ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TOWARDS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Rabinarayan Mandal
Ph.D Scholar
RIE, Utkal University
Bhubaneswar
Ph No- 9438669659
Mail Id: mandal.rabinarayan@gmail.com

Dr. Saroja Kanta Choudhury
Associate professor of Education cum Principal
Rajdhani College, Bhubaneswar
Ph no- 9438241502
Mail Id: saroja540@gmail.com

Abstract:

Vocational education an educational programme that provides knowledge, skills, attitudes towards certain vocation for future career. Considering the importance of vocational education for students, the vocational education programme (VEP) has been implemented in secondary of Odisha since 2016 under RAMSA. In this context, the present study examines the attitude of secondary school students towards the VEP in Dhenkanal district. The study adopted a descriptive survey method with a quantitative technique. The population consisted of 36 secondary schools implementing VEP at classes IX and X (as of 2023), from which a random sample of 10 schools was selected. The sample comprising 160 students who have chosen vocational courses as an alternative the third language. A 5-point Likert attitude scale used as tools for data collection. The findings revealed that boys (M = 124.08, SD = 12.20) exhibited more favorable attitudes towards VEP than girls (M = 120.55, SD = 9.72), and this difference was significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that gender is a determining factor for students' attitudes. In contrast, rural students (M = 124.31) had slightly higher attitude scores than urban students (M = 123.42), but this difference (0.89) was not statistically significant, suggesting that school location does not influence students' attitudes towards VEP. Additionally, boys' scores were more scattered, showing greater variability compared to girls, while urban students' scores were more consistent than rural students. The study concludes that gender influences students' attitudes towards vocational education, whereas school location has no significant impact. The findings highlight the need to develop strategies to enhance positive attitudes among all students to ensure the effective implementation of vocational education at the secondary level.

Keywords: *Vocational Education Programme, level of course, Trades,* NSQF.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

The International Commission on Education for the 21st Century (1993-96), appointed by UNESCO, has identified four pillars of education, namely (i) learning to know, (ii) learning to do, (iii) learning to live together (iv) Learning to be. In this context, "*Learning to do"* emphasizes the acquisition of practical skills, competencies and vocational training necessary for employment, entrepreneurship and economic development. It also focuses on integration theoretical knowledge with practical experiences through hands on learning, apprenticeship and vocational education programme. In relation to the 4 pillars, 21st-century skills are the most emerging endeavor to fostering all round development of the learners. One of the important skills comes under the category of Life and Career Skills, which emphasizes those skills that prepare individuals to navigate complex life and work environments.

Considering the above-mentioned aspects, vocational education at the secondary level and higher secondary level is one of the important steps by the central and state government. The Centrally sponsored Scheme of vocational education covers from level 1 to level 4 of the NSQF (National Skill Qualification Frame work) starting from Class 9th to Class 12th. In 2016, the Government of Odisha's School & Mass Education Department introduced vocational courses into the secondary school curriculum, initially implementing them in one school per block across 208 schools in 30 districts as part of the first phase. Subsequently, in a phased manner, the number of

secondary and higher secondary schools included in the vocational education program increased, along with the introduction of various trades and courses. According to data available up to the 2022-23 session, a total of 961 secondary schools and 63 higher secondary schools were covered under the program.

Now, in each school there are two trades/subjects introduced and two vocational teachers were appointed to impart vocational training. Each trade has 200 hours of course, including 120 hours of practical and 80 hours of theory. The practical examination is conducted by sector skill councils and the theory is conducted by the Board of Secondary Education since 2018. Odisha is the first state to provide textbooks for vocational education in the Odia language while other states are using books written in English causing immense difficulties to students.

