

## **Study of Awareness and Interest of Students towards Vocational Education at School Level in Scheduled Tribe Populated Districts of Madhya Pradesh**

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### **Abstract**

Vocational education and training (VET) is considered a master key towards socio-economic development. The main purpose of vocational education is to enhance the importance of education and develop the skill of students to make them more employable. The present research study is based on the awareness and interest of students in vocational education. The sample of the study is students from tribal populated districts of Madhya Pradesh. The methods which are applied in this study are random sampling methods by which data are collected through a structured questionnaire. Quantitative data are analyzed by using a statistical tool and some of the data are analyzed qualitatively according to the need of the objectives. The study revealed students are less aware of the term vocational education but they are interested to opt for some vocations to develop their skills and for their future livelihood.

**Keywords:** vocational education, skill development, interest towards vocational education, Awareness.

### **Introduction**

No one can deny that vocational education is the demand of time and the country needs more skilled citizens, technicians and middle-level professionals. For the socio-economic development of the Country, VET plays a major role with benefits for individual families and local communities. VET in India is organized through the formal, informal and non-formal sectors. VET delivery occurs in different forms, according to different target groups and the skill needs of the learners. Amongst the various Ministries, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MoSDE) and the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Government of India are responsible for the majority of the skill development schemes and programs. VET provisions made through the schools, colleges and universities come under the purview of the Department of School Education and Literacy and the Department of Higher Education of the MoE. The vocational education and training provided through Polytechnics, Industrial Training Institutes, Jan Shikshan Sansthan, National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development come under MoSDE.

Different education policies in India focused on promoting vocational education. For this Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of Vocationalization of Secondary Education (1988) was launched, National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE,2000) was developed by NCERT which emphasized the need for introducing vocational education at different stages of school education and treated work education and vocational education as

a part of the same. Later Centrally Sponsored Scheme merged vocational education with general education under NSQF.

The National Education Policy 2020 addresses the challenges on both the demand and supply sides of vocational education and tries to mitigate them. In order to make vocational education more structured, the policy recommends conducting a proper skills gap analysis and mapping of local opportunities to assign vocational courses relevant to a particular area. Presently, vocational education in schools under NSQF is implemented considering mainly priority sectors of the economy. These sectors are mainly related to the diversified areas of the following disciplines:

- Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
- Business and Commerce
- Engineering and Technology
- Health and Paramedical Sciences
- Home Science and Hospitality Management
- Humanities, Science, Education and Research

Some of the states are still implementing vocational education at +2 level also it has been run for a long span by most of the states. Hence, in the present study vocational education is included as a whole. Madhya Pradesh lies at the heart of India. It is home to many pre-Aryan tribes such as the Gonds and Bhils. Apart from Gonds and Bhils, many other tribes are also found in Madhya Pradesh, including the Baiga, Korku, Kamar, Kol, and Maria. The population of Scheduled Tribes in the state is 21.1 percent of the population (15.31 million out of 72.62 million), according to the 2011 census.

## **Objectives of the Study**

Present research work has been taken to study the awareness and interest of students towards vocational education at the school level in tribal populated districts of MP. The present study is conducted with the following objectives:

- To study the awareness of students towards Vocational Education at the school level.
- To identify the interest of students in vocational education.
- To recommend the strategies for effective implementation of vocational education courses.

## **Review of Literature**

The review of related literature is a very important part of any research as it helps in understanding the different dimensions of research problems and gives an insight into the scope of further studies. The review of literature not only provides a framework for the study but it is also effectively used for comparing the results of any study with other findings. It helps in identifying the existing gaps in research studies and provides us with recommendations for future research studies. Hence, this article is devoted to the literature available on vocational education.

A study conducted by Kureshi (1990) on the vocational interest of students studying at graduation level in senior colleges of rural areas revealed that the rural students showed less interest in agriculture and more interest in vocations connected with science. Students from the arts and commerce discipline showed high interest in persuasive and executive vocations. Madan (1993) in his research study revealed that while vocation-based education was closely linked with productivity and national development, the formal conventional programmes generated a huge number of educated unemployed students without any

vocational skills and had little relevance to the developmental needs of the present times. Therefore, it was suggested that to bridge this gulf and fulfill the socio-economic aspirations of society, the existing higher education programmes had to be either restructured or replaced.

Mishra et al. (1996) in their study on the status of vocational education, explained that the percentage of girls participating in vocational education at +2 level was much lesser than that of boys. The problem of girls' participation in vocational courses was not only of inequality in numbers but also in the types of vocational courses made available to or opted by the girls.

