



## **SWOT ANALYSIS OF VOCATIONAL COURSES IN KERALA**

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### **Abstract**

*India is in a transition from a society in which education was a privilege of a small minority to one in which it could be made available to the masses of people. The immense resources needed for the programme can be generated only if education is related to productivity. A basic distinction between traditional and modern societies is the development and use of the latter of science based technology, which helps modernization of agriculture and development of industries.*

*The State Government has accepted the policy of vocationalization of education in the State of Kerala. The modern vocational and technical education in Kerala has root in the past. Even during the Sangam age, there was some kind of vocational and technical education, practiced in the state.*

*As the present study is an attempt of analyses the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of vocational courses at higher secondary stage, the investigators adopts normative survey method for the present study.*

*Qualitative analysis was employed for analysis of data obtained through documents, observation schedule and interview schedule.*

**Key words:** *swot analysis, vocational courses, kerala.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

India is in a transition from a society in which education was a privilege of a small minority to one in which it could be made available to the masses of people. The immense resources needed for the programme can be generated only if education is related to productivity. A basic distinction between traditional and modern societies is the development and use of the latter of science based technology, which helps modernization of agriculture and development of industries. Despite various recommendations and suggestions made from time to time by the education committees

and commissions, the vocationalisation of courses in the educational system in India has not been affected with the result that the Indian Education remains mainly academic and bookish. The ratio of enrolment in educational and technical courses in High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools is only 5% in India as compared to 17% in China, 24% in France, 29% in Italy, 59% in U.S.S.R. 65% in UK and 80% or more in Switzerland, Denmark and Germany.

### **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

The State Government has accepted the policy of vocationalisation of education in the State of Kerala. The modern vocational and technical education in Kerala has root in the past. Even during the Sangam age, there was some kind of vocational and technical education, practiced in the state. The department of Vocational Higher Secondary Education of Kerala conducts two year vocational courses in 45 disciplines at higher secondary level leading to the award of the certificate in vocational higher secondary education in the concerned discipline. The courses are conducted in selected Government/Private (Aided/Technical) schools. Each institution gives Admission to 25-33 students per course.

Due to the lack of various academic support systems, the higher secondary vocationalisation faces many problems. These exists lot of ambiguity in the policy formulation and implementation of the vocational courses. Though, it appears to be function well, we can notice problems which directly affect the desired out come of the course. When compared to the other stream i.e. +2 courses, the vocational course suffer from proper attention, infrastructure facility, lack of funding etc. Vocational education had been launched to cater to the need of skilled and semi-skilled employees for the primary secondary and tertiary sectors of our state. This has not been addressed properly due to conceptual, organisational, administrative and financial problems it has been facing so far.

The present investigation is mainly intended to study the existing system of vocational higher secondary course in Kerala and to come forward with suggestion which could definitely be a guiding force to policy makers.

### **PROBLEM OF THE STUDY**

#### **SWOT ANALYSIS OF VOCATIONAL COURSES IN KERALA.**

### **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

SWOT is a common but important jargon in contemporary management. It means an analysis of strength, weakness opportunities and threats of an organization, a system or a process .

According to Pearce and Richard (1988) “SWOT is the acronym for the inherent strengths and weakness of a programme and environmental opportunities and threats facing that programme. It is based on logic that an effective strategy maximises programmes strength and opportunities but at the same time minimises its weakness and threats”. In this context SWOT is applicable to the ascertaining of the strength, weakness, opportunities and threats in the vocational courses.

**Strength:** A strength is a resource / skill or other advantage related to the effectiveness of a training programme.

**Weakness:** Is a limitation or deficiency in resources, skills and capabilities that seriously impedes effectiveness of a training programme.

**Opportunity:** An opportunity is a Major favourable situation or condition for effective

functioning of a programme. In this case several opportunities may rise for self employment of the beneficiaries.

**Threat:** A threat is a major unfavourable situation against the smooth conduct of the programme. A delay in release of funds lack of time, lack of awareness etc, are some of the threats which may adversely affects the vocational programme.

**Vocational education:** Vocational Education has different meaning for different people. By vocational education, the researcher means education capable of giving training in some vocation.

