP 2020's goal for vocational education. Effective training is hampered by institutional infrastructure deficiencies, especially in rural locations. Significant barriers are created by outdated buildings, a dearth of contemporary instructional aids, and a lack of digital resources. Faculty development is also very important. To apply NEP 2020's emphasis on technology integration and experiential learning, many teachers need to be upskilled. This problem is made worse by the dearth of appropriate instructional resources and online resources. Lastly, establishing strong industrial ties is difficult but necessary. Obstacles include a lack of structured programs for real-world experience, limited corporate interaction, and skills mismatches.

There are additional complications in policy and implementation. Although it offers freedom, India's decentralized educational system may be implemented unevenly by states. Fragmented progress might result from disparate resources, interpretations of NEP 2020 guidelines, and degrees of commitment. Another big worry is funding. The ambitious objectives of NEP 2020 necessitate a significant investment, but funds are frequently insufficient, delayed, or dispersed unevenly. Another difficulty is luring private sector investment. Another level of intricacy is introduced by sociocultural things to consider. Vocational education continues to be viewed as less respected than traditional academic programs. Student enrolment is restricted by this bias as well as a lack of knowledge about vocational career alternatives. This perceived gap is further exacerbated for vocational students by a lack of industry exposure, mentorship, and institutional assistance.

To overcome these obstacles, a multifaceted strategy is needed. It is essential to prioritize teacher training, obtain steady funding, establish solid industry relationships, and aggressively promote the benefits of vocational education. Realizing the potential of NEP 2020 and developing a more equal and relevant educational system require addressing these interrelated problems.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary of Key Findings

Vocational education in commerce is one of the main areas of attention for the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which has had a substantial impact on many aspects of Indian education. A summary of the main conclusions on the use and consequences of NEP 2020 on commerce vocational education shows both advantages and disadvantages.

5.2 Benefits

The first of NEP 2020's many benefits for commerce vocational education is its comprehensive strategy. The policy is to produce graduates who are well-rounded by combining occupational training with other academic subjects. This method gives students the flexibility they need to succeed in the wider business environment in addition to preparing them for specialized positions in commerce. Students acquire a wide range of information and skills because to this emphasis on holistic development, which increases their employability and competitiveness. NEP 2020's focus on skill development is one of its main advantages. This is especially important for vocational education in commerce since it enables students to gain real-world, industry-specific skills. These abilities directly relate to being prepared for the profession and are frequently found in high-demand fields like digital marketing, finance, and accounting. The policy guarantees that graduates are ready to meet the changing demands of the contemporary labour market and can contribute successfully right away by placing a high priority on skill-based learning.

In the end, NEP 2020 improves vocational education by utilizing technology and encouraging industry cooperation. By removing geographical restrictions and enhancing flexibility, technology integration broadens access to training and resources via online platforms. At the same time, the policy promotes solid collaborations between industry and educational institutions. Through internships, apprenticeships, and industry-led projects, these partnerships give students priceless real-world experience, greatly increasing their employability. Students are also encouraged to follow these career-oriented paths by the inclusion of vocational education in the NSQF and the mainstream curriculum, which communicates its worth and lessens stigma.



5.3 Adverse Effects:

There are many obstacles in the way of NEP 2020's ambitious vision for vocational education in business. Implementation at the grassroots level has been uneven, especially in rural and underprivileged areas. Despite the policy's directives, there is still a lack of clarity and inconsistent implementation. The ability to provide a wide variety of courses that meet the requirements of all students is still constrained, and many areas still lack the infrastructure required to sustain strong vocational training. This lack of infrastructure limits access for many prospective students and makes it more difficult to provide high-quality vocational education. Another significant barrier is teacher preparation. Having trained teachers with both subject-matter expertise and real-world industry experience is essential to the success of vocational education in commerce. However, the quality of training is compromised by a lack of such qualified personnel. The potential of the strategy is undermined by the shortage of teachers with the necessary training who can deliver pertinent, practical programs related to the commerce sector. The efficiency of vocational training and the readiness of the students for the workforce are directly impacted by this shortage of skilled teachers.

