



## Preparing for the Future: Secondary Teachers' Perspectives on Vocational Skills Assessment for Higher Education Readiness

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### Abstract:

*This study explores secondary school teachers' attitudes towards vocational skills assessment, evaluation and its implications for preparing students for higher education, aligning with the Vision-2047 goals for transforming evaluation approaches. This study explores the perspectives of secondary school teachers regarding the present state of vocational skills assessment and identifies opportunities for further improvement in their academic journey. Applying a Descriptive survey research design methodology, the data was collected through a survey questionnaire administered on 50 secondary school teachers. The questionnaire evaluated teachers' attitudes towards the importance of vocational education, their perceptions of existing assessment methods, the challenges they face in integrating vocational skills into the curriculum, and their recommendations and suggestions for enhancing assessment practices in teaching learning processes. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage distributions, to identify key trends and patterns in teachers' and their responses. Initial findings reveal that while the majority of educators recognize the importance of vocational skills, they also express concerns about the correctness of existing assessment methods to accurately measure students' competencies. Many teachers highlighted the need for more reliable, realistic and competency-based assessment approaches that reflects real-world applications of vocational skills. Furthermore, challenges related to scarce resources, improper training, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of coordination between secondary and higher secondary education curriculum were identified as significant impediments to effective vocational skills integration and assessment.*

**Keywords:** Vocational Education, Assessment, Teacher Attitudes, Competency-Based Assessment.

### Introduction:

Vocational education supports the future workforce by preparing students with the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to succeed in multiple industries. However, the traditional education systems have become outdated with their emphasis on rote learning and exam preparation, which do not contribute much towards the students' employability or career readiness in the age of rapid development. It prepares them with skills and knowledge to transition into the workforce where academic theory meets application on the job.

In India, the skilling of students by integrating vocational education into the main school curriculum has always been a recurring challenge. But with the introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the road has already been laid out towards a greener, brighter and proliferate future of vocational education. It sets the stage for a 21st-century education system that is inclusive and accessible to everyone, meeting the demands of the new economy. Vocational training means training which is integrated into the general education system including the provision of the academic skills needed by students. The other goals include providing more options beyond textbooks, with the introduction of vocational subjects in the early years, and creating a world-ready workforce that skilfully competes with its counterparts globally.

Despite widespread recognition of vocational education's importance, implementation in schools is not without challenges. As the frontline facilitators of this approach, secondary school teachers are central to the successful embedding of vocational education within the school curriculum. But what they think about vocational education, the steps they take to implement it and the obstacles they encounter can make a big difference to how good and effective vocational programmes are in schools. Teachers play a vital role in shaping students' perceptions of vocational education and in how well the subject is integrated into the wider curriculum. Which can better implement vocational education, not only the quality of teaching can be improved, but also student participation, etc.

Hence the need of the hour is to understand the perception of secondary school teachers regarding vocational education, especially in light of the current policy thrust that pushes vocational education under the ambit of National Education Policy (NEP 2020) reforms through teachers. The research will also assess their perceptions of vocational education, and explore the measures they put in place to incorporate vocational education in schools and the barriers they face. This will offer insights to the authorities, institutions and educators to further improve the vocational education delivery system available in Indian schools.

This study shows that if we are to improve, we need to understand this better. Thus, the results and outcomes will aid teachers in overcoming the challenge they face, and help align education with the opportunities presented by the job market and India's Vision 2047.

### **Literature Review:**

The introduction of vocational education in schools has been significant issue of concern in education reform across the globe as of its significance in enabling students produce workforce that can cope with a fast-changing world of work. This review looks at the world perspective regarding vocational education, teacher preparation, evaluation strategies and the contribution of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 towards reform of vocational education in India. Moreover, the review also covers recent literature (2022-2025) to provide the study with a background in the academic discussion.

### **Trends in Vocational Education in the World**

According to Fisher and Griggs (2021), the issue benefits by this approach as it has a successful experience in alignment between education and industry so that graduates are ready to enter the workforce. Besides making the students gain practical skills, this practice of placing vocational learning in the real world benefits the bond that the schools have with industries.

According to its demonstrable advantages, integration of vocational education has been faced with some difficulties in some of the areas. Lee and Choi (2025) also touch upon the challenges encountered by such countries as South Korea where vocational education is affected by the opposition since people consider it as secondary to the academic one.

