



A Comparative Study on Vocational Education VS Academic Educational System under Kokrajhar District

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ABSTRACT

This study compares vocational education and the academic education in Kokrajhar District, focusing on student outcomes, skill development and employment prospects. The data is collected from secondary schools, vocational training institutes. The findings reveal that while academic education is more widely pursued, vocational education provides more and better job-oriented skills. However, vocational training faces challenges like low awareness and limited resources. The study suggests better integration and increased support to strengthen vocational education in the region.

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1.Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of personal and societal development, providing individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for their future contributions to careers and society. The education system is primarily divided into two main streams: vocational education and the academic education system. Each system serves a unique purpose and caters to different learning needs and career aspirations.



Academic education is traditionally focused on theoretical knowledge and general intellectual development. It prepares students for higher education, professional careers and research-oriented fields. Subjects such as science, arts and commerce form the core of this system, emphasizing analytical thinking, problem solving and conceptual understanding.

On the other hand, vocational education is designed to impart specialized skills and practical knowledge, equipping students with hands-on-experience in specific industries such as agriculture, healthcare, engineering and hospitality. This system is more employment oriented and aims to bridge the gap between education and industry demands.

The education system between vocational and academic education has long been a topic of discussion with varying perspectives on their effectiveness, relevance and impact on employability. Economic opportunity is shaped by both traditional industries and emerging sectors, making it essential to understand the strength and limitations of these two educational systems. Factors such as job availability, societal perceptions and government initiatives play a significant role in influencing student choices.

The study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of vocational and academic education in Kokrajhar District, examining challenges and evaluating aspects such as curriculum design, job prospects and societal attitude. The research seeks to determine which educational system better aligns with the needs of students and the demand of the local job market. Ultimately, the findings will provide insights into how education institutions can be better tailored to enhance career opportunities and drive economic growth in the region.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In Kokrajhar, the investigator found that vocational education courses ITI, Polytechnics and skill development programs are not available. As a result youth remain unemployed, and the overall economic conditions of the area continue to be poor. Therefore, the investigator has selected this particular problem area for his study.

Vocational education emphasizes skilled based training for specific jobs, while academic education focuses more on theoretical knowledge. Both systems play an important role in preparing students, for the job market. However, there are several challenges in aligning education with employment needs in today's society.



One major issue is that vocational education is often seen as less prestigious than academic education. Many students and parents consider it a secondary option, despite the fact that vocational training can lead to stable and well-paying jobs. This perception leads to lower enrolment in vocational programs, even though there is a growing demand for skilled workers in various industries. Additionally, many vocational training institutions lack proper funding, modern equipment and strong links with industries, which affects the quality of education and job opportunities for graduates. On the other hand, academic education also faces problems. Many students graduate with degrees but struggles to find jobs because they lack practical skills that employers demand. There is often a gap between what is taught in academic institutions and what industries need. This mismatch leads to high unemployment rates among graduates.

Therefore, this study aims to find a way to make education more effective in providing students with skills and knowledges they need for successful careers in the present society.

1.2. Objective

- i) To study how vocational education prepares students for specific careers.
- ii) To assess employability job prospects between vocational education and academic educational system

1.3. Significance of the study

The study holds great significance as it explores the vital roles that both vocational and academic education play in shaping the lives of individuals and society, particularly within the context of Kokrajhar District. In today's dynamic world, where industries demand not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills, understanding the importance of both educational pathways that has become crucial. By comparing vocational and academic system in Kokrajhar, this research aims to identify how each contribute differently to career development, economic growth and personal advancement within the district. By critically analysing of both systems the study seeks to highlight the broader role of education in national development, workforce readiness and social equity.

The finding will be beneficial not only to students and educators in Kokrajhar, but also to local employers, policymakers and education reforms advocates. They will gain valuable insights for designing and shaping more adaptive and inclusive and relevant educational frame workers that suit the needs of the region. The study also emphasizes the importance and need of recognizing vocational



education as a viable and respectable alternative to traditional academic pathways, thus contributing to the broader discourse on how education as a catalyst for individual empowerment and regional development.