Dasgupta (1998) realized the need of offering more rural-based vocational courses for enhancing individual employability and reducing the mismatch between demand and supply of middle-level skilled manpower in rural areas.

Arora (1999) identified the hindrances in achieving the objectives of vocational education. The identified hindrances were reported to be the mismatch between the offered courses and the demand of society; the selection of students for vocational education was not based on their ability, aptitude, and interest. Hence, the absence of a uniform pattern in selecting students into a vocational stream; insufficient availability of textbooks and instructional materials in all regional languages; shortage of qualified and trained teachers and inadequate allotment of financial assistance, proved to be major hindrances in availing vocational courses.

Dashora and Sharma (2003) pointed out the entry status of tribal women of different socio-economic status in the field of business in spite of a number of barriers and tangible obstacles. The findings also reported the important role played by tribal women in the economic development of the tribal areas.

Ashok (2006) in a study that after completion of vocational education at the school level, most of the students continued their education in academic streams as their parents were not interested to send them to study vocational courses. The results showed poor staffing, obsolete equipment and poorly designed courses; which were the reasons reported by parents.

Rami (2012) conducted a study on the status of primary education in tribal districts in Gujarat and concluded that most of the schools had infrastructural facilities but they failed to attract girl students. It was revealed in the study that this was because of the lack of basic and essential facilities like drinking water and separate toilets for girls, etc.

Sareen (2012) reported in a study that vocational programmes should be tailor-made for better implementation. She also recommended in her study that as per the requirements of the industries, vocational course content may be formulated at the school level so the pass-outs can have the opportunity to move in the industries.

Sati (2015) in her research study revealed the remarkably low socio-economic status of Tribal people. It also pointed out that the benefits of different developmental efforts could not be properly availed by them. It was also found that most of them were uneducated mainly due to less number of educational institutions in the areas where they lived.

Mehrotra (2016) conducted a study titled "Attitude of Principals of Haryana towards Learning Outcome Based vocational education under NSQF". It was concluded from the study that the principals were very positive towards the implementation of a learning-outcome-based-vocational education programme under NSQF and they considered it very

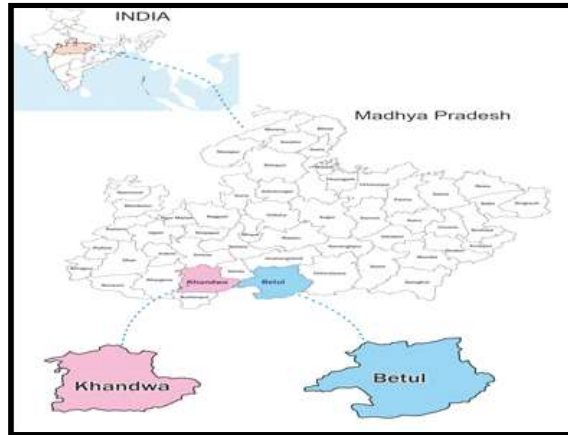
effective and relevant. The majority of the respondents agreed that there was an improvement in the quality of assessment in vocational education with a focus on skill assessment.

Haider (2020) mentioned that the Government of India has taken many initiatives in skill development where National Skill Development Council, National Skill Development Corporation etc. played an important role. But it is observed that the number of dropouts was quite high at different stages of school education. In view of these problems, there was a need for re-imagining vocational education and training systems to provide meaningful and sustainable vocational education as an alternate pathway for those students who were not interested to continue the academic stream.

Ramasamy & Pilz (2020) in their research mentioned that vocational training is a significant tool that increases employment opportunities and provides potential career advancement options for individuals. He observed that the socio-economic condition of female learners influenced their choices for opting vocational courses, which were mostly aligned with traditional or domestic social circumstances.

### **Methodology**

Research methodology provides the details of the systematic procedure to conduct research work. The first step in conducting a research study is to plan a framework for the research work. After conceptualizing the plan of work, different activities are carried out looking at the objectives of the study. Present research work has been taken to study the awareness and interest of students towards vocational education at the school level in tribal populated districts of Madhya Pradesh during 2018.



**Fig. 2: Map of Survey Areas(2005)**

**Population of the Study:** In different blocks of Betul and Khandwa districts, schools were selected randomly to collect sample the data from 720 students.

**Research Instrument:** In light of the objectives of the study, questionnaires for data collection were developed by the researcher.

