

IMPORTANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract : Vocational education is education within vocational schools that prepares people for a specific trade. It directly develops expertise in techniques related to technology, skill and scientific technique to span all aspects of the trade. Vocational education can be at the secondary, post-secondary level, further education, and higher education level and can interact with the apprenticeship system. The basis of vocational education is training which is termed as internships in the academic dialect. The present paper tries to know whether the students are aware about vocational system of education and that are they ready to accept it as it is or with some changes. The results put light on several related aspects like lack of awareness about vocational education, lack of faith, need of internships as a compulsory component and many more.

Keywords: Vocational Education, Higher Education, Students, Internships, Lack Of Awareness

1 INTRODUCTION

“Skill Development is the Key to Systemic Development”

-Shri. Narendra Modi

Although the field of education has made progress in the past ten years, vocational education seems to have lost its importance. This has led to the widening gap between the supply and demand for skilled manpower across various industries. This shortage of skills has translated directly into unemployment among an increasing number of graduates who pass out every year and are forced to be re-trained in order to become marketable. The lack of a formal degree and the belief that the vocational track is only suitable for people from a lesser financial background has resulted in the declining popularity of this area. While students from a middle-class background are attracted into academic pursuits and take up orthodox degrees, pursuing a vocational education has remained a less-explored field. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed that labour reforms and skill development is essential for the success of the 'Make in India' campaign. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is also taking initiatives and has invited proposals from universities and colleges to start courses on skill development. The need of the hour is to focus upon skill based education as a part of higher education.

Review of Literature:

(OECD, 2012) In the last thirty years a major trend has been to 'de-differentiate' work and education with the pursuit of more flexible forms of work and generic skills, and the blurring of the boundaries between educational institutions. While de differentiation is pursued to overcome the negative consequences of specialization and growing social inequalities, it may undermine the specialization that is important for innovation and growth in the 'knowledge economies'. As a result, policy makers are increasingly calling for greater collaboration between vocational education and universities. (Ms. Swati

“Skill Development : The Key to Economic Prosperity”

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Mujumdar) There is little capacity in vocational education in India and even that is under-utilized. Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an important element of the nation's education initiative. In order for Vocational Education to play its part effectively in the changing national context and for India to enjoy the fruits of the demographic dividend, there is an urgent need to redefine the critical elements of imparting vocational education and training to make them flexible, contemporary, relevant, inclusive and creative. The Government is well aware of the important role of Vocational education and has already taken a number of important initiatives in this area.

Research Methodology:

The present study is based on data collected through a primary survey. A questionnaire was prepared and distributed to 100 students of the degree college. The samples were selected randomly and belonged to all the courses. The data was compiled and graphs were prepared using Ms-Excel.

Objectives:

- ☒ To know the status of awareness about vocational education among the students
- ☒ To know the preference of students for vocational courses over regular courses
- ☒ To give measures to improve the awareness about vocational courses

Area of Study:

The area of study chosen is Nagindas Khandwala College of Commerce, Arts and Management Studies and Shantaben Nagindas Khandwala College of Science located near the railway station of the suburb of Malad in Northern Mumbai. The College is around four decades old and runs around fifteen courses ranging from Graduation to Ph.D. with around six thousand students. It also has a section of vocational education imparting education in two varied streams of retail and tourism.

Analysis & Discussion:

