

Vocational Education Under Samagra Siksha Abhiyan: Bridging Skill Development and School Education in India

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Abstract

At present, the world of education is undergoing rapid transformation. There is a growing preference for practical and skill-based learning over purely theoretical instruction. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places significant emphasis on experiential and practical-based learning, commonly referred to as Vocational Education. Vocational Education under Samagra Shiksha, as envisioned in NEP 2020, plays a crucial role in integrating practical skills with academic learning from Grade 6 onwards. This approach aims to enhance students' employability, bridge existing skill gaps, and foster entrepreneurship, thereby making education more relevant, inclusive, and aligned with the demands of the 21st-century workforce.

The present paper provides an overview of the concept, objectives, and implementation of Vocational Education within the framework of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. The study adopts a descriptive approach based on secondary sources such as government policy documents and reports from various schools. The findings reveal that Vocational Education has played an important role in equipping students with practical skills, promoting self-employment, and reducing dropout rates. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and limited industry collaboration persist. The paper concludes that strengthening industry linkages and ensuring continuous monitoring can significantly enhance the effectiveness of Vocational Education under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.

Keywords: NEP-2020, Vocational Education, Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, Sustainable Development Goals, Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

INTRODUCTION

Samagra Shiksha is an integrated scheme for school education covering pre-school to Class XII. This scheme is aligned with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** related to education. The scheme not only supports the implementation of the **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009**, but is also aligned with the recommendations of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

The scheme aims to ensure that all children have access to quality education within an equitable and inclusive classroom environment. It addresses learners' diverse backgrounds, multilingual contexts, and varying academic abilities, and encourages their active participation in the learning process. SDG 4.5 states that *"By 2030, gender disparities in education should be eliminated and equal access to all levels of education and vocational training should be ensured for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations."*

The major objectives of the Scheme are:

1. Support States and UTs in implementing the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020).
2. Support States in implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009;

3. Focus on Early Childhood Care and Education
4. Emphasis on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
5. Thrust on Holistic, Integrated, Inclusive and activity based Curriculum and Pedagogy to impart 21st century skills among the students.
6. Provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students;
7. Bridging Social and Gender Gaps in School Education; Ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education;
8. Strengthening and up-gradation of State Councils for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs)/State Institutes of Education and District Institutes for Education and Training (DIET) as a nodal agency for teacher training.
9. Ensuring safe, secure and conducive learning environment and minimum standards in schooling provisions;
10. Promoting vocationalisation of education

FOCUS OF THE PAPER

In this context, the paper examines vocational education under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan as a strategic plan of action aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, where practical-based and skill-based learning are given greater importance. Under vocational education at the school level, students of Classes IX and X are introduced to pre-vocational skills, which provide them with a basic understanding of various vocations prevalent in society. For students of Classes XI and XII, vocational education focuses on developing foundational vocational skills that enable them to acquire professional competencies and prepare them for employment or self-employment.

OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER

The present paper seeks to examine the growing significance of vocational education in the contemporary education system, with special reference to its objectives, practical relevance, and real-life applicability. In the context of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, vocational education has been recognized as a key instrument for bridging the gap between academic learning and employability by integrating skill-based, experiential, and work-oriented learning within the school education framework.

This paper highlights the following objectives

1. To examine the role of Vocational Education under Samagra Siksha Abhijan in developing practical and job-oriented skills among secondary and higher secondary students
2. To assess the effectiveness of skill-based vocational courses in enhancing students 'employability and readiness for self-employment.
3. To analyse the impact of vocational education on reducing school dropout rates by increasing students' interest, motivation, and engagement in learning
4. To suggest measures for strengthening vocational education programs to improve skill acquisition, promote self-employment, and ensure student retention.

METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

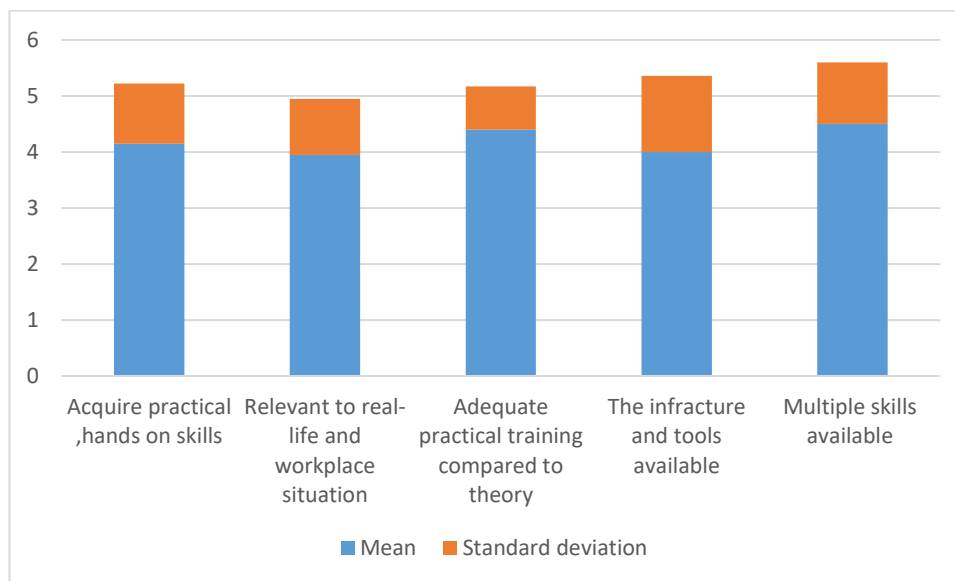
The descriptive method was used in the present study. The sample comprised 20 vocational teachers drawn from 10 schools. Descriptive statistical techniques such as mean and standard deviation were employed for data analysis related to the study topic.

ANALYSIS OF THE COLLECTED DATA

I. Objective-1 : Practical Skill Development

N=20

Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation
Acquire practical ,hands on skills	4.15	1.07
Relevant to real-life and workplace situation	3.95	1.00
Adequate practical training compared to theory	4.4	0.77
The infracture and tools available	4.0	1.36
Multiple skills available	4.5	1.10

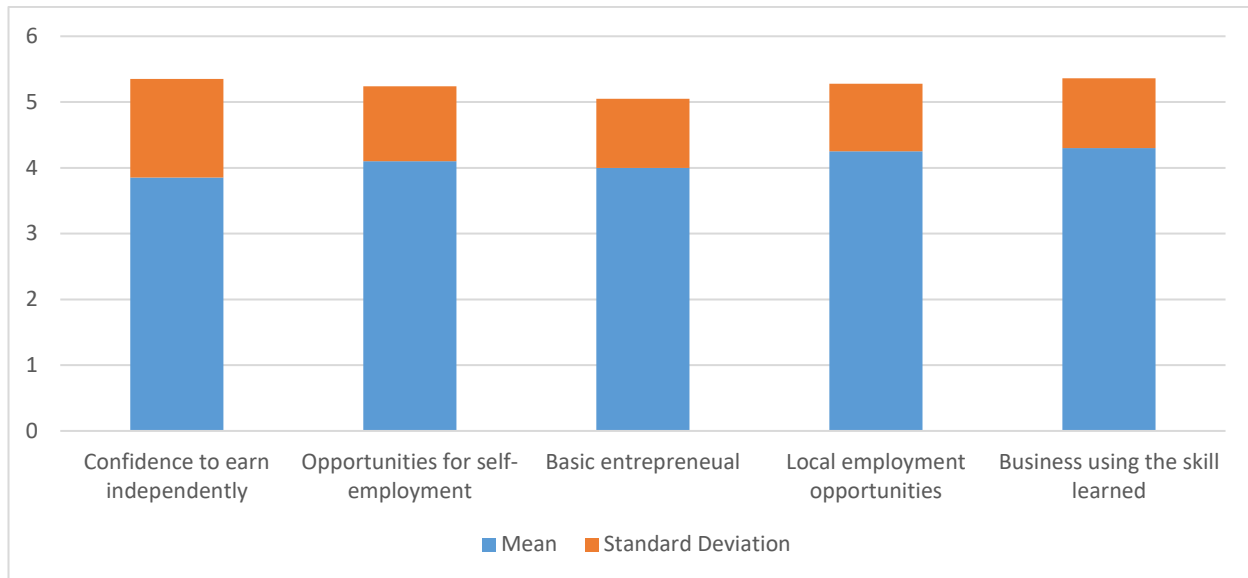


Analysis

The chart shows that respondents have positive perceptions of vocational education, with high mean scores across all aspects—especially availability of multiple skills and adequate practical training. The low standard deviation indicates consistent opinions, suggesting general agreement that vocational education effectively develops hands-on, workplace-relevant skills supported by adequate infrastructure and tools.