CONCEPT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:

Vocational education refers to the training and education provided to individuals to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for a specific occupation or trade. It is designed to prepare students for a wide range of careers and professions, with a focus on practical, hands-on training that helps them develop specific technical skills. In this context of the study, it is the programme implemented in secondary schools providing various courses as a part academic subject.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

Several studies have been conducted at international, national and state level. Some of them were analysed to explore the gap which provides insight for the present study. The findings of few of them are highlighted to establish the rationale of the study. Kumar (2021) investigated students' perceptions using a descriptive survey method and found that most students were interested in vocational education, with many securing admissions to their preferred courses. *Pattnaik and Das (2022)* in their study, vocational education's impact on unemployment, particularly focusing on the Skilled in Odisha program, highlighted its role in enhancing vocational training, improving ITI enrollments, and bridging the employability skills gap in an evolving job market. *Panda (2024)* studied the attitudes of female secondary school students in Jajpur district and found no significant difference between urban and rural students but noted a contrast between government and private school students. The study also revealed a lack of awareness regarding vocational education's scope, benefits, and scholarships. Sahoo, M (2016) highlighted that most people in India view vocational education positively, believing it leads to high-demand professions and helps reduce unemployment. However, some still perceive limited career opportunities in this field. Sharma (2018) studied vocational education in 20 South Delhi schools, surveying 500 students, 60 teachers, and 20 principals. Findings revealed resource shortages, outdated textbooks, temporary teachers, poor computer facilities, and power cuts. 60% of students preferred general education for higher studies, while 40% chose vocational education paths. Chakravarty & Gupta (2020) emphasized the challenges in vocational education, particularly the need for better infrastructure and trained teachers in schools. They stressed the importance of active participation from all stakeholders to enhance the quality of vocational education. Jeyaraman (2020) pointed out that vocational education is crucial for economic growth, yet only 10% of youth aged 15-29 receive vocational training, with just 3% of formally trained individuals finding employment.

According to Tirpathi (2003), training and skill development play a crucial role in organizational and national economic growth. Aligning vocational education with industry needs ensures that graduates possess in-demand skills, increasing their chances of employment. VET programs provide specialized training, enabling individuals to master income-generating roles (Bhatt et al., 2023). In today's evolving job market, versatile skills such as social, communication, technological, and critical thinking abilities are highly valued (Nugraha et al., 2020). Additionally, factors like enterprise skills, workplace skills, and professional standards significantly impact skill development and employability (Tiwari et al., 2020). Statistical analysis confirms that skill development directly influences employability. Another significant rationale for this study is to provide evidence-based insights that can inform policy and decision-making processes related to vocational education in the state (Mohanty & Mohanty, 2022).

After analysing the above cited studies, the investigator found limited studies in this context. There is very limited data that specifically looks at how well vocational education programs (VEPs) are working in secondary schools particularly in Dhenkanal district. As the implementation of vocational courses is a recent initiative at the secondary level, it is necessary to evaluate the status, challenges, attitude of stakeholder's problem and issues. All the above facts motivate the researcher to consider this study as a part of academic professional development.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The success of a programme depends on proper attitude and acceptance on part of stakeholders. In context of the study, the students, teachers, parents, school heads and others are involved. Therefore, the study focusing on the study of student's attitude towards vocational education programme. Also, the study is delimited only to

Dhenkanal district. So, the study titled as *"Attitude of students towards vocational education programme in secondary schools."*

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS:

Vocational Education Programme (VEP):

In this context, Vocational Education Program includes various vocational subjects taught in secondary schools as an optional subject in the state of Odisha. The programs consider the level I and Level 2 in the class IX and X respectively.

Secondary school: Secondary school refers to the formal schooling providing education of class IX and X under Board of Secondary (BSE) Education Odisha.

Levels & Courses: Levels refer to particular class in which vocational courses are offered. The courses start from Class IX to Class XII, corresponding to Level 1 through Level 4. At the secondary school level, Level 1 and Level 2 correspond to Class IX and Class X, respectively.

Attitude: Attitude refers to the teachers' predispositions or tendencies to respond positively or negatively toward the Vocational Education Programme (VEP) implemented in secondary schools. This construct is measured through a standardized attitude scale comprising Likert-type items designed to assess various dimensions of participants' orientation toward vocational education.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What is the attitude of students towards VEP in Schools.
2. Is there any difference in attitude between boys and girls towards VEP?
3. Is there any difference in attitude between boys and girls towards VEP and urban schools?

