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Nai-Talim and Vocational Education in New Education Policy 2020

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Abstract

Development of strengthen society, self-reliant and self-dependent human being is the main aim of Nai Talim. Same voice emerges from New Education Policy 2020 introduced by Government of India. To ensure vocational education in effective manner, New Education Policy 2020 provides lots of suggestions and motivation to do show. Though the policy has been introduced but the action plan is in the process of development. At this scenario a live model or path is needed to prepare a foolproof action plan. In this reference Nai-Talim, which is also called as Basic Education proposed by Mahatma Gandhi in 193, will be a live model. It is a unique and indigenous education system that has potential to fulfil all required aims of education whether it is concerned with bread-and butter or related with sustainable development. Nai-Talim provides a hope to make vocational education more organized, effective and popular among the youth and society by its grass root approach. In this paper an endeavour has been made to discuss about the concepts and problems of Vocational Education along with a detail explanation about its role to pave the path of establishment and effective promotion of vocational education.

The prime concern of education is to liberate human being from all type of slavery and dependency. Development of self-reliant and self-dependent human being is the main aim

of Nai Talim. Same voice emerges from New Education Policy 2020. The real picture of education can be seen in the perfect combination of knowledge, skills and value by which an individual could be able to earn his/her bread and butter and live a value based happy and productive life. But unfortunately, today's Indian education system is not fit to achieve its prime concern of making students independent and able to ensure their livelihood. To ensure vocational education in effective manner, New Education Policy 2020(Point 16.4, p.45) suggests that this policy aims to overcome the social status hierarchy associated with vocational education and requires integration of vocational education programmes into mainstream education in all education institutions in a phased manner. Beginning with vocational exposure at early ages in middle and secondary school, quality vocational education will be integrated smoothly into higher education. It will ensure that every child learns at least one vocation and is exposed to several more.

Further NEP 2020(pint 16.5, p.45) says, "By 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education, for which a clear action plan with targets and timelines will be developed". Though the policy has been introduced but the action plan is in the process of development. At this scenario a live model or path is needed. Defiantly this live model is Nai-Talim which also called as Basic Education proposed by Mahatma Gandhi in 1937. The aim of 'Bread and Butter' is assumed as the primary concern of education. All Indian educational thinkers are also claimed this aim in the first priority. Mahatma Gandhi said that ensuring self-dependency in all aspects of life is the prime concern of education. Students should be taught about the dignity of labour since their childhood. In short, the real meaning of education can be seen in self-dependency to fulfil all own needs and freedom from all types of slavery.

India is the youngest and second largest populated country in the world. As of 2020, share of population in the age group 0-14 is 26.16 percent. Share of economically active population (15-59 years) is 63.72 percent. Just 10.12% Indians have age more than 60 year (Staistics Time 2020). In this scenario, there is a hope to be recognized as a developed country. We have tremendous youth energy and hands to shape the destiny of India. But unfortunately, after more than seven decades of independence we could not considerably shape our education system to cop up the demand of 21st century. Still, we are just following 19th century education system which is majorly based on theoretical framework of knowledge. 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-2017) estimated that only a very small percentage of the Indian workforce in the age group of 19-24 (less than 5%) received formal vocational education Whereas in

countries such as the USA the number is 52%, in Germany 75%, and South Korea it is as high as 96%. These numbers only underline the urgency of the need to hasten the spread of vocational education in India. Consequently we just producing degree holders not educated or skilled citizens (NEP 2020, point 16.1, p.44).

To meet the objectives stated in NEP 2020, paradigm of education should be shifted from-literacy to education, theory based learning to practical skill oriented learning, desiring government job to self-creation of job, and just preparing for a job to be an example of entrepreneurship. A live model, experience, and guidelines are needed to make it visible at ground. This valuable work can be done with the help of Nai-Talim because this model works from grassroots level, have capacity to give right direction to youth energy and to skilful hand to shape the destiny of India.

The aim of this paper is to discuss about the Nai-talim in perspective of vocational Education. Author has tried to discuss about the meaning and importance of vocational education as well as try to provide a description about a live model of education named 'Nai-Talim', which has the potential to work as a torchbearer in paving the path of vocational education to fulfil the aim of NEP 2020.

Meaning of Vocational Education

Vocational education can be seen as a branch of education which ensures specialized skill oriented knowledge. It is related with the skill of earning livelihood and being a self dependent as well as productive citizen. Vocational education prepares individuals for jobs. It has adequate employment potentialities. Vocational education is generally defined as the education that provides the specialized professional knowledge and skills, which attribute professional adequacy to the trainee and are the focus of every vocational training program (Mortaki,2012). The American Vocational Educational Association has defined vocational education as education designed to develop skills, abilities, understandings, attitudes, work habits, and appreciations needed by workers to enter and make progression employment on a useful and productive basis (Harris 1960, p. 155)". Therefore vocational education can be seen as a special branch of education which includes such type of education and training that aims to the gaining of qualifications, skills or technical knowledge that are helpful to lead specific profession, art or employment.