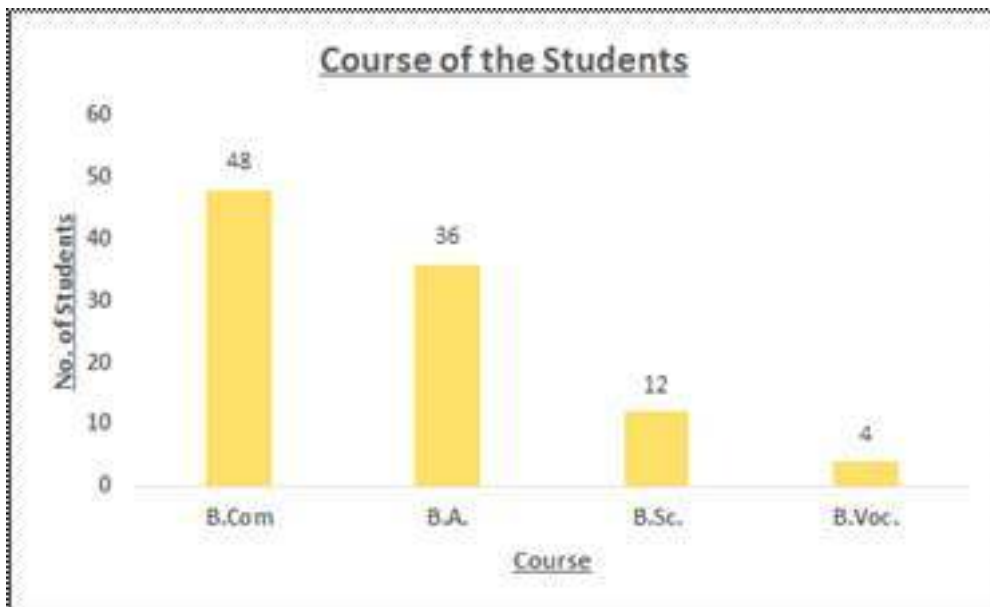


Figure 01 represents the courses to which the students belonged. From the graph, it can be observed that most of the students i.e. 48%, belonged to the B.Com. section, followed by B.A. section (36%), B.Sc.(12%) and B. Voc. (4%). This parameter was taken to know the preference of students for each course and the graph depicts that, maximum students prefer commerce over other streams. This may be due to the increasing interest in the fields of C.A., C.S. etc. On the other hand, only a handful of them were in B. Voc. Courses. This may be due to lack of awareness and newness of the courses.

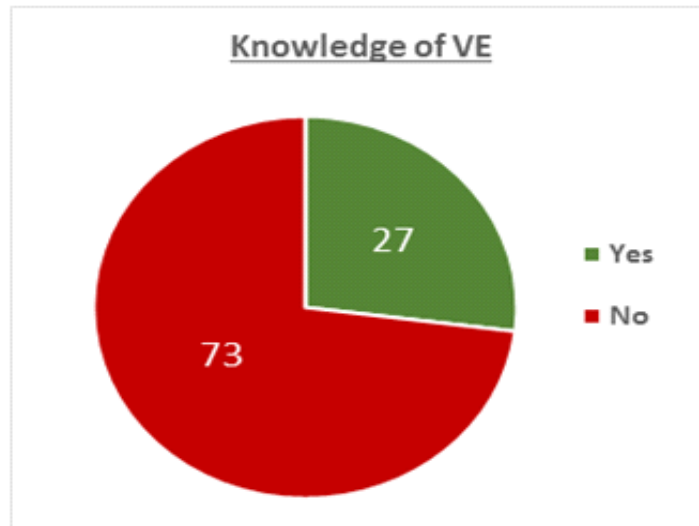


Figure 02 represents students' knowledge of vocational education. From the pie chart it can be observed that only 27% of them have some knowledge about vocational education, whereas, 73% of them do not have any knowledge about it. The lack of knowledge may be due to lack of awareness, ignorance and limited or negative knowledge about the courses under vocational education.