## **Preparedness and Teacher Education of Vocational Education**

The preparedness and professional training of teachers lie in the foundation of the success of vocational education. As Davis and Martin (2020) emphasize, vocational programs are bound to be successful when teachers have a solid background not only on the subject matter, but also on teaching techniques. The possibility to conduct vocational courses efficiently presupposes that the teachers have an idea of the industry standards and access to the recent pedagogical instruments.

In India, vocational teachers are not formally trained and this has been a major hindrance towards successful implementation. Sharma and Gupta (2024) maintain that in order to increase the quality of vocational learning, professional development programs of the teachers are deemed necessary.

## **Competency - Achievement testing in vocational Schooling**

The dominant form of assessment (based on theoretical knowledge) has often failed to serve the purpose of gauging the performance of students in vocational education programs. Dudyrev et al. (2021) believe that it is better to apply a different tool of assessment competency-based assessment that concentrates on evaluating the practical skills of students and their readiness to use particular skills. Competency-based assessments guarantee that students gain hands-on skills that they can use in their profession because they can no longer take the traditional assessment that requires students to memorize information.

Assessment of vocational qualifications in other countries such as Germany is based on competency. The assessments also test the real-life skills of students in natural environments, thus portraying them more ready to be in the job market. Sharma (2016) emphasizes that assessment aligned with the industry standards plays a significant role in the process of making sure that students have the required knowledge and skills to achieve success in their professions of interest.

## **NEP 2020 as Vocational Education**

The new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 implemented by the Government of India has attached great focus to the incorporation of vocational education in secondary schools. The policy aims at the transformation of the Indian education system by giving the students career oriented pathways by appropriating the industry. Rao and Sharma (2025) point out that the policy would ensure that vocational education is included in the education process as early as possible that is in the same process that starts in class 6. This program is also aimed at enabling the students to get basic aptitudes on vocational disciplines to be able to give choices to career decisions at a tender age.

### **Objectives:**

1. To measure the attitude of secondary school teachers towards vocational education.
2. To examine the initiatives taken by teachers in integrating vocational education in schools.
3. To identify the challenges faced by teachers in implementing vocational education in schools.
4. To assess whether secondary school students are aware of the provisions of vocational education mentioned in NEP 2020.

### **Research Questions:**

1. What are the attitudes of secondary school teachers towards vocational education?
2. What initiatives have teachers undertaken to integrate vocational education into school curricula?

3. What challenges do teachers face in implementing vocational education effectively?
4. What is the level of awareness among secondary school students regarding the provisions of vocational education mentioned in NEP 2020?
5. What strategies can be implemented to address the identified challenges and enhance the integration of vocational education in schools?

### Research Methodology:

The present research work was aimed at studying the attitude of secondary school teachers towards vocational skills assessment, evaluation and its implications for preparing students for higher education, aligning with the Vision-2047 goals for transforming evaluation approaches. Research methodology is primarily a method for solving a research problem systematically. A researcher must know both the research method and the methodology for ensuring smooth research procedures. A research methodology contains various steps which a researcher generally follows in studying a research problem.

- **Variables:** A variable is a thing which varies with time. Researcher has used Vocational Education, Assessment, Teachers' Attitude, Higher Education Readiness variables in this study.
- **Research Method:** The research method refers to the method used by the researcher to conduct the study. The Descriptive Survey method has been followed in this present study.
- **Sample:** In this present study 50 teachers from different secondary govt. schools of Siliguri and its adjacent areas have been taken as samples through purposive sampling technique where 29 are male and 21 are female.
- **Data collection tools and techniques:** Keeping in view the objectives of the present study, the researcher has collected the data from different secondary govt. schools of Siliguri and its adjacent areas of West Bengal. To collect the data a self-made questionnaire has been adopted which consists of 20 items. Data has been collected through Google form.
- **Data analysis technique:** Frequency and percentage distribution have been used to analyse the collected data.

The present study has a self-created questionnaire consisting of overall 20 questions. With a view to establish content validity, the original form of the questionnaire or items has been discussed and evaluated by a panel comprising of five education specialists, and professors familiar with the vocational education and evaluation practice. Then further to test reliability of the instrument, pilot study was done on a representative (small) group of 20 secondary school teachers of multi-ethnic and similar professional or educators. A review of the reactions of the educators to the pilot testing was conducted and Cronbach alpha was used to calculate the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha coefficient calculated was 0.85 which showed very good internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire or items.