2. Literature Reviews

Tilak J. et.al (2003) conducted their study on vocational education and training in Asia, particularly its impact on economic growth and development. He highlighted that Vocational Education and Training can contribute to building a skilled workforce, enhancing productivity and facilitating the integration of individuals into the modern workforce. Tilka also noted that VET is often seen as an educational pathway for those who may not qualify for higher education.

Aggarwal (2010) conducted his study on Theory and principles of education. Aggarwal emphasizes that need for a balanced approach in Indian education highlighting the disconnect between academic learning employability. He suggests that vocational education can bridge this gap by offering practical skills aligned with market needs.

Mehrotra et.al (2014) conducted their studied on Improving the quality of vocational education in India. Mehrotra critiques the quality and perception of vocational training in India recommended reforms in curriculum industry linkages, and certification system stress a competency-based education model.

Ryan Paul (2001) conducted his study on the school to work. Transition, across national perspective. Ryan Paul compares Germanys dual system with the academic only model in Countries like- U.S. He concluded that vocational education especially apprenticeship model leads to better employment outcomes in European contexts.

Rauner et.al (2008) conducted the study on hand book of technical and vocational education and training research. This comprehensive international review explores how vocational training systems vary across nations and identifies best practices in integrating academic and vocational learning to enhance employability.

3.Methodology

Descriptive survey method is adopted for the present study.

3.1. Research Design



Research Design is a plan that outlines how a research study will be conducted to answer a specific research question. It's a blueprint for data collection, measurement and analysis, ensuring the study effectively addresses the research problem. A well-defined research design helps to ensure the study is focused efficient and yields valid and reliable results.

3.2. Population

The population of the study comprise of 3ITI both government and private and 3 Government academic institutions of session 2023-2024 under Kokrajhar district. The following table shows the population of the study.

Table No.-1shoewing the population of the present study

| Sl.No. | Name of the Institution | Govt/Private | Enrolment |
|--------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1 | ITI Dhauliguri | | 80 |
| 2 | ITISalakati | Govt | 50 |
| 3 | ITI Magurmari | Private | 50 |
| 4 | Kokrajhar G.H.S | Govt | 100 |
| 5 | Kokrajhar B.H.S | Govt | 80 |
| 6 | Debargaon H.S.S | Govt | 120 |
| | Total | | 480 |

3.3. Sample

Random Sampling techniques is adopted for the present study. Out of 480 from six (6) Institutions, 100 sample has been taken. Twenty (20) each from 2 Govt ITI Institutions and 15 each from one (1) Private ITI Institution and three (3) Academic Institutions. The details of the sample drawn for the study is shown in the following table:

Table No.-2 showing the sample of the present study

| Sl.No. | Name of the Institution | Govt/Private | Enrolment |
|--------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1 | ITI Dhauliguri | Govt | 20 |



| | | | |
|---|-----------------|---------|-----|
| 2 | ITI Salakati | Govt | 20 |
| 3 | ITI Magurmari | Private | 15 |
| 4 | Kokrajhar G.H.S | Govt | 15 |
| 5 | Kokrajhar B.H.S | Govt | 15 |
| 6 | Debargaon H.S.S | Govt | 15 |
| | Total | | 100 |

3.4. Tools

Self-made questionnaire is used by the investigator for data collection.

3.5. Procedure of Data Collection

The investigator went from institution to institution for data collection through questionnaire and interview techniques.

3.6. Delimitation

- i)The study is restricted to institutions located within the Kokrajhar district, Assam.
- ii)Both government and private institution offering vocational education and only selected government academic education at secondary and higher secondary levels are considered.
- iii)The study focuses only on students enrolled in vocational and academic streams.