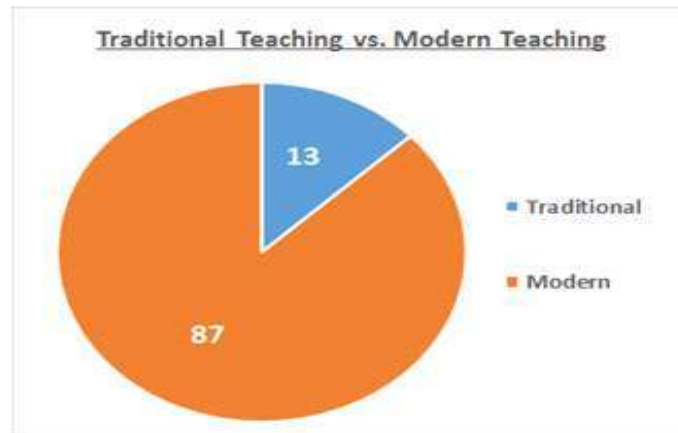


Figure 03 represents opinion of students between traditional methods of teaching and modern methods of teaching. It can be observed that only 13% of the students preferred traditional methods of teaching and 87% students preferred modern methods of teaching. As a part of the explanation, students focussed on use of technology, practical sessions like visits to several places and live examples as modern methods of teaching. This may be due to the added element of fun and connectedness with the world; things which are a need of the hour.

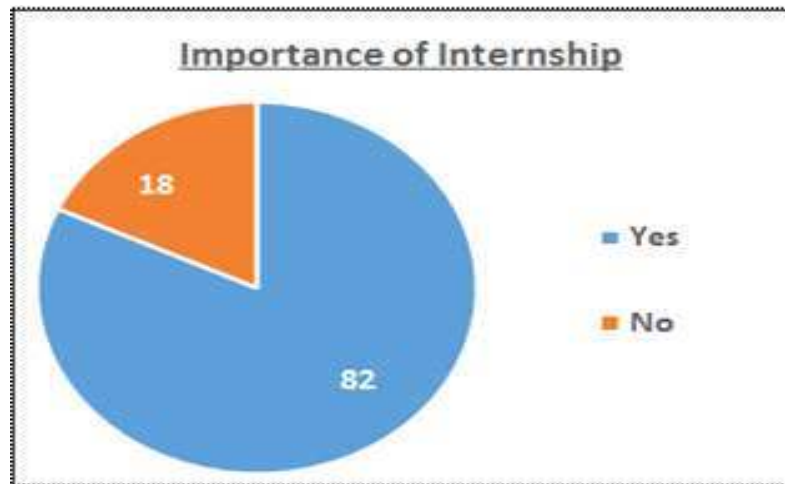


Figure 04 represents the importance of internships from the view point of the students surveyed. This parameter was taken up because, the concept of internship lie at the core of the concept of vocational training or education. It can be observed that maximum students i.e. 82% think that internships are important whereas only 18% think vice-versa.

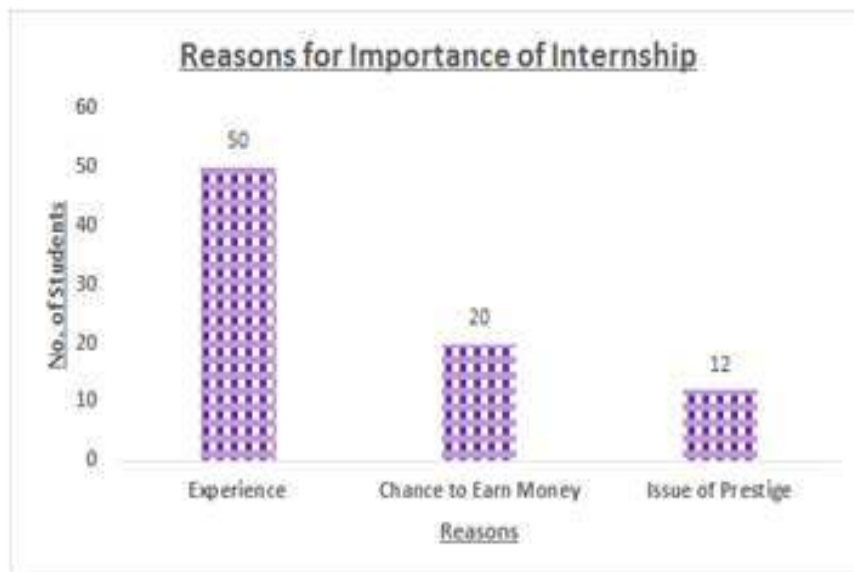


Figure 05 represents the reasons for which the students think that internships are important. It can be observed that, out of 82 students favouring internships, 50 students find it important because it enables them to gain experience which will be useful in future, followed by the urge to earn money through internships and prestige, if interned in a big and prestigious organization. This implies that, students are aware of the benefits of internship and are willing to take it up, if a chance is given to them.