“Vocationalisation means provision of some trade or skills terminal in nature for entering the world of work”- **Good.**

**Higher secondary classes:** Refers to 10+2 classes after the secondary level.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study addresses the following research questions.

1. In what way the vocational courses conducted in Kerala at +2 stages vary according to its nature?
2. What is the strength of the vocational courses related to the physical facilities of the institution?
3. What is strength of the vocational courses related to the instructional facilities of the institution?
4. What is the strength of the vocational course related to human relationship aspect?
5. What is the strength of the vocational course related to coordination of the course with other discipline?
6. What are the weaknesses of the vocational course related to the physical facilities of the institution?
7. What are the weaknesses of the vocational course related to the instructional facilities of the institution?
8. What are the weaknesses of the vocational course related to human relationship aspect?
9. What are the weaknesses of the vocational course related to co-ordination of the course with other discipline?
10. What are the opportunities of the vocational course related to skill/vocational development of the student?
11. List out the opportunity of the vocational course related to the employment of the pass-outs.
12. Whether the lacks of pubic awareness act as a threat to the vocational course?
13. Whether the vocational course faces threat due to recognitions of the course?
14. What is the attitude of vocational higher secondary school teachers towards vocational course?
15. Is there exists any significant difference in the attitude of male and female teacher towards vocational courses.
16. Does there exist any significant difference in the attitude of Government and Aided Vocational Higher Secondary School Teachers towards vocational course.
17. Does there exist any significant difference in the attitude of vocational and non – vocational teachers towards vocational course.
18. What are the changes to be needed in the vocational courses for better implementation of the course?

## **METHODOLOGY**

As the present study is an attempt to analyse the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of vocational courses at higher secondary stage, the investigators adopt a normative survey method for the present study. There are 375 vocational higher secondary schools in Kerala, which spread over 14 revenue districts under 7 regions. The sample for the present study was collected from 63 vocational higher secondary schools. The sample includes 1575 students, 315 teachers and 63 Heads of the institution. Due representation was given to gender, type of management and type of subjects taken by the teacher while selecting the sample.

### **TOOLS FOR THE PRESENT STUDY**

- a. Documents published by the Vocational Higher Secondary Directorate.
- b. Observation Schedule.
- c. Questionnaire for students.
- d. Attitude scale for teachers.
- e. Interview Schedule for head of the institution

### **STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED**

Qualitative analysis was employed for analysis of data obtained through documents, observation schedule and interview schedule. Strength, weakness, opportunity and threat analysis of questionnaire were calculated with the help of percentage.

For the analysis of the attitude scale, skewness and critical ratio were employed.

## **MAJOR FINDINGS**

### **1. The nature and functioning of the course.**

(i) *Vocational Education* : It is designed to prepare skilled work force in middle level in one or more group of occupation, trade or job after matriculation of 10 +2 stage of education. The objective of the course is to enhance individual employability and to provide an alternative for those pursuing higher education.

(ii) *Administration of the vocational higher secondary education* : The Joint Council of Vocational Education (JCVE) is responsible for over all co-ordination of all other bodies and departments concerned with vocational education. All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) is a statutory body which regulates engineering and Technology, Management and Technical Education through out the country at the National level. The State Council of Vocational Education (SCVE) at the State level. The District Vocational Education Committee performs the function of local co-ordination.

(iii) *Finance for the Vocational Courses* : The division of vocational Education under the Bureau of school education and the Bureaus of Technical Education in the union Ministry of Human Resource Development provide finances and monitor the programmes of vocational education. Directorates of Education or their counterparts and Directorates of technical education of State Government are responsible for general administration and finances in their respective states.

(iv) *Institution and course of study* : The Department of vocational higher secondary education conducts two year vocational courses in various disciplines in higher secondary level leading to the award of certificate in vocational higher secondary education in concerned discipline of the 375 vocational higher secondary schools in Kerala 248 are Government schools and 127 are Aided schools.

(v) *Time allotted for each subject* : 8 hours per week, (19%) are set apart for English and General Foundation Course. 16 hours are allotted for vocational subject theory and practical (38.09%) and 18 hours optional subject (42.85%).