**Procedure of Data Collection:** The questionnaire was distributed to all the students of class VIII in the schools. They were given the necessary instructions for filling out the questionnaires. Discussion was also held with the students on some issues and questions to clarify them, so they could fill out the questionnaire completely.

**Data Processing:** After collecting filled questionnaires from students, the questionnaire was systematically arranged for data analysis.

## Results and Interpretation of Data

The result and interpretation of the study were dealt with in the light of objectives formulated for the research study. The information regarding awareness and interest of students towards vocational education are as follows:

- Of the total 720 students, 323 (44.86 percent) students were boys, while 397 (55.14 percent) were girls. 383 students were between the ages of 14 and 15, 172 were between the ages of 12 and 13, and 165 were 16 or older. The majority of respondents were between 14 to 15 years.
- According to the study, 664 (92.22 percent) of the 720 students were Hindus, 55 (7.64 percent) were Muslims, and only 1 (0.14 percent) was Christian, with no Sikh students found.
- The distribution of students by category revealed that 501 of the 720 students belonged to the Schedule Tribe category, 128 to the OBC category, and 20 to the Scheduled Caste category. As a result, it was observed that approximately 90 percent of students belonged to the SC/ST/OBC category, with ST accounting for two-thirds of all respondents. It was also found that only a small percentage of students (1.39 percent) belonged to the general category.
- In regard to the family background of the students, the educational qualifications of the parents and family income were studied. It was observed that nearly half of the parents, 47.37 percent, have completed at least a primary school education. About a quarter of the parents were illiterate, and about a quarter of the parents had completed high school. According to the findings, the majority of parents have a poor level of education, with only a small fraction having graduated or earned a degree. In terms of family income, the majority of respondents have a monthly household income of less than Rs.15000/-. Thus, it is evident that the maximum number of respondents belonged to poor economic backgrounds.

## Awareness of Students towards Vocational Education

**Table 1: Awareness of Students with the Term Vocational Education**

S. No.	Responses	Boys		Girls		Numbers	Percentage
1.	Yes	25	7.74	29	7.30	54	7.50
2.	No	298	92.26	368	92.70	666	92.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>323</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the study's findings, only 54 students (7.50 percent) were familiar with the term Vocational Education out of total 720 students. The majority of respondents, (more than 90 percent), were not familiar with the term Vocational Education. Furthermore, almost every student who had heard of the term stated that vocational education is available in ITIs and Polytechnic Colleges. Only eight of the 54 students were aware that vocational education was being taught at the +2 level in schools.

**Students' awareness about vocational education running at +2 level:** It was observed that among 54 students only eight students were aware of vocational education running at +2 level. It is worth noting that all eight students attended schools that provided vocational education. The majority of students (85 percent) were unaware that, other than polytechnics, ITIs, and private similar institutes, vocational education courses are also available at the +2 level in schools.

**Students' perspectives on the implementation of vocational education in different classes in schools:** Surprisingly, none of the 54 respondents wanted that vocational education should be implemented in schools before eighth class. The majority of respondents, approximately 60 percent, believed that vocational education should begin from eighth class, while 20 percent wanted it should begin from class ninth and the remaining 20 percent wanted it should begin from the eleventh class.

**Students' Awareness About Institutions Implementing Vocational Education:** The present study reveals the awareness of students regarding the implementation of vocational education in different institutions. For analyzing students' opinion rank correlation is applied. Ranks are assigned to the institutions based on their mean value. Rank 1 is assigned to the institution which has the lowest mean. The study result shows in Table 2.

**Table 2: Awareness of Students about implementation of Vocational Education in different Institutions**

	Schools (+2 level)	Polytechnic	ITI	NGO	Any other
Valid	08	50	51	22	11
Missing	46	04	03	32	43
Sum	15	56	58	28	18
Mean value	1.87	1.12	1.14	1.27	1.64
<b>Rank</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>IV</b>

