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National Skill Qualification Framework at Schools: Background of Students

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ABSTRACT

Across the world, investments in education and skills development—from preschool through post-secondary education to vocational training—have high returns. Many students who manage to enroll in education or training programs do not complete their studies and miss out on obtaining formal qualifications, which can dramatically reduce the return on the educational investments in terms of lifetime earning potential. The main objective of this research paper is to find out background of students who studies NSQF vocational courses and focus upon the skill development programs for the students, belonging to deprived, marginalized and socio-economically weaker sections of the society. Due to lack of financial resources as well as other causes, related to their home and personal lives, they experience barriers within the course of acquisition of education. But they also aspire to promote better livelihoods opportunities and sustain their living conditions in an appropriate manner. Therefore, with the initiation of skill development programs, they are able to acquire opportunities to improve their skills and abilities. In rural communities too, there have been initiation of training centers that contribute in honing the skills and competencies of rural individuals, particularly in generating productive outcomes.

Keywords: Background, Framework, Disadvantaged Students, Programs, Qualification, Skills Development, Vocational Training.

INTRODUCTION

The development of skills can contribute to structural transformation and economic growth by enhancing employability and labor productivity and helping countries to become more competitive. Investment in a high-quality workforce can create a virtuous cycle, where relevant and quality skills enable productivity growth and foreign direct investment, which result in more and better jobs for the current workforce and more public and private investment in the education and training system. This, in turn, increases the employability and productivity for both the current and future workforce.

Vocational Training

Technical and vocational education and training —which can last anywhere from six months to three years— can give young people, especially women, the skills to compete for better paying jobs. Nevertheless, more needs to be done in terms of engaging local employers to ensure that the curriculum and delivery of these programs responds to labor market needs. It may involve imparting classroom instructions, hands-on training or a combination of both. Secondary and higher secondary education in India usually includes one or two vocational subjects. Still, real vocational training is imparted outside the formal education system and it often leads to a certification or a diploma. You may also undergo vocational training directly as an apprentice or a trainee with or without any formal qualification.

Vocational training within the country is provided through the mode of informal and formal education. The Industrial Training Institutes have been established to make provision of vocational training (Vocational and Life Skills Training, 2017). In the present existence, there are number of individuals, primarily belonging to economically weaker sections of the society, who are acquiring vocational training. They are honing their skills in terms of various fields, such as, carpentry, plumbing, electric work, repair work, and so forth and are creating livelihoods opportunities.

The National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF)

NSQF is a nationally integrated education and competency-based framework that enables persons to acquire desired competency levels. The National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) organizes qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude. These levels, graded from one to ten, are defined in terms of learning outcomes which the learner must possess regardless of whether they were acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning. It is, therefore, a nationally integrated education and competency-based skill and quality assurance framework that will provide for multiple pathways, horizontal as well as vertical, including vocational education, vocational training, general education and technical education, thus linking one

level of learning to another higher level. This will enable a person to acquire desired competency levels, transit to the job market and at an opportune time, return for acquiring additional skills to further upgrade their competencies. NSQF in India was notified on 27th December 2013.

BRIEF REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Choudhury (1990) performed a study to find out the vocational aspirations, occupational and academic choice of students. The mass of the students preferred the science stream for continuing their studies and future career. The study did not find any relationship between the occupation of fathers and occupational choices of the students.

Kaur (1990) undertook study of academic and vocational aspirations of students belonging to diverse socio-economic locals of Jammu Division. Found that both academic and vocational aspirations are influenced by sex, socio-economic status, and locality when taken independently. Urban students differed extensively from their rural counterparts in their academic preferences and vocational aspirations. While rural students were observed to aspire for high academic degree in arts, the urban students aspired for high professional degrees in science.

Sungoh (1991) performed a study of vocational education and attitude towards vocational education in East Khasi Hills Meghalya. He found that there was no considerable distinction in the attitude towards vocational education between pre-university female and male; rural and urban; commerce and science students; but the distinction was considerable between tribal and non-tribal, arts and commerce, arts and science students.

Sundararajan and Sarah (1993) found in their studies teachers' attitude towards vocational education in the higher secondary schools in Tamil Nadu. He examined the relative significance given by the higher secondary students to vocational opportunities. From 8 higher secondary schools five hundred sixty students of higher secondary stage were randomly selected in Chidambaram District. It was found that the male and female did not be different considerably with regard to their first choice on three vocations namely the medical, engineering and administration. No important distinction was found in respect of first two vocations but noteworthy differentiation was seen in respect of third vocation of District Collector, with respect of the other categories of students, noteworthy differences in the percentage were found with regard to all vocations. There was no relationship between the gender and most preferred vocations.