(vi) *Medium of Instruction* : Medium of instruction is English. But the students can write the examination in vernacular language also.

(vii) *Instruction time* : The instruction time is 8.30 Am to 4.30Pm. All Saturdays except Second Saturday is a working day for Vocational Higher Secondary Schools.

(viii) *Examination* : Annual Institutional Examination held at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year and public examination at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the course. A student has to acquire 80% attendance and prescribed minimum internal assessment marks for getting promoted to second year.

## **2. Attitude of vocational Higher Secondary School teachers towards vocationalisation of education**

(i) The teachers showed a positive attitude towards vocationalisation of Higher Secondary Education. Among 300 teachers responded to the attitude scale, 83 scored less than 90 i.e. 22.07% of the total sample showed an unfavourable attitude towards vocationalisation of education. 196 teachers scored greater than 90 i.e. 65.33% of the total sample showed a positive or favourable attitude towards vocationalisation of education and 21 teachers i.e. 7% of the total sample showed a neutral attitude.

(ii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of Vocational Higher Secondary School teachers of different gender towards Vocationalisation of Higher Secondary Education.

(iii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of vocational Higher Secondary School teachers of different management (Government and Aided) towards vocationalisation of education.

(iv) There is no significant difference in the attitude of Vocational Higher Secondary Schools of different subjects (vocational and Non-vocational) towards Vocationalisation of Education.

## **3. Strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of the vocational courses**

### **1. Physical facilities of the institution.**

#### **Strength**

(i) Well furnished class rooms for taking classes were noticed in all vocational higher secondary schools.

(ii) Enough bench and desk are present, seating arrangements proper and the class rooms were sufficiently lighted and provided with proper ventilation.

(iii) Separate vocational subject laboratory and optional subject laboratory were present in all the schools.

(iv) Drinking water facility and urinal facility are satisfactory in most of the schools.

#### **Weakness**

(i) Separate subject room and craft room are not present in most of the schools. (It was found only in 12 schools)

(ii) First Aid facility was not seen in most of the schools. (It was found only in 14 schools)

(iii) The condition of play ground is not satisfactory in most of the schools.

### **2. Laboratory facilities of the institution**

#### **Strength**

- (i) The condition of vocational subject's laboratory and optional subject laboratory are satisfactory
- (ii) Most of the students are very much interested in doing practicals
- (iii) The laboratory was equipped with tools, chemicals and provided enough raw materials to repeat the experiment.

**Weakness**

- (i) The students are not satisfied with the extent of assistance from lab assistants
- (ii) The students are not getting sufficient time for repeating practical.
- (iii) The students opined that the time specified for practical was not sufficient to acquire competency in the vocational trade.
- (iv) In some vocational schools especially in government schools sufficient amount of chemicals and raw materials are not provided to carry out the practical.

**3. Library facilities of the institution**

**Strength**

- (i) Some institution keeps books for reference.

**Weakness**

- (i) No separate library was found in any of the school.
- (ii) The books were kept in some shelves in the staffroom.
- (iii) Most of the books were in English language.
- (iv) Most of the schools do not possess any type of journals or periodicals.
- (v) Reference books for vocational trade and practical were very less.
- (vi) Most of the schools do not take adequate steps for issuing books to the students.

**4. Instructional facilities.**

**Strength**

- (i) The objective of the course is to equip the students with skill/vocational proficiency in their concerned vocational trade.

**Weakness**

- (i) Though vocational courses started from 1983 onwards in Kerala only last year a curriculum was framed for the course
- (ii) Adequate weightage was not given in the curriculum for skill development.
- (iii) Recent developments in the field were not included in the curriculum.
- (iv) Students have to study vocational subject, optional subject and general foundation course subject, seems to be additional burden for students.
- (v) Teachers followed only lecture method in vocational schools.
- (vi) In most of the schools instructional aids/any other type of media are not used in the classroom
- (vii) In government schools, permanent teachers are not permanent. The classes are taken by guest teachers.
- (viii) The teachers were not getting proper in service training programme.