### Result and Interpretation:

- **Table-1:** Frequency and percentage distribution of samples according to type of response to whether it is a right move towards promoting vocational education in schools

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	3	6
Yes	47	94

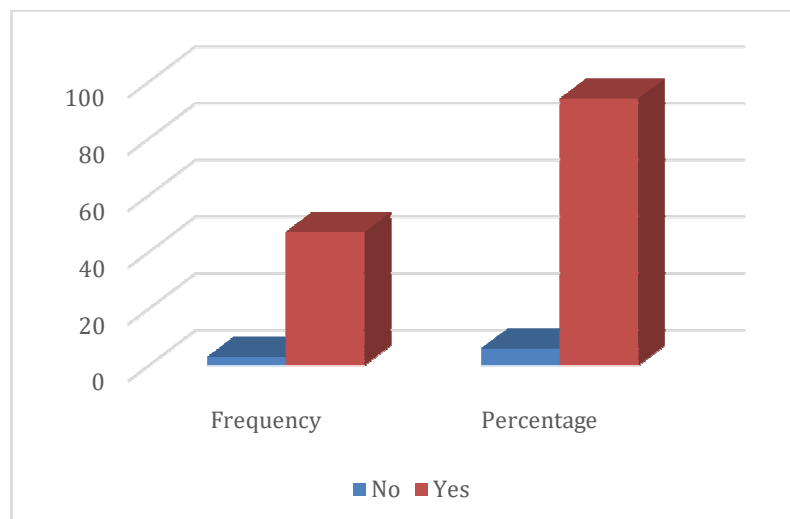


Table-1 represents that the frequency of the response 'No' is 3 that means out of 50 secondary govt. school teachers only 6% teachers think that promoting vocational education in schools is not a right move. On the other hand, the frequency of the response 'Yes' is 47 that means 94% of the total sample show positive attitude towards vocational education. From this it is clearly evident that majority of the secondary school teachers have positive attitude towards integrating vocational education in their school curricula.

- **Table-2:** Frequency and percentage distribution of samples according to type of response to whether the secondary school teachers have professional training for being quality vocational teachers.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	34	68
Yes	16	32

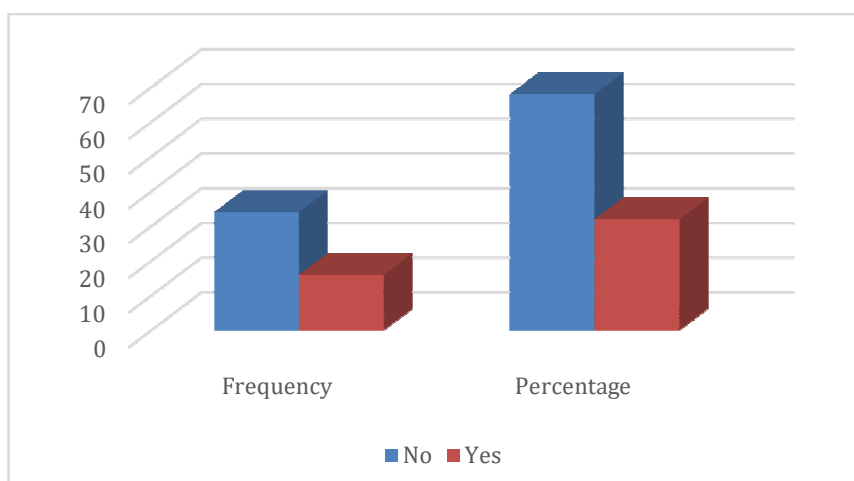


Table-2 represents that the frequency of the response ‘No’ is 34 that means out of 50 secondary govt. school teachers 68% teachers challenge in implementing vocational educational as they don’t have proper professional training. On the other hand, the frequency of the response ‘Yes’ is 16 that means 32% of the total sample ensure professional training for being quality vocational teachers. From this it is clearly evident that majority of the secondary school teachers face challenges in implementing vocational education properly as they do not have proper professional training for being quality vocational teachers.

