

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION

Wood's Despatch

Wood's Despatch (1854) for the first time highlighted the need for introduction of occupational education for a good number of students. Persistent efforts were made to influence a reform by introducing non-literary/vocational education at the secondary stage. But the efforts could not succeed. After Wood's despatch several commissions and committees have consistently stated that the secondary school stage is not only a preparatory stage for the pupils to enter the university, but also an exit point for those who might discontinue the studies and enter the world of work. Hence, instruction in secondary schools should be directed towards producing useful members of the society. In other words, education should be useful to the people of India in their different spheres of life-economic, social and psychological. But since the establishment of universities in 1857, secondary schools have been merely serving as institutions preparing students for entering higher education. It is quite obvious that the voices before 1882 remained unheeded until the **Hunter Commission** was set up in 1882 'to examine the problems of education in general and technical and vocational education in particular'.

Hunter Commission

The Hunter Commission recommended that at the high school stage there ought to be two distinctive streams of education - one for preparing the students for higher education and the other for practical occupations. In other words, it emphasised the bifurcation of courses at the upper classes of the high school - one leading to the entrance examination (matriculation) of the universities and the other for practical life; preparing youth for commercial or non-literary pursuits. This recommendation was accepted and an alternative examination to the institution's examination was started to be organised in every province. But the scheme remained unpopular as not even one-tenth of the students who appeared for matriculation came forward for the other stream, i.e., for the alternative examination.

Hartog Committee

Hartog Committee (1929) suggested diversification of curricula and diversion of students into industrial and commercial careers. The outcome of this recommendation was that provincial governments started technical, commercial or agricultural high schools and also began to give

large grants to assist schools which provided non-literary courses. This development helped in the introduction of some effective measures for providing alternative vocational or prevocational courses at the secondary stage.

Sargent Plan

The Sargent Plan (1944) recommended the re-organisation of high schools into two types of schools : Academic High Schools were visualised as institutions for imparting instruction in the Arts and Pure Sciences, while the Technical High Schools were visualised as institutions for giving training in the applied sciences as well as industrial and commerce subjects.

Agricultural stress to rural curriculum, domestic science as one of the options in girls' education were amongst the major recommendations. There were certain healthy developments in the provision of opportunities for crafts instruction, vocational education and preparation for commercial and secretarial practice, outside the regular school system in nineteen forties. This gave rise to significant increase in the facilities for vocational education at the secondary stage.

Some of these facilities were:

- (i) Polytechnics for training-technicians
- (ii) Industrial institutes for training skilled and semi-skilled workers.
- (iii) Introduction of secretarial and commercial courses.
- (iv) Provision for financing of training of para-medical personnel.
- (v) Programmes for training middle level workers in agriculture.

Mudaliyar Commission

The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53). also known as Mudaliyar Commission after the name of its Chairperson, recommended the re-organisation of the pattern of secondary education. As also recommended by the University Education Commission (1948-49), it sought the addition of the intermediate stage, to increase the period of secondary education by one year and to plan a three-year degree course at the University stage in place of the prevalent two-year first-degree course. It also recommended the diversification of curricula. The multipurpose schools contemplated were meant to provide terminal courses in Technology, Commerce, Agriculture, Fine Arts and Home Science and help to divert students to different walks of life and reduce pressure upon university entrance. It suggested agriculture as an important subject in rural schools as well as horticulture, animal husbandry and cottage industries. It recommended that girls in co-educational or mixed schools be taught subjects like Home Science, Needle work, Drawing, Painting and Music.

Kothari Commission

The Education Commission (1964-66) under the chairpersonship of Prof. D.S. Kothari was perhaps the first one to make a significant effort in free India to take a comprehensive view of the entire educational scene in the country. The Commission evolved a National Pattern of Education which did not exist till then. The most significant element of the Kothari Commission report was its explicit observation on education being the major and vital tool for development and on the linking of education to productivity. The main recommendations of the Commission relevant to Vocational Education were:

- (i) a national pattern of 10+2+3 system of education.
- (ii) work experience in the ten years of general education.
- (iii) vocationalization at +2 stage with a possible coverage of 50% of the enrolment therein.

Working Group (1985)

The Working Group, set up in 1985 under the Chairpersonship of Prof. Kulandaiswamy, recommended the classification of vocational courses under various heads, namely :

- (a) Agriculture,
- (b) Business and Commerce,
- (c) Engineering and Technology,
- (d) Health and Para-medical,
- (e) Home Science,
- (f) Humanities and others.

The target population conceived for vocational courses were

- Students upto grade X
- Higher Secondary Students
- Out-of-School Groups
- Tertiary level students

Work experience was allotted 20 per cent of the total time of the curriculum. The target of diversion to the world of work envisaged was 10 per cent students by 1990 and 25 per cent by 1995 respectively.

