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Role of Vocational Education in Generating Employment in Assam with Special reference to Rural Area

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ABSTRACT: The government has included vocational training courses in the NEP 2020 curriculum, which is centered on occupation and employment. It is imperative that all countries have robust vocational education systems. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which mandates that all educational institutions incorporate vocational education into mainstream education, points to the possibly unstable rise of vocational education in the nation. Vocational education plays an important role in generating employment opportunities particularly in rural areas in Assam which is far away from urban centres. This abstract will be highlighted the crucial role of vocational education in creating employment opportunities specially the rural people of the state. It explains the present scenario of vocational education, finding out obstacles and chalked out the opportunities. Moreover, it analyses the case studies of the initiatives and aimed at enhancing vocational training and employment outcomes in rural economy of Assam. Finally, this study highlighted the crucial role of vocational education for the development of rural economy of Assam and recommended the strategies and proper initiatives of the stakeholders.

KEYWORDS: Vocational Education, Employment Generation, Rural Development, Skill Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Assam is a state in north-eastern India which is highly rich in its cultural heritage, bio-diversity and having high quality of natural resources. The economy is dominated by agrarian with a major portion of population is engaged with agriculture and its allied activities. The industrial conditions at present relatively modest compare to the rest of the area of the country.

II. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational education or Vocational Education and Training (VET), also known as Career and Technical Education (CTE), prepares people for jobs that require manual or practical skills, are traditionally non-academic, and are entirely related to a specific trade, occupation, or vocation in which the learner participates. It is frequently referred to as technical education since the student gains proficiency in a certain set of skills or technology. Vocational education also refers to education and training that prepares individuals for creating job opportunities using practical activities which traditionally non-academic and related to specific trade, occupation and or vocation. Vocational education focuses on imparting practical knowledge, and competencies necessary for employment in a particular sector or industry. The role of vocational education in generating employment in Assam, particularly in rural areas, is crucial issue that intersect education, economic development and social empowerment in the state.

Objective of the study:

The main objectives of the study about the status of rural unemployment and employment opportunities in relation to vocational education in and strategy prepares by the stakeholders.

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The case study is primarily based on secondary sources of data which are collected from books, journals, official and govt. website and other govt. document available in govt. office and most importantly from practical observation.

NEP 2020 and Vocational Education:

The New Education Policy (NEP) is a government of India policy aimed at promoting education among Indian citizens. In both rural and urban India, the policy encompasses primary education through college. The first NEP was issued by the Indian government in 1968 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the second in 1986 by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and the third in 2020 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The overview of NEP 2020 and vocational education is important relevant to the topic. The NEP 2020 is a comprehensive framework initiated by the central govt. to reform the education system of the country. The policy focuses on skill development practical courses. The policy addresses the skill development in the following aspects.

- NEP 2020 emphasis integrating vocational education starting from school education which means students will have the opportunities to choose vocational courses along with academic subjects to develop the practical skill in the early student's life.
- The policy introduces multiple exit-entries in education, allowing the students to peruse the students for short term skill development courses and the re-enter into the formal education if they wish to continue their education. This flexibility ensured to design to cater to diverse learning needs and career aspirants.
- The policy encourages the establishment of dedicated skill based higher educational institutions that focuses on imparting vocational training and skill development.
- The policy emphasises the importance of internship, apprenticeship, and practical training as a integral parts of the curriculum.
- NEP 2020 promotes collaborations between educational institutions and industries ensure that the curriculum aligned with the needs of job market.

In a nutshell, NEP 2020 aims to transform India's educational system by making it more holistic, flexible and aligned with the demands of the 21st century economy. Skill development occupies a central role in this transformation, emphasizing practical learning and employability alongside academic achievements. All human capacities- mental, cultural, social, physical, emotional, and moral should be improved through holistic and multi-disciplinary education. In the long run, this type of comprehensive education will be the standard for all undergraduate programmes, including medical, technical, and vocational schools. A comprehensive approach to learning environments and student assistance includes a sufficient curriculum, engaged pedagogy, consistent formative assessment, and enough student support.

Present Scenario of Vocational Education in Assam.

- **Educational Institutions:** Assam has a network of vocational training Institutes, such as Polytechnics, Industrial training Institutes and Skills development centres that offer vocational education and training programs.
- **Curriculum and courses:** The curriculum in vocational education includes a wide range of trades such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical works, automobile mechanics, health care, agriculture and so on.
- **Skill development initiatives:** Various Governmental and non-governmental organization run skills devolvement programs aimed at enhancing the employability of youth in Assam.