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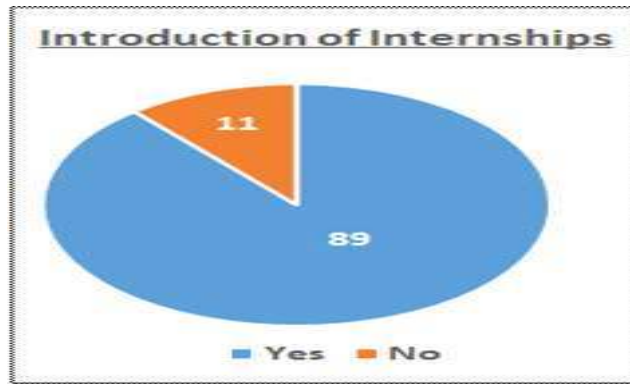


Figure 06 represents students' opinion on introduction of internships in their respective courses or not. It can be observed that 89% students agree to introduce internship in their course whereas, only 11% do not. The students who agree with it may be aware of the benefits that it has for the students and vice-versa.

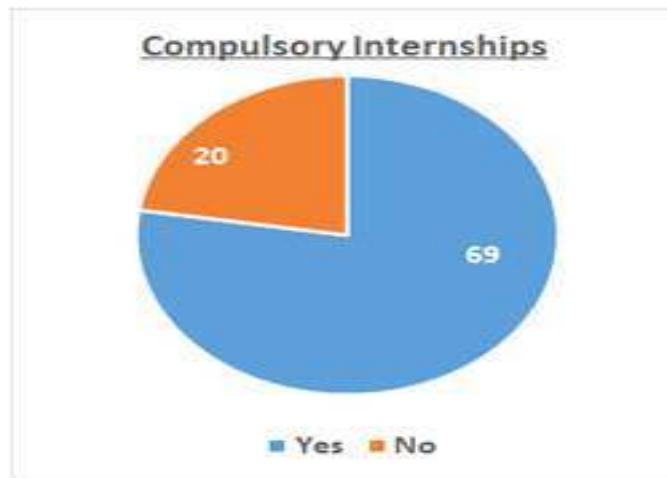
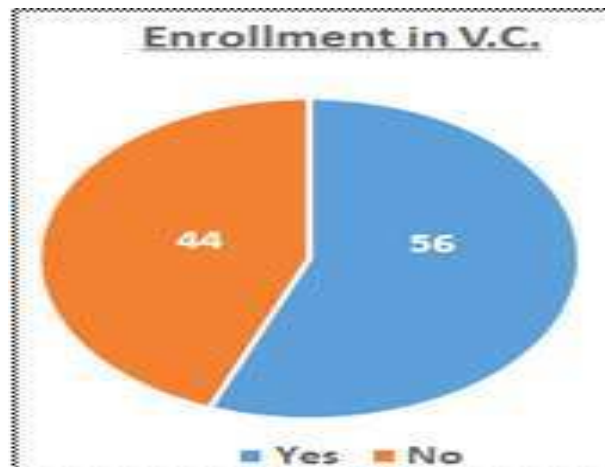


Figure 07 represents students' opinion about making internships as a compulsory component, if introduced. It can be observed that, out of 89 students 69 students think that it should be made compulsory and 20 students think it should not be made compulsory. When asked to elaborate their choice, students favouring the question focussed upon its benefits and the attitude of ignorance, which the students generally have. Those who did not want internships to be made compulsory focussed upon personal barriers and personal choice.



