
AWARENESS ABOUT THE UTILITY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AMONG THE STUDENTS OF SECONDARY CLASSES

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portiapaul77@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

Education encompasses a diverse range of studies and is a vital tool for addressing challenges that arise from the various aspects of life, including religious, political, moral, economic, social, and personal concerns. Vocational education is defined as "any form of education whose primary and controlling purpose is to prepare youth for specific occupations, allowing individuals to support themselves within the contemporary economic landscape." This type of education emphasises self-reliance and encourages entrepreneurship. Ultimately, students who initially seek jobs can become creators of job opportunities. Vocational education serves as a cornerstone for the economic development of individuals, society, and the nation as a whole. It plays a crucial role in shaping the future of individuals and humanity. It is important to raise awareness among students regarding the scope and significance of vocational education.

Keywords: Vocational Education, Awareness, Utility, Academic self-image.

INTRODUCTION

Education as a Multidisciplinary Endeavour. Education encompasses a vast, multidisciplinary spectrum, serving as a critical mechanism to address challenges stemming from religious, political, moral, economic, social, and personal dimensions of life. It is a continuous process characterized by specific objectives that adapt to the evolving demands of society (Muthumanickam R. 2006, p. 2). The Spens Report on Secondary Education articulates education as the cultivation of distinct habits, memory, ideals, both manual and cognitive skills, intellectual interests, and moral concepts—fostering knowledge that transcends mere facts and conclusions to include methodologies. Swami Vivekananda further conceptualizes education as a natural, harmonious, and progressive unfolding of humanity's intrinsic potential.

DEFINING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (VE)

Vocational Education (VE) is characterized as any educational framework specifically aimed at preparing individuals for defined occupations, equipping them to navigate the complexities of contemporary economic conditions. Authentic vocational education is rooted in the identifiable requirements of particular professions or closely related occupational clusters. According to Webster's Dictionary, a 'vocation' refers to an appropriate employment or occupation—encompassing trade, business, or profession. Awareness of the practical value and future prospects offered by vocational education contributes positively to the academic self-image of secondary school students, fostering a sense of purpose and self-worth in their educational journey (Portia R, 2016). Thus, VE epitomises educational models designed to effectively position individuals for organised or reorganised gainful employment, regardless of whether it is pursued for financial gain.

KEY ATTRIBUTES OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

- VE is intrinsically oriented towards manual labour.
- It is craft-centric, focusing on the cultivation of specific skills.
- VE emphasizes productive application, targeting socially beneficial work.
- It plays a pivotal role in influencing individual trajectories and the broader future of society.

SIGNIFICANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational education is essential for fostering resourcefulness among individuals. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) highlights several critical dimensions of VE:

- Production Orientation: VE underpins the productive capabilities of rural youth, driving local development.
- Self-employment Opportunities: By fostering entrepreneurial skills, VE mitigates unemployment among educated youth.
- Technical Skill Development: Focusing on technical competencies increases job prospects for rural demographics, thereby alleviating poverty.

- Socio-economic Progression: VE serves as a vehicle for social and economic transformation through the engagement of vocationally educated youth.
- Life-Centric Activities: VE is predicated on practical life activities, forming a foundation for the economic advancement of individuals, enhancing economic output, and contributing to national development.
- Middle-Level Industrial Technology: VE is critical in shaping the middle-level manpower necessary for diverse sectors, including industrial technology, healthcare, and commerce.

In summary, vocational education transforms job seekers into job creators, thereby serving as a crucial catalyst for individual economic development, societal advancement, and national economic progress.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sehgal G.C.S. (1999) conducted a study titled "A Critical Study of Work Experience Programme at the Secondary Stage in the National Capital Territory of Delhi," which revealed several key findings: (1) There is a significant inadequacy of facilities, including teaching staff, tools, equipment, and laboratory resources. Insufficient storage space, lack of supporting staff, limited raw materials, and minimal community participation are major factors contributing to the ineffective implementation of the work experience program. (2) 51% of the teachers involved in work experience education were not trained specifically for this role but were general trained graduates. (3) Over 50% of the teachers indicated that the Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW) was valuable, with 96% of students expressing that it should be continued.

Yadav R.K. (2005), in his study "A Study of the Relationship Between Needs and Vocational Preferences of Adolescents," found that students exhibited a high need for achievement, while their need for exhibition was the lowest among all evaluated areas. The highest preferences were noted for executive roles, whereas there was a lesser inclination towards jobs related to music. Administrative work emerged as the most preferred field. Notably, the need for achievement showed a negative correlation with biological sciences. Additionally, while need preference did not exhibit significant correlations with any vocational areas, need order demonstrated a significant relationship with five fields of vocational preferences: biological sciences, computation, persuasive skills, linguistic abilities, and humanitarian efforts.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To find the level of awareness of students of secondary classes about the utility of vocational education in total and in terms of its dimensions.
- ✓ To find the level of awareness of students of secondary classes about the utility of vocational education in terms of Gender.(Male/Female)
- ✓ To find the level of awareness of students of secondary classes about the utility of vocational education in terms of locality. (Rural/Urban)
- ✓ To find the level of awareness of students of secondary classes about the utility of vocational education in terms of Father's occupation (A/DW/E/PB/P)
- ✓ To find the level of awareness of students of secondary classes about the utility of vocational education in terms of mothers' educational qualification. (D/I/UH/PD)

METHODOLOGY

The identified issue will be examined using the survey method of research. This study aims to explore the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable, along with selected background variables; therefore, it is classified as descriptive research.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Awareness about the Utility of Vocational Education (AAUVE)

In this context, the investigator refers to the scores obtained from the instrument designed to measure awareness about the utility of vocational education among secondary school students, which has been prepared and validated by the investigator.

