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PERCEPTIVE CROSS - CURRENTS IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

Indian economy's metamorphosis has been extraordinary and noticeable over the past 3 decades. With the rise in globalization and technological transition, India is witnessing a shift in work place as snowballing proportion of employees, in the service or manufacturing industries need cultured workforce to contest in the domestic and international sectors. At this time, India is focusing on workforce expansion, through a well-planned and composed edification and training inventiveness, which underwrites suggestively to encouraging interests of those, proprietors, originalities, economy and society at large.

Paper intentions at appreciating employer's perception of the proficiency of vocational education training programme. Using descriptive survey research design,, a sample of 54 Human Resources Managers have been incorporated in the study. A corroborated and piloted questionnaire based on 5-point Likert scale has been used as data collection instrument. The study observes that vocational Graduates were ranked higher than other employees at most magnitudes. Managers opine that educated employees had stouter job habits, more common sense, and passion than their non-trained complements. Study reveal that as number of Non- Vocational Training technical employees increases, salary and training expenditure increases expressively as compared with number of Vocational Training apprentices. Study concludes that vocational training programme employees contribute colossally to job quality and performance.

Keywords- Vocational Training, Employability, Skill, Knowledge and Employers.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employability of individual depends on knowledge, skills, abilities (K-S-A) and attitude. It is interesting to investigate reasons for high rate of unemployment, which include alteration in technology, job market, recession, to name a few. Many young individuals are unemployed due to lack of appropriate skills required by industry. In such situation, exact necessities of employers have to be agreed so that unemployed youth can be trained, accordingly.

Vocational training institutes train towards specific career or trade. According to Gyan

(2015)¹, one of the major reasons for increased unemployment in India is 'Theoretical education system' of India. The teaching pedagogy used in most of the educational Institutes in India involves teaching the trainees the theoretical knowledge. However, the trainees lack ability to apply theoretical knowledge in contemporary and realistic environment. Trainees have no experience to corporate world and their requirements unless they are employed. It becomes difficult for trainees to cope up with industrial requirements. To bridge this gap, between education and corporate requirements, prospective trainees need to be trained. Industries and educational institutions are

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involved in training people to make them employment ready. However, training is both expensive and time-consuming. Vocational Training Institutes are involved in training trainees aspiring for employment. These Institutes focus on practical applications of the skills learned. The pedagogy involves hands-on-training and experiential learning rather than theory and traditional academic skills. Gyan (2015)¹ suggests that vocational training centers may be opened by Government to reduce 'gap' between education system and industrial requirements. Such vocational training centers may have a tie-up with industries so that focused training could be delivered to trainees as per requirement of industries.

Kakade, V. B., Suryavanshi S.S., and Hindurao S. (2012)², steered a study to determine benefits of 'Earn and Learn' Scheme for trainees in Universities. For this, they interviewed 200 trainees from Maharashtra. Findings of research confirm that 'earn and learn education scheme' is beneficial for trainees and Universities, as well. This scheme has also proved to have a positive impact on society. According to the evaluation and impact assessment report of 'Seekho and Kamayo' scheme of Government of India, which is undertaken as a part of the Skill Development Project in India. The objectives of such programs are to –

- Reduce unemployment rate
- Conserve, update and enhance traditional skills of the youth
- Improve employability among the young population
- Decrease school dropouts
- Generate better means of livelihood, and
- Develop potential human resource for the country.

Through such schemes are undertaken by Government of India, Universities and Educational Institutes endeavour to bring about positive alteration in youth by supporting them to become employable and thereby impacting society. Most of these schemes are undertaken in rural areas or for rural trainees studying at urban places, so that

through such earn and learn schemes they could earn and support their basic or advanced studies. The researchers argue that present educational sector is market-driven and higher education is the privilege of mostly rich class. Exclusion of meritorious but poor trainees from getting access to adequate higher education opportunities results in a loss in terms of human capital. Such earn and learn schemes could be helpful to such meritorious yet poor trainees. These researchers further suggest that it is that it is time for India to transform non-inclusive educational sector. The paper also reported that if scheme is implemented widely in various sectors, the dreams of billions of people would come true. It was also suggested to execute 'Earn and Learn' Scheme in collaboration of corporate sector where various tasks involved in businesses could be shared by trainees; thus a win-win affair for both corporates and trainees. This was envisaged to become instrument for effective employment generation.