Importance of Vocational education

Wardha Committee (1937), Rahakrishnan committee(1948), Secondary Education Commission (1952-53), The Indian Education Commission (1966) , New Education Policy (1986) and other all commissions and committees along with New Education policy 2020 already emphasized on the Vocationalization of education due to its importance in making students skillful and workable in society. The utmost aim of vocational education is to improve the vocational efficiency of the students and eliminate the unemployment from the country. Vocational education and training plays an important role to promote sustainable economic growth and the socioeconomic development of countries, with benefits for individuals, their families, local communities, and in turn, the whole society (Maclean, Jagannathan, and Sarvi, 2013). The importance of Vocational Education can be seen in the light of following points-

1. To develop a healthy attitude among students towards work and life.
2. To enhance employability.
3. To provide a sense of entrepreneurship.
4. To reduce the mismatch between the demand and supply of skill man-power.
5. To provide an alternative for those intending to pursue higher education without particular interest or purpose.
6. To provide an orientation and required skill for various types of productive works.
7. To make self-employment possible.
8. To provide opportunities of work to fulfill the needs of women, rural and tribal students and other deprived sections of society.
9. To give opportunities for professional growth, career improvement and lateral entry into courses of general, technical and professional education through appropriate bridge courses.

Challenges in effective assurance of vocational education in India

After passing seven decades of independence, India is still in the group of developing country. Our economic developmental growth rate is not much satisfactory as it is expect from a second largest populated country as well as a young country. There would be lots of reasons behind it. But the negligence of skill based education is the key factor for it. It is a common feeling of national and malty-national companies that majority of youth has no skill and enthusiaztion to work in their companies. Our young force is neither educated nor

trained; just they are literate and unemployable. Even in society, vocational education is not in first priority of parents as well as students too. There are many challenges in this concern. These challenges and issues are related with psychological, sociological, political and economical aspects of human being.

Issues related with psychological aspects are more serious rather than other aspects. Negative attitude towards vocational education, lack of interest and proper orientation towards vocational education are much serious problems. Vocational education considers as a non-intellectual work too that leads inferiority complex among students. It is a common feeling of society that vocational education is for those people who cannot do good performance in their academic field. So, students as well as their parents are not showing eagerness as required for vocational education in India. These types of thinking patterns must be checked and a positive atmosphere should be created for the promotion of vocational education.

Education is for the society and by the society. Education is the only mean that has the capacity to change the society in right direction. Slavery, more than thousands of years, has changed the mindset of society about the skill based education. Skill based or vocational education is being seen inferior than general stream education in society. There is more respect for office or file work than labour or technical work like plumbing, carpentry, book binding etc. Therefore, Vocational education has not obtained its due respect in society.

Though all commissions and committees are recommended for proper establishment of vocational education system according to the need of society but the political willingness are not appeared as it was required. 'The Economic Survey of the year 2017-18 shows that the states and the Union government together have been investing less than 3 per cent of the country's GDP in education (Indian Express, January 2018)'. More than 85% of the total educational budget is being spent on general stream education. So it is easy to understand that how much our government is serious towards the promotion of vocational educational. That's why the number of required institutes and qualified teacher, as well as infrastructure is not arranged.

Vocational education is directly related with the educational aim of bread and butter. It is the branch of education which considered as mean of economic development but the money that are provided to skilful people for their skill based or technical job are not satisfactory. Vocational institutes are not up-to date and also not provide new courses. Therefore

vocationally trained people cannot achieve their dignified life in society due to outdated skills and technical trainings.

On the basis of above discussion it is clear that positive attitude, work culture, orientation towards physical work, introduction of skill based education, positive changes in the mind set of society are necessary to make Vocational education effective and popular among society. For this work basic foundation about skill based knowledge is necessary. Unfortunately today's education system cannot solve this problem. So an indigenous skill based, productive work orientated education system is needed. For this purpose Nai-Talim (Basic education) will be useful.

Nai-Talim as a unique model of Skill based Education System

There is a need of proper modal to shift the paradigm of education from information to skill based learning smoothly. To establish the skill based education system there is need of foundational work. We are fortunate enough to fulfill this purpose because we have a live model to implement it. The name of this model is Nai-Talim or Basic Education. "The reason for calling the scheme as basic education are the following: (i) It is based on the ancient Indian culture and it lays down the minimum education which every child is entitled to receive without the distinction of caste or creed. (ii) It intimately related to the basic needs and interests of the child and makes use of his innate potentialities for creative and productive work. (ii) It is closely associated with basic occupation of the community, the child hails from(Sony,1998, p.100)".