II. Objective-2: Self-Employment and employment.

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Confidence to earn independently	3.85	1.5
Opportunities for self-employment	4.1	1.14
Basic entrepreneual	4	1.05
Local employment opportunities	4.25	1.03
Business using the skill learned	4.3	1.06

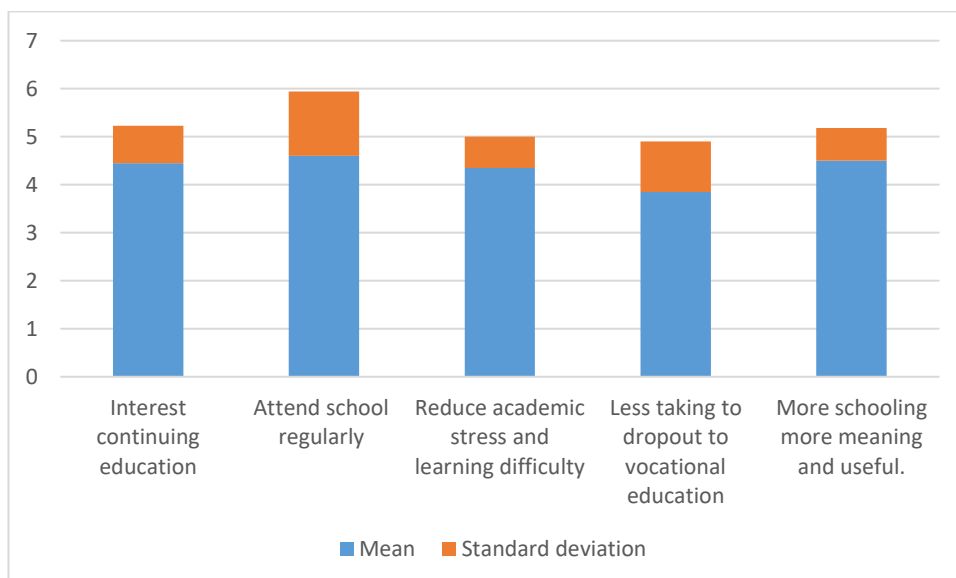


Analysis

The graph indicates consistently high mean scores (around 4.0–4.3) across all indicators, showing a positive impact of skill training on self-employment, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities. Low standard deviation reflects uniform responses, with the strongest effect seen in using skills to start a business.

III. Objective -3: Motivation and dropout Reduction

Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation
Interest continuing education	4.45	0.78
Attend school regularly	4.6	1.34
Reduce academic stress and learning difficulty	4.35	0.65
Less taking to dropout to vocational education	3.85	1.05
More schooling more meaning and useful.	4.5	0.68



Analysis

The graph shows high mean scores (≈ 3.8 – 4.6) for all indicators, indicating that vocational education increases student interest, regular school attendance, reduces academic stress, lowers dropout rates, and makes schooling more meaningful. The moderate standard deviations suggest generally consistent student perceptions.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The Present study aimed to explore on vocational education under samagra siksha abhiyan: bridging skill development and school education in India. Based on responses from 20 teachers of 10 Schools including quantitative analysis using mean and standard deviation, the following key findings have been derived in alignment with the stated objectives

1. Vocational education has been found to build students' confidence for independent earning, promoting self-employment, entrepreneurship, and local employment opportunities. The findings indicate that skill-based courses enable students to use acquired skills for business creation and livelihood generation at both local and industrial levels.
2. The integration of vocational education within the school curriculum has positively influenced students' motivation and engagement in learning. Students showed increased interest in education, improved regular school attendance, and a stronger connection between schooling and real-life applicability.
3. The study highlights that vocational education contributes to reducing academic stress and learning difficulties, making education more meaningful, practical, and learner-centric.
4. Vocational education has played a crucial role in lowering school dropout rates, as students perceive schooling as more useful, relevant, and aligned with future employment prospects.

SUGGESTION

Most vocational education teachers suggested that vocational education should be designed and implemented according to local needs, so that students can remain engaged in skill-based training even after school hours. They also recommended the provision of adequate contingency funds to meet essential training requirements and to ensure the effective implementation of vocational programmes.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings of the study clearly indicate that vocational education functions as an effective bridge between skill development and formal school education. It strongly supports the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 by improving students' employability skills, encouraging entrepreneurial thinking, and reducing dropout rates through increased student engagement. Vocational education provides students with opportunities for industrial exposure through regular industry visits, internships, and practical training. Such exposure enables students to acquire first-hand knowledge of workplace practices, tools, and technologies, thereby enhancing their practical competencies and real-world problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, vocational education acts as a foundational or stepping-stone programme for systematic skill development among students. By integrating vocational skills with academic learning, it empowers learners to achieve self-reliance, pursue self-employment or wage employment, and adapt effectively to the demands of the modern labour market. Ultimately, vocational education contributes significantly to making students economically independent, socially responsible, and self-sufficient in their lives after completing their education.