Students of Secondary Classes

For this study, the investigator defines secondary class students as those in the 9th and 10th grades attending high and higher secondary schools.

Research Tools

The research tool assessing awareness about the utility of vocational education has been developed and validated by the investigator.

Data Analysis

1. H: The level of awareness among secondary students about the utility of vocational education with regard to its dimensions is average.

Table – 1: Awareness of students among secondary classes about the utility of VE in total and in terms of its dimensions

Dimensions	N	Low		Average		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
VE is an opening for non academic minded pupils (D1)	300	76	25.3	224	74.7	-	-
VE is a means for channelizing Physical Education(D2)	300	158	52.7	142	47.3	-	-
VE is useful for those who cannot go for higher education (D3)	300	140	36.7	81	27.0	79	26.3
VE is useful for those who crave for immediate employment (D4)	300	122	40.7	178	59.3	-	-
VE is useful for those who desire for self employment (D5)	300	120	40.0	76	25.3	104	34.7
Choosing VE due to interest(D6)	300	95	31.7	88	29.3	117	39.0
VE reduces the rush for higher education (D7)	300	201	67.0	99	33.0	-	-
VE is easy to offer in rural areas(D8)	300	144	48.0	156	52.0	-	-
Knowledge about employment opportunities for VE(D9)	300	75	25.0	148	49.3	77	25.7
Total	300	91	30.3	132	44.0	77	25.7

A large percentage of secondary class students falls under average category in total and in terms of its dimensions. (D1, D4, D8 &D9) of AAUVE, low in dimensions (D2, D3, D5&D7) and high in dimension (D6).

2. H: The level of awareness of students of secondary classes about the utility of VE in terms of Gender is average.

Table -2: Awareness of students of secondary classes about the utility of VE in terms of Gender

Gender	N	Low		Average		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	141	43	30.5	62	44.0	36	25.5
Female	159	48	30.2	70	44.0	41	25.8

The AAUVE in case of male students of secondary classes falls under average category.

3. H: The level of Awareness of students of secondary classes about the utility of VE in terms of locality is average.

Table – 3: Awareness of student's secondary classes about the utility of VE in terms of locality

Locality	N	Low		Average		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Rural	150	43	28.7	64	42.7	43	28.7
Urban	150	48	32.0	64	42.7	38	25.3

The AAUVE in case of rural and urban students of Secondary classes falls under average category.

4. H: The level of Awareness of student's secondary classes about the utility of VE in terms of their Father's occupation is average.

Table – 4: Awareness of students secondary classes about the utility of VE in terms of their Father's occupation

Father's Occupation	N	Low		Average		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Agriculture	85	24	28.2	38	44.7	23	27.1

Daily wages	126	36	28.6	56	44.4	34	27.0
Employee	20	6	30.0	9	45.0	5	25.0
Petty business	69	22	31.9	29	42.0	18	26.1

The AAUVE in case of Secondary classes students having fathers with different occupation falls under average category.

5. H: The level of Awareness of students secondary classes about the utility of VE in terms of their mother's educational Qualification is average.

Table – 5: Awareness of students secondary classes about the utility of VE in terms of their mother's educational qualification

Mother's Educational Qualification	N	Low		Average		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Illiterate	97	29	29.9	38	39.2	30	30.9
Up to higher secondary	198	61	30.8	79	39.9	58	29.3

The AAUVE, in case of Secondary class students, having a mother's educational qualifications, falls under the average category

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Awareness and Understanding of Vocational Education (AAUVE) among secondary school students is found to be at an average level.
2. It has been observed that secondary school students perform at an average level in dimensions D1, D4, D8, and D9; below average in dimensions D2, D3, D5, and D7; and above average in dimension D6 of the AAUVE.
3. The AAUVE is consistently average among both male and female secondary school students.
4. The AAUVE for rural and urban secondary school students is also found to be average.
5. The AAUVE is similarly average for secondary school students regardless of their mothers' educational qualifications.

CONCLUSION

There is an urgent need to educate students on the importance and opportunities associated with Vocational Education. Maintaining comprehensive records is vital, and efforts should be made to enhance the attractiveness of Vocational Education so that students feel valued and are motivated to build their self-confidence. The government should prioritize vocational education by establishing partnerships with local industries and providing recruitment opportunities for students. Furthermore, the government needs to organise awareness programs in rural areas to effectively promote this field.

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