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study the attitude of teachers towards vocational education programme with reference to gender (boys and girls).
2. To study the attitude of students towards vocational education programme with reference to location of school (Urban and Rural).

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS:

Null Hypotheses (H_0):

- H_{01}: There exists no significant difference in the mean attitude scores of students towards VEP based on gender.
- H_{02}: There exists no significant difference in the mean attitude scores of students towards VEP based on school location (urban and rural).

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The Descriptive survey method with quantitative techniques was used.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The population of the study consists of 36 schools of Dhenkanal district that have implemented vocational education courses (up to 2023) in class IX (level-1) and & X (level-2). The sample is restricted to ten (10) secondary schools of Dhenkanal district selected through random sampling method. The sample comprises 176 students (16 students from each school) who have selected vocational subject as an alternative to 3rd language subject.

TOOLS USED:

The Likert 5-point attitude scale for students was employed to compare the attitude of students towards VEP. The scale was prepared and an information blank was used to explore the availability of the facilities.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES:

After collecting the data by using above tools, were tabulated and analysed by using statistics like mean, SD and t test for comparison of attitude of secondary school students towards VEP.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study has been delimited as-

- The students who have chosen vocational courses as an alternative to 3rd language subjects such as Hindi and Sanskrit.
- The course at level 1 & level 2 (Class IX, and level 2) was considered.
- The study is only considered students attitude as a variable with respect to gender and location of schools.
- The study considers a greater number of schools (6 schools out of 10) from rural location.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

a) Test of significance with respect to gender variable:

GENDER	N	MEAN	SD	DF	T VALUE	T Crit.	RESULT
Boys	86	124.08	12.20	158	2.03	1.97	Significant
Girls	74	120.55	9.72				

The table represents the distribution of means, SD, t value, df etc. for boys and girls in an attitude scale. The 1st hypothesis ($H_0$1) investigates whether there's a significant difference in students' attitudes towards Vocational Education Program (VEP) based on gender. The data indicates that the mean attitude score for urban boys is 124.08, while for girls, it's 120.55. This results in a difference in means of 3.53.

To determine if this observed difference (3.53) is statistically significant or merely due to sampling error or chance, a t-test was conducted at a 0.05 level of significance. The calculated t-value was found to be 2.03. When compared to the table value of 1.97 (at α=0.05 with 158 degrees of freedom), the calculated t-value (2.03) falls below it (2.03<1.97). This indicates that the observed difference in means lies in the rejection region. Therefore, the null hypothesis was *rejected.* This indicates that boys and girls differ significantly in their attitude towards VEP.

b) Test of significance with respect to school location:

School location	N	MEAN	SD	DF	T VALUE	T Crit.	RESULT
Urban	64	123.42	10.41	158	0.49	1.97	Not significant
Rural	96	124.31	11.51				

In order to test the significance difference between mean attitude scores , an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of students from urban and rural schools. The table shows, the mean of students in urban and rural schools are 123.42 and 124.31 resulting a difference of 0.89. The calculated t value is found to be 0.49 at .05 level which is less much than critical value of 1.97 at 158 df. Therefore, the investigator *failed reject* the null hypothesis and it is concluded that, there is no significant difference between the mean attitude scores of urban and rural school students at the 0.05 level. The mean differences may be due to sampling error or chance not a true difference.

Findings of the study:

1. The mean attitude score of boys (124.08) is higher than that of girls (120.55), indicating that boys possess more favorable attitudes compared to girls.
2. Although boys have a higher mean score, their attitude scores are more scattered and less stable than those of girls, as indicated by the higher standard deviation (12.20).

