

REPORT

Extension Lecture on Vocational Education at Middle Stage (Grades 6 to 8)

Date: 29 August 2024

Venue: PSSCIVE, Bhopal



PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education

(a constituent unit of NCERT, Ministry of Education, Government of India)

Shyamla Hills, Bhopal – 462 002, M.P., India

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The Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), Bhopal organized an insightful Extension Lecture on "Vocational Education at the Middle Stage (Grades 6 to 8)", which was held on August 29, 2024 at PSSVIVE, Bhopal. The event was attended by the Institute's faculty and staff, marking a key moment in the ongoing efforts to promote vocational education in schools.

Introduction by the Programme Coordinator

Dr. Vipin Kumar Jain, the Programme Coordinator, introduced the speaker Dr. Vinay Swarup Mehrotra, who is a Professor of Department of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry and also the Head of the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Centre (CDEC) and the Centre for International Relationships (CIR) at the PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), Bhopal. With over 28 years of



experience in the field, Prof. Mehrotra is recognized as an authority in vocational education. Dr Jain stated that Dr Mehrotra is a Member-Convener of the Curriculum Advisory Group (CAG) on Vocational Education, and he has played a pivotal role in developing guidelines document, syllabus, and activity book of Vocational Education for Grade 6. His extensive expertise and experience in vocational education makes him the ideal speaker for the lecture session.

Proceedings of Lecture Session

A major focus of Prof. Mehrotra's lecture was the implementation of vocational education at the Middle stage (Grades 6 to 8) in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023. He gave a detailed overview of the four educational stages outlined in the policy—Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary—highlighting the importance of integrating vocational education across these stages to prepare students for the "World of Work."

Report of Extension Lecture on Vocational Education at Middle Stage (Grades 6 to 8)



Prof. Mehrotra highlighted the significance of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and State Curriculum Frameworks (SCFs), which aim to integrate vocational education into the mainstream curriculum, breaking down the traditional divide between academic and vocational learning. Prof. Mehrotra stated that the Middle stage (Age Group: 11 to 14 years; Grades: 6-8) supports early adolescence, where students begin to develop more abstract thinking and start exploring different subjects and skills. He described how vocational education can be effectively integrated with general education in the curriculum, particularly at the Middle stage (Grades 6 to 8), to create a well-rounded educational experience. He emphasized that vocational education should nurture respect for both intellectual and manual labour, aligning with the dignity of labour philosophy. He stated that at the Middle Stage, students will develop a broad-based understanding of different forms of work, which will equip them to successfully manage their personal work and responsibilities. At this stage, experiential learning is to be facilitated through hands-on activities like field visits, experiments, and project work. Project-based learning allows students to work on projects that require them to solve real-world problems or create something tangible. This will also equip them to identify, create, and initiate business, work, and community opportunities. Students in Grades 6-8 will participate in vocational crafts, such as gardening, pottery, cooking, toy making, filling a biodiversity register and the projects will be conducted, based on local skill needs and resources. Additionally, every student will engage in a 10-day "bagless" period during these grades, where they will intern with local vocational experts like carpenters, gardeners, potters, and artists. In his address, Prof. Mehrotra stressed the importance of work ethics and the continuous upgrading of teachers in the ever-evolving educational landscape.

Report of Extension Lecture on Vocational Education at Middle Stage (Grades 6 to 8)

Prof. Mehrotra informed that the NCERT has published an activity book titled “Kaushal Bodh” for Grade 6, which comprises projects related to three work forms— life forms, machines and materials, and human services. The projects will help students to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values alongside ecological sensitivity, gender sensitivity, digital skills, and life skills.

Prof. Mehrotra presented several key points essential for the successful implementation of vocational education at the middle stage (Grades 6 to 8):

1. **Mindset Change:** Society's perception of vocational education must shift to view it as a valuable path.
2. **Rebranding:** Vocational education should be rebranded as "Skill Education" to focus on skill development.
3. **Systemic Reforms:** The vocational education system needs reforms to align with contemporary needs.
4. **Proper Guidance:** Both students and parents should be informed of the significance of vocational education.
5. **Experiential Learning:** Engaging students in hands-on, practical experiences can enhance their exposure to various vocations.
6. **Social Hierarchy Reform:** The devaluation of vocational education in the social hierarchy needs to be addressed.
7. **Awareness Campaigns:** Efforts should be made to increase awareness and acceptance of vocational education.

He also discussed PSSCIVE’s contributions, such as developing guidelines for the "10 Bagless Days" initiative and Career Cards, both designed to promote practical learning and vocational exploration in early education. A key takeaway from the lecture of Prof. Mehrotra was the focus on holistic student development through project-based learning and making skill education locally relevant by encouraging the incorporation of local crafts, trades, and practices into the curriculum.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Vipin Kumar Jain underscored the importance of Prof. Mehrotra’s insights on vocational education and how NEP 2020's integration of vocational learning represents a transformative step toward a skill-focused, and inclusive education system.