- **Table-3:** Frequency and percentage distribution of samples according to type of response to whether the students of secondary level of their schools are aware of the provisions of vocational education mentioned in NEP 2020.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	2	4
Yes	48	96

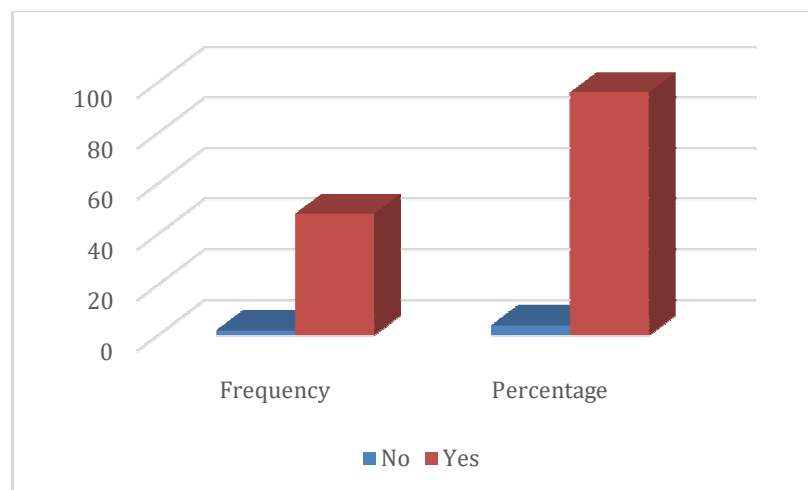
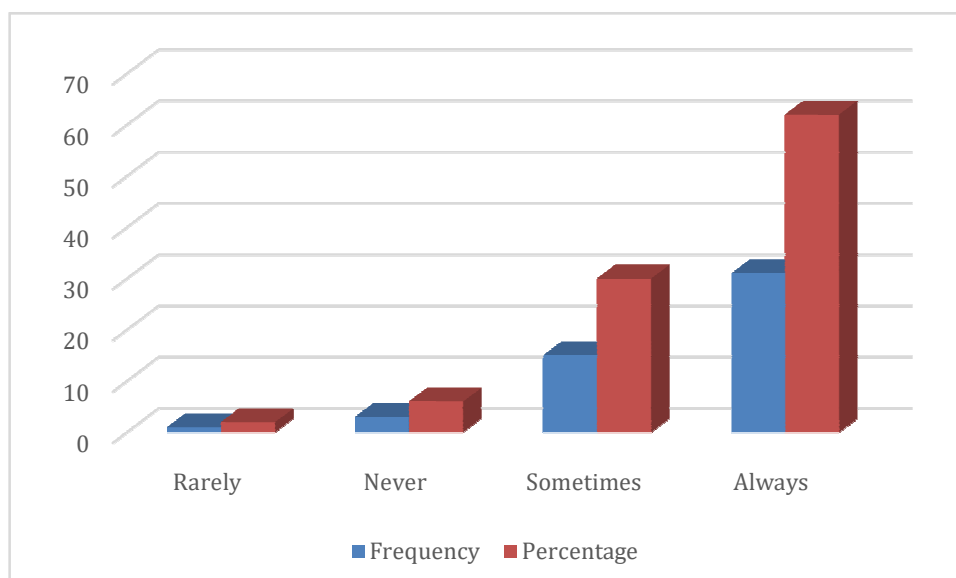


Table-3 represents that the frequency of the response ‘No’ is 2 that means out of 50 secondary govt. school teachers only 4% teachers admitted that the students of secondary level of their schools are not aware about the provisions of vocational education mentioned in NEP 2020. On the other hand, the frequency of the response ‘Yes’ is 48 that means 96% of the total sample reported that the students of secondary level of their schools are quite aware about the provisions of vocational education mentioned in NEP 2020. From this it is clearly evident that majority of the secondary school students are aware about the provisions mentioned in NEP 2020 regarding vocational education.

- **Table-4:** Frequency and percentage distribution of samples according to type of response to whether the secondary school teachers feel the need to integrate new technologies into vocational courses

Response Pattern	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rarely	1	2
Never	3	6
Sometimes	15	30
Always	31	62



**Table-4:** Represents that the frequency of the response ‘Rarely’ is 1 that means only 2% of total sample rarely feel the need to integrate new technologies into vocational courses. On the other hand, the frequency of the response ‘Never’ is 3 which means that out of total respondents, 6% of the total sample have never felt the need to integrate new technologies into vocational courses. Meanwhile it is found that the frequency of the response ‘Sometimes’ is 15 and the frequency of the response ‘Always’ is 31 respectively which means that out of total sample 30% of the total teachers have felt the need to integrate new technologies into vocational courses sometimes and a majority of secondary school teaches i.e. 62% of the total sample always feel the need to integrate new technologies into vocational courses.