Arora (1998) performed a pilot study on general educational and vocational aspirations of students of Class XII - preparation of an interview schedule. He found that: (1) the percentage of male obtaining marks above 75 per cent was higher than that of female. (2) Out of 19 percent of the students whose fathers were postgraduates, about percent obtained marks above 75 percent out of 10 percent students whose fathers were professional degree or diploma holders about 1.34 percent students obtained marks above 75 percent.(3) None of the male whose fathers were doctors, engineers or teachers obtained mark less than 45 percent. (4) 59.39 percent female of the science stream belonged to the income group between Rs 10,000 and Rs 20,000, and out of these 31.26 percent female aspired to join the medical course. (5) The sex-wide degree of importance of reasons motivating students to pursue higher education was also studied.

Desai and Whiteside (2000) performed a study and analyzed the views of the restricted number of graduates from secondary vocational courses entered the world of workforce and reported that commerce and technical courses attract more students. On the subject of socio-economic background of students and ex-students, it was found that students from inferior and less privileged background like to enter vocational stream. With observe to disparity in choices of course in relation to income of family, it was found that lower family income background were more represented in the home science courses, while highest Family income backgrounds were not represented in the technical courses. It was found 37 percent of vocational students come from family that has income below Rs 1500 per month. The study also approved the finding of other studies that students from underprivileged background were more represented in the Vocational Education Program. On the issue of job search, ex-students reported that the waiting period has been prolonged and complicated. Conclusion, it established the findings of other states which have shown that the prerequisite of vocational secondary education does not indicate that student will automatically get employment after completion of a vocational course.

Alonzo (2011) performed a study on analysis of career and technology programs in Texas ESC Region in high schools. In his study compared to the graduation rates of the students enrolled in Career and Technology (CTE) programs with those who were not in CTE. The findings of the study proved that most of the groups' graduation rates were extensively related with CTE programs. The group of students who were measured to be Economically Deprived was most impacted by CTE programs while the Special Education students were slightest impacted. His study found Career and Technology programs of the one area are well aligned with the vocation force demand of the same industrial region.

Goyal and Tome (2015) performed a study to analyze the role of human resource development and vocational education and training in Indian economy. They found that it is growing for India to become developed. There is need to give attention in human resource development and vocational education rather than general education. The government goals for 2022 are enormous and aimed for HRD and VET are anticipated to transform the India's economy and society.

Rationale of the Study

The development of nations requires skilled manpower and vocational education prepares them for the job. Also, the demand for skilled labor has increased manifold in both the business and government sectors. Furthermore, over the year the vocational education has diversified immensely.

Moreover vocational courses come as a surprise package as students gets the opportunity to enhance and get trained to improve their natural talents and skills. Besides, they become highly successful in their field and fetch good packages. In conclusion, the students who complete these courses are better at a job than those who only receive an academic education. Also, it is an asset of the country that helps the economy to develop and grow. In addition, there is a high demand for these skilled people in both the government and the business sector. Above all, it benefits students, society, nation, and employers.

There are also those set of students who are not able to cope with main stream education. This could be because of economic reasons or academic in-capabilities. So what are the options available to them, such that they lead a dignified life without being exploited or being vulnerable? Introducing skill training at a young age will go a long way in directing these students to opportunities that will have a larger impact on the general fabric of the workforce in this country. Apart for these, introducing students to some of the employable skills mentioned above will also help them prepare and adapt to real work situations without much effort. It will ease the transition phase from being a student to being a professional.

The answers to these questions will reveal the background of students of NSQF vocational education in the schools, which will enable the authority to do something for the improvement. The vocational courses at senior secondary stage are to be regarded as a preparation of an increasingly large number of school leavers for different vocations in life.

1) What is the background of NSQF senior secondary school students in Kurukshetra ?

Statement of the Problem

To address the questions rose in the previous section the proposed research problem was formulated as below:
National Skill Qualification Framework at Senior Secondary Schools: Background of Students.

Objective of the Study

1. To find out the background of NSQF Senior Secondary Schools in Kurukshetra.
2. To point and conclude the importance of NSQF vocational education at Senior Secondary stage of education in Kurukshetra.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The methodology adopted by the researcher in the present study is discussed and presented under the following heads:

1. Method of the Study
2. Population and Sample
3. Construction of Tools
4. Collection of Data
5. Statistical Treatment of Data

Methods

A descriptive survey approach was used to collect data for the present study.

Population and Sample

Population of the present study has been discussed under the following heads:

1. Population and sample of vocational students

Population and sample of schools

There were 6 Senior Secondary Schools in Kurukshetra where vocational courses were offered. All these schools constituted population of the present study. As the number of senior secondary schools offering vocational courses

was large, sampling was random. Thus 6 Senior Secondary Schools offering vocational subjects were covered in this study.

Population and sample of Vocational Students

Sample selection was done random as the number of students enrolled in vocational courses at senior secondary level was large. All the 6 senior secondary schools offering vocational courses in the State were visited and 4 random students of each IX to XII were selected of each vocational subjects present on the day of data collection formed the sample. As such, the sample of the present study came to be 192 students.