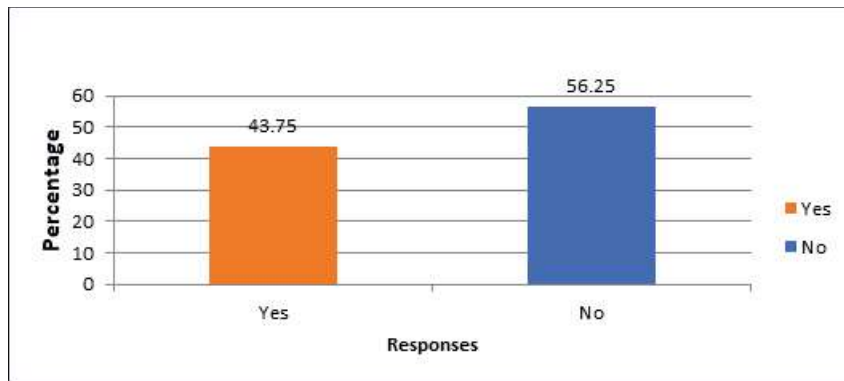
According to the rank correlation study, majority of students were aware that Vocational Education courses were offered in polytechnic colleges, followed by ITIs and Non-Government Organizations. Only a few respondents stated that they were aware of other Vocational Education institutions. It is clear from Table No. 2 that maximum respondents were not aware about vocational education being implemented at +2 level in school.

**Students' responses to employment opportunities after completing vocational education:** According to the study's findings, 32 of the 54 students who were aware of vocational education were aware of the employment opportunities available after obtaining vocational education. Rank correlation method was applied to find the awareness of students towards opportunities in different areas. The result of the study shows ranked computer as first, embroidery as second, pot making as third followed by food preservation and stitching at fourth and fifth ranks respectively.

Further, when it was studied gender-wise, it was observed that more girls were aware of the employment opportunities available after acquiring vocational education as compared to boys. The study found that more girls were aware of the opportunities in the areas of embroidery, stitching, and food preservation, whereas boys were found to be more aware in the areas of pot making and computers. As a result, it was found that awareness of job opportunities in various fields had some gender inherence and stereotypical thinking attached to it.

**Awareness for vocational education under the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF):** It was found that none of the respondents were aware of National Skills Qualification Framework. The most likely reason was the lacked exposure and information of vocational education and the most recent developments in the field of vocational education.

**Students' responses on awareness of schemes/programmes related to skill development:** When asked about government schemes or programmes for skill development, 315 (43.75 percent) students out of 720 reported that they were aware of some of the schemes/programmes, but when asked to list some names, they mentioned incorrect or irrelevant terms. Thus, it was found that none of them were properly aware about any scheme or programme related to skill development as there is still some gap in the popularization of the implementation of such schemes by the Government.



**Fig. 3: Students' Responses for Awareness of Schemes/Programmes Related to Skill Development**

**Student's opinion on advantages or disadvantages of vocational education:** It was found that most of the students were not aware of the advantages and disadvantages of Vocational Education. Only 42.59 percent were little or partially informed on the advantages of Vocational Education.

**Advantages of vocational education replied by students:** The majority of respondents cited “earning money” as the main benefit of vocational education, followed by “skill development” and “job security,” respectively. It was further noted that even the aware respondents had only partial or incomplete information related to the advantages of vocational education. It was also interesting to note that none of the students mentioned any disadvantages of vocational education. Furthermore, a chi-square test was used to analyze student responses, and the results revealed that gender has no correlation with the parameters provided by the respondents.

### Interest of Students towards Vocational Education

**Students' responses regarding their interest in opting for vocational education:** It was interesting to observe that, despite the lack of awareness for Vocational Education, 390 students out of 720 expressed their willingness to opt for Vocational Education. The Chi-square test was applied to determine the correlation between students' willingness to pursue Vocational Education and their gender. The test results revealed that willingness to pursue Vocational Education is related to gender, a greater proportion of female students than male students were found to be interested in pursuing Vocational Education.

**Table 3: Chi-square Calculation**

S. No	Responses	Boys		Girls		Number	Percentage	Chi - square ( $x^2$ )	Asymp. Sig. (p - value)
		No.	percent	No.	percent				
1.	Yes	130	40.25	260	65.49	390	54.17		
2.	No	193	59.75	137	34.51	330	45.83	45.71	0.00001**
<b>Total</b>		<b>323</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>100</b>		

It was observed that out of 720 students, 390 students showed willingness to opt for vocational education whereas 330 students were not willing to opt for it. It is important to note here that even after lack of awareness of vocational education, more than half of the students showed their willingness in opting for vocational education. It seems that these students may be attracted by the new stream and they do not want to opt for routine subjects like Science, Commerce and Arts.

**Students' responses on opting for different vocational areas of their interest:** The study's findings show that, out of the six major identified areas listed in the questionnaire, Home Science was ranked first, followed by Engineering and Technology at second, Agriculture at third, Business and Commerce at fourth, Health and Paramedical Science at fifth, and Humanities at sixth. This study was carried out by including a colored action images chart with the questionnaire in order to obtain accurate responses from students about their interests in six major identified areas. The study's findings revealed significant changes in student responses as a result of their improved understanding of action images. It was found that out of 720 students, 316 students expressed their interest in Agriculture, while 274 students expressed their interest in Engineering and Technology. Home Science drew an interest of 262 students, followed by Business and Commerce with 203 students and Health and Paramedical Science with 188 students. It was evident that the responses received from text differed from those received from images.