According to Alam (2007)³, human capital theory (1985)⁴ has strong influence on the analysis of the labour market. Study has observed that investment in education and training benefits both individual and society, as a whole. Society would benefit in arena of worldwide competitiveness and trade and industry growth due to development of a skilled workforce. Skilled individuals would benefit as they would be able to pursue good career, increase their earnings and lead better quality life. Fagerlind and Shah (1989)⁵ are of opinion that education and training increase proficiency of employees and their lifetime earning capacity.

According to a study by Haddad et al (1990) ⁶; educational investment is one of the most promising factors which causes economic growth in both developed and developing nations. Further, it was noted that studies done on expenditure on education and its effect on labour productivity show positive correlation. Investment in education gives higher return on investment as compared to other monetary investments. Studies have also revealed that parents' education, especially mother's education have a great impact on the family. In families where mothers are educated, children are healthier and fertility rates are reduced. This scenario is observed in both

developed as well as developing countries. The study noted that there were compelling pieces of evidence which confirms that access to higher education leads to higher equitable income distribution in economy and lesser poverty. Educated and trained employees would be able to understand, adapt as well as adopt changing technology in corporate sectors. Right blend of skilled employees and contemporary technology would enable industries to grow.

Shavit and Muller (2000)⁷, investigated if the vocational training works as;

1. A guard which enhances trainees' skills and thus increases their chances of finding jobs or
2. A diversion for working-class trainees from higher education to the professionals.

Vocational Training, on one hand, facilitates the school-to-work transitions of youth. This is termed as guard function of VET. On the other hand, placement into vocational tracks dissuades trainees from attending higher education; a diversion function of VET. Researchers hypothesised that role of vocational secondary education as a 'safety net' and 'diversion' varies in different countries. This hypothesis was tested with help of secondary data from various countries with different secondary education systems. Results have shown that vocational training has reduced chances of unskilled labour getting employment in organization. Vocational training has significantly reduced unemployment. Specific and focused vocational training offers better advantages than general one. Third, finding of research is graduates of vocational secondary education occupy less prestigious positions than those attained by their counterparts from academic tertiary education. This disadvantage of vocational education/training is pronounced in countries where vocational education also serves as effective safety nets. From the findings, it was concluded that that guarding and diversion effects of vocational training were not exclusive but two sides of same coin.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Government of India is promoting Vocational Education and Training Programs to address issue of un-employability of current workforce. Therefore recently many Institutes are emphasising on Vocational Education and Training programs. Rising number of VET programs signals need for evaluating Proficiency if such programs. However, very few research studies have been conducted so far to evaluate Proficiency of such VET programs. Considering the background of study major research question posed is 'What is the Proficiency of vocational education system on overall cost incurred on Human Resource of companies?'

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been undertaken to meet the objectives of study. Past studies were reviewed for getting insights into education systems and consequences of implementing vocational education method. Such literature review is a qualitative approach. Primary data is collected which is quantitative approach. HRD managers of organizations wherein Learn and Earn Scheme is run are sources of primary data. Primary data has been collected through structured questionnaire using interview technique. Besides interview, observation is used as too of collecting primary data. Research assistants helped in collecting data from samples after receiving training from researcher. Non-probabilistic Purposive sampling technique is used for selecting samples from populations. HR managers of organizations of which trainees were selected. Structured questionnaire is formed for data collection. A total of 60 questionnaires were mailed to HR Professionals out of which 54 fully filled questionnaires were considered for study. The questionnaire was prepared with consultation with the experts in the field.

Existing relevant literature is reviewed to prepare a valid questionnaire. Human resource professionals of sample organizations' were asked to respond to the questionnaire which was rated on 5 point Likert's scale. On this scale 1 meant 'Strongly disagree' and 5 Meant 'Strongly Agree'. There are total 6 items in this subscale. The

questionnaire was designed to understand HR managers' perception of employees from vocational education and traditional education. To make balance HR managers/ professionals were asked to presume that they were comparing these trainees/ employees having same amount of Vocational Training. In social science Cronbach's

alpha coefficient of equal to or more than .7 is considered as indication of reliable scale. Value of Cronbach's Alpha of the questionnaire used for HR Professionals is greater than .7(.830). This indicates that questionnaires are reliable and can be used further for data collection. Therefore, questionnaires are used for final data collection.

RELIABILITY STATISTICS

Questionnaire	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
For HR Professionals	.830	11

From table it is observed that Cronbach's alpha value of questionnaire is more than .7 hence it is considered as reliable.

