

TECHNICAL SESSION - IV

New Education Policy 2020: Strategic Priorities for VET System in India



▶ **Technical Session-IV : Presentation- II**
**Reimagining Vocational Education:
Priorities and Action Excellence in VET**

▶ **Speaker**
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ABSTRACT

The NEP 2020 has placed the responsibility of providing quality vocational education firmly in the hands of educational institutions by requiring that ALL schools, colleges and universities integrate vocational education into their regular curriculum. This is a bold and transformational move that takes into account not just the present shortcomings with regard to the provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the country today, but also the pressing need to provide students with high-quality, holistic, TVET that prepares students more broadly and deeply, and bridges the gaps in the availability of trained personnel in many sectors of the economy. The present ecosystem for skilling, consisting largely of the NSDC and its training partners and some skills universities, have contributed to tremendous progress being made in the provision of short-term training courses. However, long-term training courses at educational institutions which are the focus of the NEP require considerable attention from all stakeholders¹. At a recent Webinar² on the theme of 'Harnessing Education, Research and Skill Development for Atmanirbhar Bharat' the Prime Minister pointed out that "in order to create an Atmanirbhar Bharat, it is essential for the youth in the country to have 'atma vishwas'. This can only come when youth have confidence or 'vishwas' in their education, knowledge and skills; when they believe that their education will give them the skills and the opportunity for work. The NEP has been prepared with exactly this thinking", he said. The implementation of the NEP must therefore focus on the abilities, interests and aspirations of students, and help to fulfil them with the relevant knowledge and skills. NEP 2020 seeks to bring about a new reality for the Indian education system. It clearly articulates the contours of this new reality but leaves it to the stakeholders concerned to evolve their own pathways towards it. Educators, educationists, managements of institutions and governments are being exhorted to make a leap of faith, to abandon their present mindsets, to embrace change, and to innovate towards transforming the education system completely, especially vocational education. The challenge however is that educators, educationists, teachers, administrators in the field of education both at the Centre and the states, other academics, and all other stakeholders have little or no familiarity with vocational education, particularly its linkages with the labour market, with businesses and industry. The enabling

environment provided by NEP 2020 represents a very big opportunity for schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) to give the country a 21st century education system that is second to none in the world. Teachers and faculty members must look to inculcating critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, collaboration and communication skills, and all other 21st century skills in their students, and the integration of vocational education can be a key instrument of bringing in change. The model of vocationalisation of school education that is in vogue at present is flawed in its design since it entrusts the provision of vocational education into the hands of private sector training providers, partners of the NSDC, and assessments to the Sector Skills Councils. This takes away any opportunity to integrate vocational education into regular school education and to explore the symbiotic relationships between them for the benefit of students. It is critical to note that there are two distinct groups of students whose interests need to be catered to at the secondary school stage: i) students who intend to take up higher education but are still looking for deeper exposure to different vocations in order to explore their interests; ii) students who have chosen their vocations and would like to acquire sufficient expertise in their chosen vocation during higher secondary school so that they can enter the world of work after completing grade 12. We discuss alternative models for vocational education for both these groups. The B.Voc. degree launched by the UGC in 2013 is very popular, with 999 institutions offering these courses as of the academic year 2020-21. The provision of vocational education through HEIs has the potential to not just provide jobs to students and contribute to the economy, but to bring HEIs closer to industry and to their communities, valuable linkages that are either weak or non-existent at present. We discuss effective ways of partnering with industry for the mutual benefit of industry as well as the students.

BRIEF CV

Dr. Leena Chandran Wadia is Senior Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Mumbai. She received her PhD in Physics from the Indian Institute of Science Bangalore and did her post-doctoral work in high-performance computing at ETH Zurich. She has been a researcher at several places in India and abroad including IIT Bombay, and CERN in Switzerland. She has also served in the corporate sector, as Senior VP and CTO at Netcore Solutions Pvt. Ltd., working in the area of value-added services on mobile phones. Since moving to ORF Mumbai in 2010, Leena has been engaged in research and policy advocacy primarily in education, but also in other areas such as renewable energy, public health and sustainable agriculture. She has contributed to the preparation of India's Draft National Education Policy 2019, as a member of the technical secretariat to the Dr Kasturirangan committee and as a member of the drafting committee of the policy.