4. Findings and Analysis of Result

4.1. Responses regarding vocational education provides better job opportunity than academic education.

| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|-----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 60 | 60% |
| 2 | No | 40 | 40% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |



From the above table it shows that 60% of the respondent agreed that vocational education provides better job opportunity than academic education and 40% of the respondent are not.

4.2. Responses showing that vocational education is undervalued compared to academic education in society.

| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|-----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 75 | 75% |
| 2 | No | 25 | 25% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

From the above table it shows that 75% of the respondent agreed that vocational education is undervalued compared to academic education in society and 25% said no.

4.3. Responses showing that vocational education gain more practical skill than academic education.

| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|-----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 85 | 85% |
| 2 | No | 15 | 15% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

From the above table it shows that 85% of the respondent agreed that vocational education gain more practical skill than academic education and only 15% respond no.

4.4. Responses regarding vocational education be made compulsory in school along with academic subjects.

| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|-----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 71 | 71% |
| 2 | No | 29 | 29% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

From the above table it shows that 71% of the respondent agreed that vocational education should be made compulsory in school along with academic education and 29% respond no.



4.5. Responses showing that academic education provides better opportunities for higher studies than vocational education.

| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|-----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 90 | 90% |
| 2 | No | 10 | 10% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

From the above table it shows that 90% of the respondent agreed that academic education provides better opportunities for higher studies than vocational education and only 10% said no.

4.6. Responses regarding lack of awareness about the benefits of vocational education.

| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|-----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 84 | 84% |
| 2 | No | 16 | 16% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

From the above table it shows that 84% of the respondent agreed about the lack of awareness about the benefits of vocational education and 16% respondent said no.

4.7. Responses regarding the struggle of academic graduates due to lack of practical skills.

| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|-----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 81 | 81% |
| 2 | No | 19 | 19% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

From the above table it shows that 81% of the respondent agreed that academic graduates struggle due to lack of practical skills and 19% said no.

4.8. Responses regarding vocational education can help in reducing unemployment in the region.



| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|-----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 84 | 84% |
| 2 | No | 16 | 16% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

From the above table it shows that 84% of the respondent agreed that vocational education can help in reducing unemployment in the region and 16% are not.

4.9. Responses regarding academic education is necessary for career success in today's job markets.

| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|-----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 61 | 61% |
| 2 | No | 39 | 39% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

From the above table it shows that 61% of the respondent agreed that vocational education is necessary for career success in today's job markets and 39% are not.

4.10. Responses regarding the form of vocational education as a first-choice for career option.

| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|-----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 69 | 69% |
| 2 | No | 31 | 31% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

From the above table it shows that 69% of the respondent agreed that vocational education as a first-choice for career option and 31% are not.

4.11. Responses regarding vocational education is more beneficial for students from economically weaker background.

| Sl. No. | Response | | Percentage |
|---------|----------|----|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 82 | 82% |



| | | | |
|---|-------|-----|-----|
| 2 | No | 18 | 18% |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

From the above table it shows that 82% of the respondent agreed that vocational education is more beneficial for students from economically weaker background and 18% are not.

5. Suggestion and Conclusion

5.1. Suggestion

i) Educational Institution should blend vocational training with academic learning offering dual educational models.

ii) Vocational education curriculum must be regularly updated to match changing industry demands eg. AI, green energy, digital marketing.

iii) Academic graduates should be encouraged to pursue vocational certificate and vocational graduates should be motivated to seek academic qualifications, promoting skill diversification.

iv) The Government and media must work together to elevate the status of vocational education by showcasing successful professionals from vocational backgrounds.

Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that the comparative study on vocational and academic education in Kokrajhar district reveals the importance of integrating both systems to meet diverse learner needs and local employment demands. While academic education provides foundational knowledge and theoretical understanding, Vocational education offers practical skills aligned with industry requirement. A balanced approach, promoting dual education models and mutual recognition, can enhance employability, skill development, and socio-economic growth in the region.

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