The concept of Nai-Talim was given by the Mahatma Gandhi in 1937. This concept was not the result of Mahatma's overnight dream, but it was the result of good experiences acquired from the different experiments which were informally carried out in South Africa's Phoenix and Tolstoy Ashramas during Satyagraha and the deep reflection on the education of Indian education system and its impact on society. Like ancient education system, socially useful works is the core component of the education in Nai-Talim. Agriculture, Carpentry, husbandry, Horticulture, Dairy Science and Technology , Healthcare, Health and Beauty Studies, Medical science, Clothing, Construction, Textile Design, Music, services related beauty etc are some popular skill based or craft oriented work that is necessary to lead teaching learning process. Students are required to choose one or more skill for specialization. These specialized skills are as similar as the socially useful work were divided in sixteen knowledge are as that also called as 'Solah Kalas' in ancient education system.

The core of Nai-Talim is well narrated in the word of Jeyapragasam (2010, p.26), he write, “Mahatma Gandhi visualized an alternative and new civilization based on the principals welfare of all at all levels (Sarvodaya) and welfare of the last first at all levels (Antyodaya). He investigated a new education policy and philosophy – Nai Talim – to suit his vision.” The Wardha scheme of Education(1937), popularly known as ‘Basic education’ occupies a unique place in the field of elementary education in India. This scheme was the first attempt to develop an indigenous scheme of education in British India by Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation. As a nationalist leader he fully realized that the British system of education could not serve the socio-economic need of the country. The main features of Basic education are-

1. **Free and compulsory education:** Gandhiji wanted education to be free and compulsory for all boys and girls between the ages of seven to fourteen. He evolved a scheme of education which would be in harmony with the culture and civilization of the Indian people and which would solve the problem of mass education in a practical way.
2. **Education through craft:** The basic idea of this scheme is to impart education through some craft or productive **work**. Craft work helps the child to acquire sensor and motor co-ordination and to appreciate the value of honest labour. The opinion of Gandhiji was that the method of training the mind through village handicraft from the beginning as the central focus would promote the real, disciplined development of the mind.
3. **Education in mother tongue:** Without the capacity of speaking effectively, reading and writing correctly as well as lucidly, no one can develop precision of thought or clarity of ideas. Moreover, it is a means of introducing the child to the rich heritage of his people’s ideas, emotions and aspirations.
4. **Self-reliance:** entire education system should be Self-reliance and free from government financial support. The expenditure must be earned from the student made product.
5. **Social reconstruction** is the prime concern of this education system.
6. **Flexibility in curriculum** is a prime characteristics entire education system.
7. **Development of ideal citizen and harmonious society** is the ultimate aim of this education system.

These all key features of basic education can be seen easily in the New Education Policy 2020 of India. Above all features are implemented in the basic and post basic schools of Gujarat still today from very begging of its establishments. There are more than four hundred basic

schools are running in all over Gujarat. The main thing is that these schools are in remote areas of Gujarat. Craft centric education system of this modal makes every child skilled in some particular work and provide some basic inputs to be entrepreneur.

Role of Nai-Talim as the foundation of Vocational Education

The craft education is nothing but the well associated learning process of knowledge and skill which enable an individual to be independent and socially useful. The core of Gandhi's proposal was the introduction of productive handicrafts in the school curriculum. The idea was not simply to introduce handicrafts as a compulsory school subject, but to make the learning of a craft the axis of the entire teaching program. It implied a radical restructuring of the mindset of society and sociology of school knowledge in India, where productive handicrafts had been associated with the lowest groups in the hierarchy of castes.

Knowledge of the production processes involved in crafts, such as spinning, weaving, leatherwork, pottery, metal-work, basket-making and book-binding, agriculture, carpentry etc; generate a sense of respect among children towards physical labour and vocational education.

The social philosophy and the curriculum of basic education thus favoured the child belonging to the lowest stratum of society. This is how it implied a program of social transformation. It sought to alter the symbolic meaning of education and thereby to change the established structure of opportunities for education. Though the reason behind this craft based education was given in that time, but in recent the social scenario is not changed, situation is still same as it was before independence. The role of Nai-Talim in insurance of effective vocational education model can be seen in given points-

1. Schools based on the principals of Nai-Talim, are bound to give equal importance to physical labour and mental exercises in its educational program. This thing generates a positive attitude towards hard skills from the primary level that will be helpful to learn some more complex technical skills in future too.
2. To link knowledge with skill is the prime characteristics of basic education. This system believes that true knowledge enable individual to earn its livelihood by own skill and endeavor. The association of knowledge of different subject with any useful local craft or socially useful productive work is the prime task of this system. So this education system has potential to provide a foundation to be successful technician as

well as a creative skillful person who posses high level of intellect and knowledge to think rightly.