Unemployment Status in Assam:

The latest Economic Survey Assam has stated that nearly 10 lakh fresh educated youths have registered in employment exchanges in the state in 2022 compared to just 1.4 lakh in the previous year. The Economic Survey, Assam for 2023-24 stated that the size of the educated job seekers is considerably high with new registration jumping by a whopping over seven times in just a single year. From the records of the live register of Employment Exchanges, the registered educated job seekers stood at 9,83,093 in 2022 as against 1,37,865 during 2021. It said that the overall number of educated job seekers stood at 18,05,441 as per registrations at Employment Exchanges in 2021 as against 17,46,671 during 2020, thereby showing an increase of 3.36 percent. From the record of live register of employment exchange, the register educated job seekers stood at 1642718 during 2016. The year 2016 depicts an increase in registration of engineering graduates 59%, Agricultural graduate 90%, vet nary graduate 100%, IIT passed 2.5%, Post graduate 3.7%, Diploma holders 2.55% and other 16.66%. "In rural areas, the unemployment rate is 1.5 per cent whereas in urban areas, the unemployment rate is 6.1 per cent in Assam during 2022-23. The unemployment rate at all India level is 2.4 per cent in rural areas and 5.4 per cent in urban areas during the same period," the survey said.

Roll of Vocational Education in Employment Generation in Rural Assam:

- **Skill Development and employability:** Vocational education equips individuals with specific skills that are directly applicable to job market. In rural Assam, where traditional livelihoods are prevalent, vocational training can enhance the productivity and efficiency of various sectors such as agriculture, handloom, handicrafts and small-scale industries. Considering training programs in agricultural techniques, animal husbandry and organic farming can significantly improve agricultural productivity and income levels among the rural farmers.
- **Entrepreneurship development:** Vocational education encourages entrepreneurship by providing aspiring entrepreneurship with the necessary skills knowledge to start and managed their own business. This particularly important in rural areas where self-employment opportunities can replace traditional livelihood. Considering training in small scale industries like food processing, garment making, and handicrafts can empower individual to establish micro enterprises and generate employment for themselves and others.
- **Industry relevant and linkages:** To ensure effective employment generation, vocational educational programs must align with the needs of local industries and businesses. Establishing strong linkages between vocational training institutes and industries can facilitate internship, apprenticeships and job placement for graduates. For example, collaboration with tea industry companies in Assam for training in tea plantation management and processing can create skilled work force ready for employment in the tea-estates.
- **Empowerment of marginalised groups:** Vocational education can be a powerful tool for the empowerment of marginalised groups such as women ST, SC in rural Assam. By imparting knowledge and skills enhances their employability economic freedom. For example, training programs for women in tailoring, weaving and handicrafts not only generates employment but also contribute to women empowerment social upliftment in rural communities.
- **Skill development and tourism and hospitality:** Training in hospitality, tour guiding, and rural tourism management can tap in to the growing tourism sector in Assam and create job for local youths.

Challenges Faced by Rural Communities in accessing vocational training:

- **Limited infrastructure:** Rural areas often lack of infrastructure quality vocational training centres. Limited access to technology and equipment's hinders practical training. Moreover, many rural educational institutions having lack of infrastructure such as additional room, proper equipment for training, power, network facility etc.
- **Financial Constraints:** Rural communities often face financial barriers to accessing vocational training. Course fees, transportation and living expenses can be a barrier.
- **Lack of awareness:** Limited awareness about the benefits of vocational education is a challenge. Many rural communities are unaware of the available training programs.
- **Limited job opportunities:** The limited job market in rural areas can discourage individuals from pursuing vocational training. Finding relevant employment after completing training can be challenging.
- **Limited skilled trainers:** A shortage of qualified trainers with practical industry experience hinders the quality of vocational education.

Government Initiatives:

The government of Assam, in collaboration with central government of India, has launched several initiatives and policies to developed vocational education and skill development.

- **Assam skill development mission:** Schemes like The Pradhan Mantri Kusal Vikash Yojana aim to impart skill training to youth across various sectors. The ministry of MSDE releases the fund amounting to 36,9532,800 in the year 2017-18 under Assam Skill Development Mission. More over Krishi Vigyan Kendra offers skill-based training in agriculture.
- **Financial incentives:** Subsidies and financial assistance are provided to encourage establishment of skills development centres and ITIs in rural areas.
- **Public-Private partnership:** Public-private partnership is encouraged to bridge the gaps between vocational educational institutions and industry requirement.

- **HEI and Skill development Program:** As per NEP 2020, The Higher education, Government of Assam instructed all the affiliated all higher educational institution to open up skill developmental program for students for employability. These initiatives have been instrumental in enhancing employment opportunities in rural Assam. They provide practical vocational education Assam plays a critical role in bridging the skills gap and promoting sustainable economic growth, especially in rural areas.

IV. CONCLUSION

Vocational education plays a pivotal role in generating employment in rural Assam by imparting relevant skills, fostering entrepreneurship, creating industry linkages, and empowering marginalised groups. However, addressing challenges such as curriculum relevance, infrastructure improvement and awareness among the rural communities is crucial for the effective implementation and scaling up of vocational education initiatives in the state. With concerted efforts from government bodies, educational institutions and industry stakeholders, vocational education can significantly contribute to socio-economic development and prosperity in rural Assam. Vocational education is now seen as a crucial prerequisite for a nation's growth. In a nation such as India, where the young population is growing daily and all of them receive training to become highly competent workers, the economy will grow. However, practically all colleges do not provide vocations, therefore students are unable to acquire the necessary skills. Enhancing skills and employability will be greatly impacted if relevant actions are implemented, such as integrating vocational education into regular schooling and selecting priority areas based on a skills gap analysis and mapping of nearby possibilities

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