National Education Policy 2020: Reimagining Vocational Education

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to overcome the social status hierarchy associated with vocational education and suggests the integration of vocational education into mainstream education in all educational institutions in a phased manner over the next decade. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 also highlighted that there is a need to ‘re-consider the epistemology’ of vocational education afresh by bridging the gap between academic and vocational streams and the curriculum should provide space for learning beyond subject boundaries so that children and young people can make connections between different areas of learning. According to NEP 2020, by 2025, at least 50% of learners shall have vocational exposure through school and higher education. Every child is supposed to learn at least one vocation and be exposed to several more. The NEP 2020 stated that there will be ‘no hard separation’ between the ‘vocational and academic streams. Universal access to all children of the country to quality holistic education - including vocational education - from preschool to Grade XII will be ensured, while allowing for flexibility and choice of subjects. School students will have 10 bagless days in a year, during which they are to be exposed to a vocation of choice. This will be supplemented by experiential vocational learning from Grades 6 to 8. Every student will take a fun course during Grades 6 to 8 that gives a survey and hands on experience of vocational crafts. Skill labs will also be set up and created in the schools in a Hub and Spoke model, which will allow other schools to use the facility. The vocational education system in schools will be reintegrated under National Skills Qualifications Framework for providing training to the dropouts. Bachelor in Vocation (B.Voc.) programme offered by higher education institutions is to be expanded and a credit-based framework will facilitate mobility across general and vocational education. A National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) will be formulated by
the General Education Council (GEC) and it shall be in sync with the NSQF. A National Committee for Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE) consisting of experts in vocational education and representatives from across Ministries, in collaboration with industry will oversee the efforts of the implementation of VET.

At the Secondary stage i.e., for students of ages 15 to 18 years or Grades IX to XII, every student will receive training in at least one vocation, and more if they are interested. The entire four-year period in secondary school, Grades IX to XII, can be used not just to expose a student to different vocations but to help him/her to progressively build a considerable degree of expertise (number of courses) that a particular student takes should be left entirely to them. Specific mention of inclusion in the context of children with disabilities is made, with the emphasis on the use of assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools, as well as adequate and language-appropriate teaching-learning material, considering the safety aspects.

Regarding the appointment of teachers, the NEP 2020 has laid emphasis on recruiting adequate teachers of vocational subjects to schools and school complexes as well as hiring a local eminent person or expert as a master instructor in various subjects, such as traditional local arts, vocational crafts, entrepreneurship, agriculture, or any other subject where local expertise exists to benefit students and help preserve and promote local knowledge (Lok Vidya).