**Student's responses after watching colored action images on opting for vocational courses in different classes:** According to the findings, 225 students out of 590 students were of the opinion that vocational education must be implemented from class XI, 200 students wanted it should begin from class VIII, while 142 students felt it should begin from class IX. Few students wanted that it must commence from classes VII and IV. The above responses were received after the students watched the action images of different vocational courses. Before watching the action image chart, when they were asked the same questions, the responses were found different.



**Students' responses regarding reasons for being interested in opting for vocational education:** Out of 720 only 390 students (54.17 percent) replied when asked about reasons for them being interested in opting for vocational education.

The percentage of females was found to be higher than that of males. The rank correlation method was used to determine the reasons. According to the findings, students ranked “opportunity to earn more money” first, “interest in self-employment” second, and “more opportunities for wage employment” third, followed by “interest in joining family business” and “for developing creative attitude” fourth and fifth, respectively. Whereas, “for gaining respect in society” and “getting admission in vocational courses easily” was cited by the least number of respondents and were ranked sixth and seventh respectively. It was evident that students believed that Vocational Education could help them earn money and secure some kind of employment, which appears to be a positive indicator for creating the right image of Vocational Education in society.

**Students' responses regarding reasons for not being interested in opting for vocational education:** Out of 720 students, 330 students responded regarding reasons for being not interested in opting for Vocational Education. The majority of these 330 students stated that they aspired to become doctors, engineers, teachers, bankers, civil service officers, pilots, or scientists. It was observed that students had a biased opinion towards white collar jobs which could fetch them better lifestyles and more income.

## **Conclusion**

Presently, vocational education is implemented from class IX at the school level under NSQF. Hence, data from the students of class VIII was collected with the understanding that the students of this stage were the most appropriate sample for the present study. The present research study has been undertaken to study the awareness and interest of students towards vocational education at the school level in the tribal populated districts (Khandwa and Betul districts) of Madhya Pradesh. The study revealed that respondents were less familiar with the term vocational education, only a negligible number of respondents knew that vocational education was implemented at the +2 level in school. The students were of the opinion that computer applications, embroidery, pot making, food preservation and stitching are some areas having employment opportunities. More than half of the students were not aware of the advantages of vocational education, only a small number of students could report some of the advantages of vocational education. They reported the main advantages as earning money, skill development and job security. Despite the lack of awareness of vocational education 54 percent of students were willing to opt for vocational education. Students mentioned their reasons for being interested in opting for vocational education as getting the opportunity to earn more money; interest in self-employment; more opportunities for self-employment; interest in joining a family business for developing a creative attitude; for gaining respect in society and getting admission to vocational courses easily. It is realized from their statement that students believed that vocational education can help them earn money and secured some kind of employment.

## **Recommendations**

- There is a need to create an appropriate eco-system for awareness of vocational education at the school level, especially in tribal populated areas. Hence, awareness programmes for vocational education should be conducted from the national level to grass root level especially in suburban, rural and tribal areas by various concerned Government and Private agencies to popularize and bring about the desirable changes in the attitude and mindset of the people towards vocational education.

- Implementing authorities of vocational education should also take a lead to create awareness and popularize vocational courses, their scope, employment opportunities, etc. at a large scale using various effective modes of popularization with the help of electronic media, print media, social media, radio and local media according to the target groups.
- Vocational guidance and counseling cell should be established or strengthened in all the schools. Through guidance services, a proper environment should be created to motivate the students and their parents to educate them on the scope, advantages, employment opportunities, etc. of vocational education, so that more students would be benefitted through education.
- At present most of the courses available in higher secondary schools focused on employment in the organized sector of the economy. Higher secondary schools, which have the provision for vocational courses should also be involved in short-term courses oriented towards opportunities in the unorganized sector. Certain short-term courses can also aim at self-employment or improving the skills of young people already working in the unorganized sector in the neighborhood of the school. Such courses can be organized during after-school hours or evenings.
- Course content for vocational courses should be revised / developed considering the local needs and availability of local resources, especially for rural and tribal areas. For designing the course content, local industries, service institutions and local knowledgeable persons should be involved in the committee.

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