3. The higher standard deviation of boys (12.20) indicates the scores are more scattered and less stable than that of girl's attitude scores.
4. The means attitude scores of boys and girls differs significantly at 0.05 indicating gender is a factor in determining the attitude of students.
5. The mean attitude score of rural students (124.31) is slightly higher than that of urban students (123.42). This indicates that, on average, rural students possess slightly more favorable attitudes than urban students.
6. The SD for urban students is 10.41, which is lower than rural students (11.51). This means that urban students' scores are less scattered and more consistent, while rural students' scores show greater variability
7. There is no significant difference in attitude scores between urban and rural students. The small difference in mean scores is not statistically significant. Such small difference (0.89) may be attributed to random variation rather than a true difference.
8. The result shows, the location of school is not a factor in determining attitude of students towards VEP.

Educational implications:

The findings of this study have several important educational implications for the effective implementation of the Vocational Education Programme (VEP) at the secondary level.

1. The significant gender difference in attitudes indicates the need for gender-sensitive strategies, such as awareness programs and career counseling, to encourage greater participation of girls in vocational courses.
2. Although school location does not significantly influence students' attitudes, the greater variability in rural students' scores suggests that consistent facilities, resources, and teacher support should be ensured in rural schools.
3. As teachers play a crucial role in shaping student attitude, professional development and orientation programs should be organized for teachers.
4. To foster positive attitudes among all students, schools should provide hands-on experiences, vocational fairs, and industry visit, that creates a link between classroom learning and real-world applications.

References:

Bhatt, Devendra & Deb, Rajdeep. (2023). Contribution of skill building and vocational education to the formation of new business in India, *Journal of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda ISSN: 0025-0422*

Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha. (2017, July 19). *Notification: Vocational education (No. 458).* Cuttack, Odisha.

Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha. (2018, Sept 17). *Notification: Vocational education (No. 358).* Cuttack, Odisha.

Chakravarty, D., & Gupta, M. (2020). Current and emerging challenges in Vocational Education. *International Journal of Educational Research and Development, 7(2),* 120-130.

Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: World Education Forum, Dakar, 2000 [57] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000121117

Jena, M. & Sahoo, B. (2024). Perception of Students and Teachers Towards Vocational Education in Secondary Schools. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention,* 13(3), 139-146.

Jeyaraman, A.K. (2020). Significance of Vocational Education in India. International *Journal of Advanced Research and Development, 5(12),* 350-355.

Kumar, A. (2021). A Study of Vocational Education in Relation to Government Policies, Facilities and Students' Interests *[Jamia Millia Islamia]*. *http://hdl.handle.net/10603/362413*

Mohanty, B., & Mohanty, R. (2022). Vocational education and training in Odisha: *Issues and challenges. Asian Journal.*

National Skill Development Corporation. (2019). Skills development in India: Challenges and initiatives. https://www.nsdcindia.org/sites/default/file s/Challenges-and-Initiatives-for-SkillDevelopment-in-India.pdf

National Policy on Skills Development: Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2009. http://labour.nic.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Policies/ National Skill Development Policy Mar 09.

Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) (2022, August 8). *Expression of Interest (EOI) for Implementation of Vocationalisation of School Education in Odisha* (No. 10059). Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha.

Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA). (2020, August 17) *Expression of Interest (EOI) for Implementation of Vocationalisation of School Education in Odisha (No 5302).* Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha.

Pattnaik A, Das. K (2022): Transforming the Skill Ecosystem: An Analysis of Skilled in Odisha Program's Effect on Vocational Education: *International Journal of Finance, Entrepreneurship & Sustainability (IJFES), ISSN Online: 2583-0899, Volume-2, Issue -2*, 150-163.

Panda, M. (2024). Attitude of Girls Students towards Vocational Education In Secondary School of Jajpur District. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Arts, Science and Technology, 2(4),* 26-34 Sahoo, M. (2016). Vocational Education at Secondary Stage in Present Society. *International Journal of Educational Sciences, 13(2), 98-115*.

Sharma, J. (2018). Study of status and problems faced by the schools under the Directorate of Education Delhi in implementing vocational education at the plus 2 level. *Journal of Educational Research and Development, 5(2),* 125-140.

Tiwari, P., & Malati, N. (2020). Employability skill evaluation among vocational education students in India. *Journal of Technical Education and Training, 12(1),* 218-228.***