3. The country, however, has a big challenge ahead as it is estimated that only 2.3% of the total workforce in India has undergone formal skill training as compared to 68% in UK, 75% in Germany, 52% in USA, 80% in Japan and 96% in South Korea(according to DNPSDE,2015). To properly address this challenge, initiation must be started from the primary level. The concern should not be just related with the quantity of skilled person but it must be stress upon the quality of skilled person too. Because, all of sudden, all student cannot be trained properly in any specific skill to provide world class expertise. So a model is required that make foundation to promote it. In this context Basic education can solve this problem because this education compulsorily start with any craft or hand work from primary level which provide fundamental technical skill and habit from where specific skill can be easily acquired.
4. A skill gap study has been conducted by National Skill development Cooperation in 2014, which indicates that there is an additional requirement of 11.92 crore skilled manpower in twenty four key sectors by 2022 (According to DNPSDE, 2015). To achieve this task the model of Basic Education can be employed. According to the principal of Basic Education all schools should be directed by policy to make arrangement of a local craft centric activity to ensure the basic training of hands and mind. If younger student will take such type of training at primary stage then they will be able to learn specific skill qualitatively with full of pride.
5. One of the major challenges faced in the country today is the public perception that views skilling to be the last resort meant for those who have not been able to progress in the formal academic system. Skill based learning is seen negatively by society. To change this perception basic education system will be useful because there hand job or craft work and subject knowledge are given same importance. If this education system will implement then it will be compulsory for every child to go through craft work that will be helpful in rising love and interest towards productive work.
6. The leading principals of basic education are not only beneficial to promote hard skill but these are also useful to incorporate soft skill too. Daily as well as occasional curricular and co-curricular activities like managing assembly, and hostel kitchen, social work, organization educational tour, participating awareness program on different social issues, game, and celebration of festivals are the necessary part of basic schools. These activities provides enough opportunity to learn the lesson of soft skills

like communication, co-operation, team work, leadership, planning, management, and time as well as resource management etc. along with some hard skills. This additional lesson of soft skills will be useful for an individual to be professional in future.

7. It can remove social conflicts and tensions in the society by inculcating a sense of dignity of labour. It can eradicate the social evil of untouchability. Economically it creates productive labour since the emphasis is on job-oriented education. It can also become an instrument for rapid improvement in the standard of living of the people through increased production of goods and services.
8. The aim of skill based learning is not just to get mastery on any specific skill but it's more valuable aim is to prepare students for entrepreneurship. Basic education system can play an important role in this context. Teertha and others (2010, p. 56) rightly stated that after gaining the expertise with the products/processes, the students can try being entrepreneurs. If a group of students and teachers in a rural school can run a new technology gadget/process successfully then there would be enthusiasm for replicating it for economic gain.
9. There is no discrimination between general stream and vocational stream in the basics of Nai-Talim. Craft centric education is the prime place so there is no chance to see craft centric or skill base or vocational education as a supplementary of education. Therefore gaining mastery in some specific skill will be the status symbol in society rather than gaining just a general degree. In this way positive attitude will be generated in society.

Conclusion

It is important to restructure our education system to face the challenge of 21st century. Unemployment and the proper use of youth's energy is the big challenge in the way of prosperous and peaceful India. To effectively address these issues, promotion of vocational education is necessary and in this context the model of Nai-Talim is very beneficial. In establishing the skill based learning system, Nai-Talim can guide and provide a live model and experiences. The role of Nai-Talim can be seen in the context of making positive attitude towards labour, hand work, self-reliance, changing the mind set of society towards vocational education, linking to skill and knowledge with each other, and the initial training for entrepreneurship. The model of Nai-Talim is not only useful for training of hard skill but it is the most valuable in learning of life skills too. NCERT(2007,P.5) rightly stated in its

position paper on work and education, “Gandhian proposal of Nai Talim (Basic Education) was a radical departure from this Brahminical-cum-colonial paradigm insofar it challenged the dichotomy by placing productive manual work at the centre of school curriculum itself. As per this view, participation in productive work under conditions approximating to real-life situations is pedagogically linked to learning and simultaneously becomes the medium of knowledge acquisition, developing values and skill formation”. So it is a proper time to introduce Nai-talim to restructure the Indian education and promote as well as provide a sound foundation of vocational education. In this way, we shall not only implement NEP 2020 recommendations to create a prosperous India or provide employment to all by their own efforts but also a sustainably developed India too.

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