National Policy on Education (1986,1992)

The NPE emphasised that the introduction of systematic, well-planned and rigorously implemented programmes of vocational education was crucial in the proposed educational reorganisation. Original targets aimed at were the same as suggested by the Working Group of 1985. However, in view of the constraints experienced in implementation, the 1992 modified version of the NPE revised the targets of vocational education. The new time-frame for the purpose was to bring 10 per cent students under the vocational education fold by 1995 and 25 per cent by 2000.

Rarnamurthy Committee

The Ramarnurthy Committee (1990) in its review of the National Policy of Education (NPE) proposed that work should be the medium of education and it should be reflected through the content and process of education at all levels. No dichotomy between vocational and general education is to be practised. This is essential because general education, too, should provide the students with some competence to be able to earn their bread and butter. Vocational education too, should provide the students with some competence to be able to earn their bread and butter. Vocational education also provides students the feeling of dignity of labour which can go a long way in providing cohesion to the Indian society, which is fractured on the basis of elite grouping and working class. Thus, vocational education to all students will increase social mobility for the so-called 'blue-collared' professions. Also, the vocational education programmes should be directed both at the organised and unorganised sectors of employment.

The Current Status

The above discussion has established the need for Vocational Education. The debate is not on its need which is accepted by all, but on other issues related to its implementation. The difference of opinion arises in whether preparation for jobs should be the responsibility of college or school, that is, at which stage vocational education should be introduced. In short the whole historical development on Vocational Education should be visualized on the following lines :

- (a) Since 1854 positive thinking on the usefulness of occupational education to every situation of life is recognised and approved.
- (b) Time and again a strong desire to introduce Vocational Education along with general education has been expressed.

(c) But the only difference that could be noticed between different committees and commissions is in its further details; and thus on the basis of these difference the opinions can be clubbed into following groups:

- i) Higher Secondary Education is purely a preparatory stage for higher education, hence general academic content should dominate.
- ii) Higher Secondary Education stage being one of the exit points should prepare students both for higher education as well as for occupations. Hence there should be two streams - one preparing for higher education and the other for various jobs and self-employment.
- iii) Occupational education is an essential component in education and that too for the school going children. But for this a separate structure be established to cater to the needs of skill training.

Vocational education and training is presently being offered in the country primarily through the following categories of institutions:

- (i) Polytechnics;
- (ii) Industrial Training Institutes (ITIS);
- (iii) Specialised Institutions and schools like Technical, Arts and Craft Schools, Agriculture Schools, Forestry Schools, Nursing Schools Commercial Training Schools etc.;
- (iv) Vocational Education at the +2 level within the school system.

Polytechnics and ITIs

Polytechnics and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) have, for long, been recognised as the main institutions conducting vocational training programme outside the school system. The **Craftsman Training Scheme** was introduced in 1950 for imparting skill training in various vocational trades to meet the skilled work force requirement of the industry on the one hand and to reduce unemployment among educated youth by equipping them with employable skills on the other. The period of training varies normally from 1 year to 3 years while entry qualifications vary from 8th standard to 12th standard or equivalent depending upon the trades. The National Trade Certificates awarded to the successful candidates is a recognised qualification for recruitment to relevant subordinate posts and services in Central State Government establishments.

The polytechnics are also offering diploma level courses in a number of trades which are well received in the job market. Training is imparted in at least 42 engineering and 22 non-engineering designated trades.

Centrally Sponsored Vocationalization of Secondary Education

As we have already learned, the National Policy on Education, 1986 accorded high priority to vocationalization at secondary stage and set up a target of diverting 10% students at +2 level to the vocational stream by 1995 and 25% by 2000 A.D. In pursuance of the above, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education was launched in February 1988 with the following objectives: '

enhancing individual employability;

reducing mis-match between demand and supply of skilled workforce, and providing a alternative to those pursuing higher education without any aim or purpose.

For proper implementation, the scheme envisages setting up of a separate management structure at various levels in each State i.e. Directorate, SCERT, Districts and schools. Substantial financial assistance is provided by the Central Government to States and UTs including 100% assistance for construction of work sheds, procurement of equipment, district vocational surveys, workshops for development of curriculum/instructional material/text books, 50% assistance for raw-material, field visits of students, stipend for apprenticeship training and towards salary of the staff at all levels (75% in case of teaching posts). The programme had been started by all States and UTs (except Lakshdweep) and 18055 vocational sections had been sanctioned in 6280 schools all over the country, creating a capacity for vocational education for 9.02 lakh students at the Senior Secondary level till 1995. At least 150 courses are presently being offered under the scheme. The courses are selected on the basis of assessment of local demand through district vocational surveys to ensure training as per the needs of the job market.

Central Institute of Vocational Education (CIVE)

A large infrastructure has been created for 'vocationalisation of education in India. A Central Institute of Vocational Education was set up at Bhopal as a constituent unit of NCERT, in July 1993 to provide technical and academic support to the programme.