EMPLOYABILITY SUBSCALE

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS- EMPLOYABILITY SUBSCALE (HR PROFESSIONALS' PERCEPTION)

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.
Stronger attitude towards Learning	54	3	5	4.07	0.6964
Maintain their Learning Longer	54	3	5	4.06	0.7376
Better Utilization of Learning	54	3	5	3.89	0.7439
Highly Trainable	54	2	5	3.76	0.7507
Highly Proficiency of training	54	3	5	3.63	0.5595
Lower Cost involved in Training	54	2	4	3.37	0.5595
Overall Mean				3.80	

The statements mentioned in above table shows the preference for VET trainees against non-VET trainees. Overall mean of employability sub-scale is 3.80 on 5 point Likert's scale. This signifies that respondents consider that Vocational Training trainees are more employable that their counterparts.

HYPOTHESES

Based on literature review, hypotheses framed during proposal of this study stands confirmed and considered for further analysis. Hypotheses of this research study are-

H1- Higher proportion of trainees from Vocational Training Program among all trainees lesser expenditure on salaries and training of trainees.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

H1- Higher proportion of trainees from Vocational Training Program among all trainees lesser expenditure on salaries and training of trainees.

Pearson Correlation- Expenditure on Salary and Training * No. of Vocational Training trainees* No. of polytechnic employees other than Vocational Training

CORRELATIONS

	Salary and Training Expenditure on Polytechnic Employees including Vocational trained Trainees for last year	Ratio_vocational_nonvocational
Salary and Training Expenditure on Polytechnic Employees including Vocational trained Trainees N for last year	1	-.412**
Pearson Correlation Ratio_vocational_nonvocatio Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.002
N	54	54
	-.412**	1
	.002	.002
	54	54

** . Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Above table is an output of Pearson's correlation test in SPSS. From the table it is observed that Pearson's correlation is negative and significant value (p) is less than .01. This indicates that negative correlation is statistically significant and not just by chance. In simple words this result means that as proportion (ratio) of number of trainees from vocational training program to that of employees from traditional technical programs increases the expenditure on salaries and training decreases significantly. If magnitude of correlation is observed then one can say that there exists moderate negative correlation between said ratio and expenditure. Therefore this study accepts hypothesis H1.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Significant number of HR professionals (60%) agrees that the trainees receiving vocational training are more trainable as compared with the trainees receiving traditional technical education. This signifies that vocational education is more effective.

It is noteworthy that 41% of respondents agree with statement 'Costs involved in training

Vocational Training Trainees are less as compared to other employees'. Furthermore 55% of respondents think that Proficiency of training among Vocational Training trainees is better as compared to their counterparts. More than half of respondents think that Vocational Training trainees utilize their learning better than their counterparts. This shows that Vocational Training trainees grasp training more effectively.

Overall mean of employability (HR perception) subscale is 3.80 on the 5 point Likert's scale. This signifies that respondents think that Vocational Training trainees are more employable than their counterparts.

From results of Pearson's correlation it was interpreted that as number of Non- Vocational Training technical employees increases salary and training expenditure also increases significantly as compared when number of Vocational Training trainees is higher than Non- Vocational Training technical employees. This is because Vocational Training trainees are considered as trainees and not full time employees. Thus, organizations employing such trainees need not to be paid with provident funds. Therefore expenses of

organizations on provident funds have reduced significantly. Furthermore such trainees work on shop floor from day one of admission to vocational education system. This helps them to acquire required skills in short period of time compared to their counterparts who join organization after their technical education. Therefore, HR professionals prefer Vocational Training (vocational education) trainees over other pass out trainees.

V. CONCLUSION

Vocational education is taken as one of the most important resources to resolve social, economic and political issues that threaten nations' social sustainability and business productivity. In addition to educational reform initiatives in many developing countries, the shortage of qualified and skilled employees, increasing unemployment, high school and college dropout rates and the changing demographic nature of staff have put issue of vocational training and workplace learning. Because of its complex existence, VET systems are continuously subject to various factors leading to alterations in educational institutions, job industry and society.

Human capital can be built at two stages: the first stage is the planning stage, where future workforce is provided with the requisite theoretical framework as well as the practical implementation. It is important at this point to define the content of the job and get enough skills for a career. The second stage is on-the-job preparation.

Design is carried out by a group of on-the-job technical operations. Key goal of on-the-job training is to raise the level of success and improve the skills of employees and talents, as well as developing an effective psychological and interpersonal culture for the human capital. Considering both numerical (proportion of effective employees) and quality (performance) meanings of work are related to efforts made by the HR Manager to building a strong human capital is the foundation for sustainable growth.

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