### Findings:

The primary purpose of the present study was to measure the attitude of secondary govt. school teachers towards vocational education and to examine the initiatives taken by teachers to integrate vocational education into school curricula. Along with these, the present study was also focused on the challenges teachers faced in implementing vocational skills, assessment, and evaluation for preparing students for higher education, aligning with the Vision-2047 goals for transforming evaluation approaches. The findings of the present study indicate that majority of secondary school teachers have positive attitude towards integrating vocational education in their school curricula. In this present study it is found that majority of the samples i.e. 94% of the total teachers have responded positively when asked whether promoting vocational education in schools is a right move or not. From their responses it is clearly evident that most of the schools and the teachers are still facing some challenges to integrate vocational education. The challenges faced by the secondary teachers could be of many types, e.g. it could be of lack of professional training, not taking part in awareness programmes on vocational education, unable to make students aware about NEP 2020, unable to integrate new technologies into vocational courses due to indifferent attitude etc. From the findings it is clearly shown that only 32% of the total sample ensures professional training for being quality vocational teachers. From this it is clearly evident that majority of the secondary school teachers face challenges in implementing vocational education properly as they do not have proper professional training for being quality vocational teachers. Also, it is found that majority of the teachers i.e. 66% of the total sample have never been a part of any kind of awareness programme on vocational education till date. As a result, it is not expected from them to feel the need of integrating new technologies into vocational courses or make their students of secondary level aware about NEP 2020. Though result shows that a majority of secondary school teaches i.e. 62% of the total sample always feel the need to integrate new technologies into



vocational courses which could be taken as a positive move towards implementing vocational education in school curricula. Before implementing vocational courses in schools, students must be aware about the provisions of vocational education mentioned in NEP 2020. To ensure this, the secondary school teachers have asked whether their students are aware about NEP 2020 or not and as a result, it is found that 96% of the total sample reported that the students of secondary level of their schools are quite aware about the provisions of vocational education mentioned in NEP 2020.

#### **Delimitations of the Study:**

- Data has been collected from Siliguri city and its adjacent areas only.
- Only 50 samples are taken to conduct the study.
- Data has been collected solely from secondary govt. school teachers.

#### **Educational Implications:**

A number of important educational implications are attributed to incorporation of vocational education in school curricula especially in NEP 2020:

1. **Curriculum reform:** Schools need to move to skills-focused curriculum allowing school children to obtain both academic knowledge and specialized vocational training.
2. **Teacher Training:** Vocational education is based on the viable teachers who have both the subject knowledge and the latest pedagogical methods. It is important that a teacher undergoes continuous professional development to keep abreast of industry requirements.
3. **Competency-Based Assessment:** Vocational education cannot be assessed in a traditional means by means of theory. The switch to a competency-based assessment that considers practical skills will put students in the position of being workforce ready.
4. **Student awareness:** It needs to be done more to inform students regarding options of vocational education that they have under NEP 2020 so that they make appropriate career choices and participate actively in learning oneself and taking up vocational courses.

Through the effects of these implications, vocational education is an effective way of putting this education system into practice so that learners get effectively prepared to future careers.

#### **Conclusion:**

The study aimed to analyse secondary school teachers' perceptions regarding assessment of vocational skills in continuity with the objectives of Vision-2047 aiming to transform India's education system. The results show a very supportive disposition of teachers towards the introduction of vocational education into the teaching plans, where 94% of teachers supported the promotion of this type of education. But, teacher involvement in practical engagement is still at as low as 18%, indicating a gap in delivering these learning outcomes. Many of their challenges include a lack of professional training, awareness programs, or new technologies incorporated into vocational courses. However, despite these challenges, there was apparently a considerable awareness about the provisions of NEP 2020 among students as 96% teachers reported that students familiarized themselves with the initiatives of vocational education as included in the policy.

The results highlight the need to address the barriers, including improved teacher training, integration of technology, and greater awareness programmes. Working together with secondary schools, vocational institutions, and industries is key to improve quality and relevance with respect to vocational education.



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