Construction of Tools

To develop tools, the researcher first consulted different kinds of documents related to the study, interviewed experts having knowledge of vocational education, teachers and students of vocational education. The following are the tools developed by the investigator for collection of data relevant for the study:

1. Questionnaire for studying the background of the students.

Collection of Data

The required data for the present study were collected from both secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources comprised of books, journals, annual reports of SCERT, office documents, internet, e-book, e-journals and files etc., whereas primary sources comprised of students.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data obtained after tabulation were analyzed quantitatively. For quantitative analysis descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were used. Interpretation of data on the bases of above method was used for findings and conclusions.

Findings and Conclusions of the Study of Background of NSQF Students

1. **Distribution of Class and course wise NSQF students**
   1) The total number of 1028 students enrolled in NSQF vocational courses at SSS level.
   2) 31.32 percent were NSQF students of Class IX.
   3) 30.35 percent were NSQF students of Class X.
   4) 23.24 percent were NSQF students of Class XI.
   5) 15.07 percent were NSQF students of Class XII.

   Percentage of students is decreasing it means student's dropout is increasing from class IX to XII.

2. **Hometown of NSQF students**
   1) Students from rural constituted the percentage 85.41 of NSQF vocational students.
   2) Whereas 13.02 percent were from semi urban.
   3) Urban constitute the smallest students 1.56 percent.

   NSQF vocational students from rural constituted the utmost percentage.

3. **Local and non-local NSQF student**
   1) 100 Percent of students in NSQF vocational courses were local.

   Percentages of non-local students were lower than those of local students in NSQF vocational courses.

4. **Age of NSQF students**
   1) NSQF students of 14 years & below constitute 28.12 percent.
   2) 17.18 percent NSQF students of 15 years.
   3) Among the NSQF students of 16 years, has the highest enrolment with 30.30 percent.
   4) NSQF students of 17 years have enrolment with 19.79 per cent.
   5) There is only 0.04 percent has the lowest enrolment of 18 years and above.

5. **Gender of NSQF students**
   1) There were 62.50 percent of NSQF students were female.
   2) 37.50 percent male students studying in NSQF vocational courses.

   Percentage of gender data shows that female students studying in NSQF vocational courses are more than the male students.

6. **Fathers' occupation of NSQF students**
   1) Highest percentage of 40.62 percent of occupation among fathers of NSQF vocational students was Laborer.

2) The second highest percentages 25.52 percent of fathers are into Business.
3) Whereas 18.36 percent of fathers are engaged in private company.
4) 10.93 percent of fathers work as Farmer.
5) Rests of the fathers engaged in other occupations are only 0.04 percent.

Occupations of fathers of NSQF students reveals that no student whose father is Government servants. And mostly student's background is marginal.

7. Fathers' educational qualification of NSQF students

1) Majorities 51.56 percent of the fathers of NSQF vocational students were with up-to 8th and below qualifications.
2) 31.25 percent of fathers of vocational students are Class 10th passed.
3) And 6.25 percent fathers are illiterate.
4) Only 9.89 percent of the fathers are 12th and 1.04 percent graduates.
5) There were no father M.Phil and PhD degree holders.

Fathers of NSQF vocational students are not highly qualified.

8. Mothers' occupation of NSQF students

1) Occupation of the highest percentage of mothers of NSQF vocational students 85.41 percent is House wife.
2) Second utmost percentage 8.85% of the mothers is occupied in Laborer.
3) Whereas 3.12 percent are occupied in private company.
4) And 1.56 per cent is in other occupations.
5) Rest of the mothers 1.04 percent works in business.

Highest percentage of occupation House wife constituted among the mothers of NSQF vocational students. It was followed by other occupation like Laborer, private company and business. No student whose mother is Government servants and some mothers who were engaged in other occupations.

9. Mother's educational qualification of NSQF students

1) Majority 73.46 percent of the mothers of vocational students were with class Up-to 8th and below qualifications.
2) 14.06 percent and 10.41 percent of mothers of NSQF vocational students are Illiterate and class 10th respectively.
3) Only 1.56 percent of the mothers are 12th and 0.52 percent graduates. There were no mother M.Phil and PhD degree holders.

Mothers of NSQF vocational students are not highly qualified.

10. To study NSQF vocational courses helpers in decision making

1) Advised by teachers were majority of 56.77 percent of the NSQF students.
2) Decision make by themselves in pursuing NSQF vocational courses were 23.95 percent.
3) 15.62 percent by friends to study NSQF vocational courses.
4) Only some students 3.64 percent were advised by parents.

Decision make by students of taking NSQF vocational courses are more influenced by teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

Hence, development of skills is regarded as an important aspect in sustaining one's living conditions in a better way. Skills development has acquired priority place within the development discourse of the country. Primarily two sets of skills contribute to achieving success in employment opportunities, these are, life skills and technical/vocational skills. Life skills are defined as the psychosocial abilities for the adaptive and positive behaviour that enables the individuals to cope with demands and challenges of everyday life in an effective manner. These include, cognitive skills for conducting an analysis and using information; personal skills for managing personal agency and managing oneself and communication skills for establishing interactive terms with other individuals.

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