**5. Human relationship aspect**

**Strength**

- (i) There is good teacher pupil relationship exists in most of the schools. Especially in aided schools

**Weakness**

- (i) The scope of co-curricular activities is very less in vocational schools, therefore, the relationship of students with the institution seems to be very less

- (ii) The teacher not allowed group discussion in the class
- (iii) Most of the students do not have good relationship with vocational instructors.

#### **6. Co-ordination with other discipline.**

##### **Strength**

- (i) There is wide scope for the course to have good relation with other subject, with local industry and with other department.

##### **Weakness**

- (i) Though the vocational course belonged to other fields like Engineering technology, Agriculture, Business, commerce, at present there exist less co-ordination among those fields and vocational education field
- (ii) In order to have apprenticeship training and follow up programme for the pass-outs, there need good relationship with local industry. But at present there was no-cordial relation exist between vocational schools and local industry.
- (iii) For the proper functioning of the vocational course, cordial relationship to with departments like business, industry, finance and education was needed But at present, there exist less co-ordination among these departments.

#### **7. Opportunity of the vocational course**

This is a unique course which prepares a student both for higher education as well as for employment.

##### **1. Educational opportunity**

- i. Some of the universities recognized these courses as equivalent to 10 +2. So the students can pursue their studies.
- ii. All the universities in Kerala recognized these courses as equivalent to 10 +2, so that students can continue their studies in Kerala if they are interested
- iii. The students successfully complete the course can appear for entrance examination for MBBS and Engineering courses.
- iv. Some seats are reserved for vocational pass-outs in diploma courses.

##### **2. Employment opportunity.**

This course offers a solution to the unemployment problem.

- i. The outstanding feature of the course is that its objective is to prepare the students fit for a particular vocation.
- ii. The Directorate of Vocational Higher Secondary Education in Kerala offers 42 vocational trades in different discipline.
- iii. About 17,000 skilled personals came from vocational higher secondary institution from every year.
- iv. Most of the students under agriculture vocational trade got job immediately after the course.
- v. Another unique feature of the course is that it prepares the students for self employment.

#### **8. Threat of the vocational course**

- (i) Only 10% of universities in India recognized the course as equivalent to 10+2. Therefore the students who are studying in this course are not able to continue their studies, in those universities.
- (ii) Only 13 courses out of 42 are recognized by Public Service Commission of Kerala. Only those students are able to apply for a job under PSC, with the vocational

- qualification. Absence of a state level/ school level placement using can also be considered on a threat of the course
- (iii) Most of the courses conducted by vocational schools are outdated and not suited to the present information technology era.
  - (iv) As equal weightage given to theory and practical, the course fails to prepare skilled personal in the concerned vocational trade.
  - v. Most of the students are not confident to take up a job related to their vocation after the successful completion of the course.
  - vi. Before adding new vocational course, vocational survey to know the demand of the society was not done, which sometimes acts as a threat to the proper functioning vocational course.
  - vii. Another important threat of the vocational course is parental indifference towards the course. Most of the educated parents feel that vocational courses are inferior to general stream courses.
  - viii. Another threat of the course was the lack of public awareness. Due to this, the courses do not get any community support and fund from local bodies.

### **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The National Policy of Education had stipulated that the vocational course will be a distinct stream intended to prepare students for identified occupations covering several areas of activity with the following objectives: (1) To provide diversification of educational opportunities. (2) To reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled man power and (3) to provide an alternative education for those pursuing higher education. The present study analyses how far the objectives of vocational education have been realized in the state of Kerala and suggest measures which would improve the existing system of vocational higher secondary education.

The National Curriculum Frame Work (2000) had pointed out the need for linkage between the world of work and world of education. The goal behind it was creating positive attitude to the labour from a young age itself. The introduction of systematic, well planned and rigorously implemented programmes of vocational education is essential to attain this. The present study looks in to this objective in terms of the linkage that vocational education has created with the potential world of work.

The present study aims at enquiring into the logistics of conducting vocational courses in terms of certification of pass-outs, equivalency with other courses of similar nature campus recruitment of employers and maintenance of placement records in each school. The present study deals this aspect and that will enable the authorities to incorporate modifications in designing various vocational courses so as to face the challenges of future in a better way.

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