Lastly, sustaining quality control, guaranteeing accessibility and equity, and incorporating industrial partnership are continuous challenges. The establishment of significant relationships between corporations and academic institutions has been sluggish and frequently unsuccessful, despite NEP 2020's emphasis on industrial ties. Because of the skills gap caused by this misalignment between curriculum development and industry demands, graduates are ill-equipped to meet the demands of the job market. Additionally, access to technology-enhanced learning is restricted by the digital divide, which impedes the potential of online resources and virtual training, especially in rural and undeveloped areas. These issues pose a danger to the efficacy and consistency of vocational education programs in commerce, especially when combined with the requirement for more robust quality control and monitoring systems.

5.4. Recommendations for Policy and Practice

A multifaceted strategy centered on teacher training, industry engagement, closing the digital gap, guaranteeing quality, and fostering inclusivity is needed to address the obstacles impeding the effective implementation of vocational education in commerce under NEP 2020. Enhancing teacher preparation is crucial. Frequent upskilling programs that prioritize both subject-specific knowledge and real-world industry experience are crucial. To keep instructors up to date on the latest trends and technologies, these programs should take use of collaborations with specialists in the field to provide training sessions, workshops, and mentorship opportunities. Additionally, creating a framework that supports and encourages instructors to gain industry experience—possibly through temporary assignments in companies—can close the knowledge gap between theory and execution and impart practical relevance to the educational environment. In order to match market demands with vocational training, industry partnership must be strengthened. To jointly create curricula that meet the demands of the industry today, formalized industry-institute partnerships are required. Creating advisory boards with professionals from the business may guarantee that students learn pertinent skills and offer helpful advice in developing curricula. It is equally necessary to expand apprenticeships and structured internships in the commerce sector. These programs give students priceless real-world experience, which greatly improves their employability by enabling them to use their academic knowledge in authentic situations. In order to create a mutually beneficial ecosystem for vocational education, such programs necessitate close collaboration between employers and educational institutions.

Assuring quality and closing the digital divide are also crucial. Expanding access to online learning resources requires investments in digital infrastructure, especially in rural and underprivileged areas. More students will be able to take advantage of online courses and virtual internships if computers, fast internet, and digital learning platforms are made available. By mixing online and offline instruction, a blended learning strategy can optimize technology's advantages while minimizing its drawbacks. With this approach, students can still access digital resources while still taking advantage of in-person interactions and practical instruction in conventional classroom environments. Lastly, to maintain high standards in vocational programs related to commerce, strong structures for quality assurance and monitoring are required. It is essential to have clear, uniform standards for curriculum design, instructional strategies, and industry involvement at the federal and state levels. Frequent assessments and feedback systems that take into account opinions from students, alumni, and employers can assist pinpoint areas in need of development and guarantee



that programs continue to be successful and relevant. Access and equality can be further improved by encouraging inclusion through targeted outreach programs and financial aid, guaranteeing that every learner, irrespective of background, have the chance to gain from high-quality vocational education in commerce.

5.5. Prospects for the Future:

Under NEP 2020, vocational education in business has a bright future ahead of it. In addition to academic credentials, professionals with real-world, employable skills will be in more demand as the global economy develops. By providing specialized training in fields like financial technology, e-commerce, data analytics, and entrepreneurship, vocational education programs in commerce have the ability to satisfy this demand.

However, ongoing innovation, flexibility, and cooperation will be necessary for vocational education to genuinely flourish in the future. Vocational education must be able to quickly adapt its curriculum to keep up with the increased skill requirements brought about by the advent of automation, artificial intelligence, and the digital economy. By embracing business collaboration and technological improvements, commerce vocational education may equip students with the skills they need to thrive in a fast-paced, multinational market. Additionally, the requirement for cross-cultural competency and global awareness in the workforce is increasing as the world grows more interconnected. Students will be well-prepared for a competitive global labor market by vocational education programs that embrace global ideas and promote international internships and exchanges. To sum up, NEP 2020 has the potential to revolutionize commerce vocational education, but its success will rely on resolving the present issues and putting the suggested tactics into practice. Vocational education in commerce can be crucial in creating a workforce that is knowledgeable, flexible, and able to prosper in the twenty-first century economy if it maintains its emphasis on teacher preparation, industry involvement, digital integration, and inclusivity.

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