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Figure 08 represents students' will to enroll for courses under vocational education. It can be observed that 56% would like to enrol for vocational courses whereas 44% do not. This parameter was undertaken after explaining them the concept of vocational education and training, its advantages and a brief detailing of the courses which the college offers was also undertaken. Thus, the responses received are completely influenced by the explanation and the grasping and understanding power of the students. It also shows students' interest in the new concepts that are coming up in the education sector.

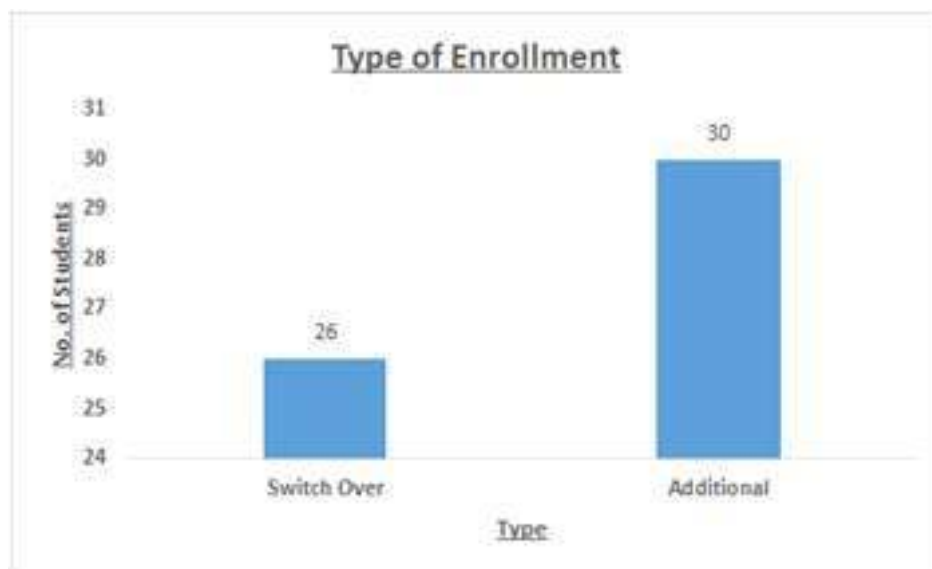


Figure 09 represents the type of enrollment that the students want to opt in context of vocational education. It can be observed that only 26 out of 56 students would like to switch over from their current course to vocational course and 30 students would like to do it as an additional course. Students opting 'additional' may do it because of lack of faith on the scope and advantage of the vocational courses, they want to avoid experimentation, want to have two degrees at a time, cannot leave what they are currently doing due to pressure from family or friends.

Conclusion:

- ✍ Commerce is the most common stream among students as the craze for C.A., C.S. and entrepreneurship is too high among them.
- ✍ The awareness about vocational education and its benefits is too less.
- ✍ Students prefer modern methods like e-learning, practical sessions, visits etc. over traditional chalk and board method of teaching.
- ✍ Students are well aware of the importance of internships and are willing to take it up for several reasons. They also favour the opinion of making it a compulsory component in all the courses.
- ✍ After knowing the concept of vocational education and learning its benefits, most of the students are ready to take up vocational education but, as an additional course. This implies that the students lack faith and complete knowledge on vocational courses; a natural factor as it is new in the market.

Recommendations:

- ✍ Awareness camps or lectures should be organized so that the concept of vocational education becomes clearer with each day passing by.
- ✍ Students however, should not be discouraged to opt for other courses, but only encouraged to join vocational courses.
- ✍ The choice of opting vocational courses as an additional programme should be made available so that the students can get maximum benefit of the years they are putting into their education.
- ✍ Some colleges have started offering vocational education in some subjects like Retail Management and Tourism and Hospitality Management, however, the choices should be increased to incorporate HR, industrial processes, trade, finance, etc.

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