

Problems Faced by Students of Vocational Stream in Higher Secondary Schools in Mizoram

J. Lalhriatpuii*
Lalhmasai Chuaungo**

Abstract

Vocational stream means the stream of education at higher secondary stage where vocational subjects are offered. There are 14 higher secondary schools offering 8 vocational courses in Mizoram. In 2014-2015 there are 774 students enrolled in different courses. These students constitute the population and 618 students of vocational courses present on the day of data collection formed the sample. Primary data were collected by using Questionnaire constructed for students of vocational courses by the investigators. Problems of the students related to courses pursued, facilities, practical work, textbooks, contents of the textbooks, teachers, on-the-job-training, test and examination and methods of teaching were studied. The study found that 'worried about college admission, insufficient equipments, insufficient number of practical classes, not enough time allotted for practical classes and worried about job placement' were the top five problems of the vocational students.

Key words: Problems, Students, Vocational Stream, Higher Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Secondary and higher secondary stages of education are important terminal stages in the system of general education because it is at these points that options are exercised by the youths to enter the world of employment or to go for technical training or pursue higher education. Educationists and experts have consistently recommended that education at these stages should be given a vocational bias to link it with the world of work. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) was of the view that for a majority of

occupations, university degrees were not necessary; and these jobs could be completely performed by trained higher secondary students. The Commission felt that it should be possible to divert at least 50 per cent of students completing 10 years of education to the vocational stream, reducing the pressure on the universities and also preparing students for gainful employment. Despite the priority accorded to this programme in the report of the Kothari Commission, the erstwhile National Policy on Education (1986) as well as in successive Five Year

*J. Lalhriatpuii is research scholar in Department of Education, Mizoram University. Email: tetejjinhlawng@gmail.com

**Lalhmasai Chuaungo is Professor, Department of Education and Dean, School of Education and Humanities, Mizoram University. Email: lalhmasai.c@gmail.com

Plans, the implementation of the programme has remained weak. Many State Governments have started vocational programmes. However, because of inadequate resources, lack of proper management structures, technical expertise and inadequate teacher preparation, the results have not been commensurate with expectations. (Scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education, 2009).

In Mizoram, the first phase of vocational education was launched in the year 1988. It has been two decades since the implementation of Vocationalisation of Secondary Schools in Mizoram but still, no research has yet been conducted. To identify the problems of the students and to suggest measures for solving the problems and for the improvement of vocational education in Mizoram, an intensive research needs to be undertaken. The present study is a meager attempt to fulfill such needs.

Operational Definitions of the Terms Used

The following are the operational definitions of the different terms used in the present study:

a) Vocational Stream: The term 'vocational stream' in the present study means the stream of education at higher secondary stage where vocational subjects are offered.

b) Higher secondary stage of education: This implies the stage of education that comprises of classes XI and XII.

Objectives of the Study:

Objectives of the present study are:

1. To study the problems faced by students of vocational stream at the higher secondary stage of education in Mizoram.
2. To suggest certain measures for improvement of vocational education in Mizoram.

Methodology of the Study:

(a) Research approach: A descriptive survey approach was used to conduct the present study.

(b) Population of the study: The total number of 774 students enrolled in different courses during 2014-2015 constituted the population of the present study

(c) Sample of the study: Sample selection was not done as the number of students enrolled in vocational courses at higher secondary level was not large. All the higher secondary schools offering vocational courses in the State were visited and all the students of vocational subjects present on the day of data collection formed the sample. As such, the sample of the present study came to be 618 students.

(d) Tool used: Questionnaire for students of vocational courses constructed by the investigators was used for collection of data.

(e) Data collection: The required data for the present study were collected from students of Higher Secondary Schools offering Vocational Courses by

administering the tool mentioned above. Secondary data were collected from books and annual reports of SCERT.

(f) Statistical treatment of data: Descriptive statistics i.e., percentages were applied for treatment of data.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Data on problems of students pursuing vocational courses in higher secondary schools in Mizoram were presented in tabular form, analyzed and interpreted as follow:

Table 1: Problems of Students Relating to Courses Pursued

Sl. No.	Problems faced:	No. of Respondent N = 618	Percentage
1	Not interested in the course	33	5.34
2	The course is not of my first choice	128	20.71
3	Worried about college admission and further studies	305	49.35
4	Worried about job placement	220	35.6
5	Thinking of changing my subject into general (Arts, Science, Commerce) stream	69	11.16
6	Other streams look down upon us	35	5.66
7	High admission fees	31	5.01
8	General Foundation Course subject is difficult	22	3.56

A cursory glance at table 1 shows that, 49.35 per cent of the vocational course students are worried about their further studies, 35.60 per cent about job placement and for 20.71 per cent, the courses they choose are not their first choice. 11.16 per cent thought about changing their subjects into arts, science or commerce and 5.34 per cent of the students are not interested in the courses they study.

Minor problems are ‘students from other stream look down upon them’ in the case of 5.66 per cent students, ‘high admission fee’ for 5.01 per cent and ‘General Foundation Course subject is too difficult’ for 3.56 per cent of the students.

Table 2: Problems of Students Related to Facilities

Sl.No.	Problems faced related to facilities:	No. of respondent N = 618	Percentage
1	Irregular power supply	200	32.36
2	Congested classrooms	180	29.12
3	Insufficient equipments	246	39.8
4	Insufficient furniture for all the students	84	13.59

Regarding the problems faced related to facilities, the above table shows that 39.80 per cent of the students have problems as equipments for their practical are insufficient and 32.36 per cent of the students face problems because of irregular power supply. For 29.12 per cent of the students, congested classrooms and for 13.59 per cent, insufficient furniture, are problems for them.

Table 3: Problems of Students Related to Practical Work

Sl.No.	Problems Faced:	No. of respondent N = 618	Percentage
1	Too congested practical rooms/ workshop/ laboratories	140	22.65
2	Lack of required space for doing practical work	128	20.71
3	Insufficient no. of practical classes conducted	235	38.02
4	Irregular supply of electricity	163	26.37
5	Insufficient number of computer	19	3.07
6	Absence of study tour	13	2.1

Table 3 illustrates that 38.02 per cent of the respondents have problems as sufficient number of practical classes are not conducted. Due to irregular supply of electricity 26.37 per cent of the students face problem in doing practical work. As stated by 22.65 per cent of the students, their practical rooms, workshop and laboratories are too congested. Lack of required space for doing practical work is one of the problems that 20.71 per cent students face.

Due to insufficient number of computer, 3.07 per cent respondents face trouble in doing their practical work. A few percentages of students i.e., 2.10 also feel that absence of study tour is a problem.

Table 4: Problems of Students Regarding Textbook

SI.No	Problems Faced:	No. of respondent N = 618	Percentage
1	Costly textbooks	202	32.69
2	Textbooks not available in time	146	23.62
3	Textbooks for all subjects not available	190	30.74
4	Textbooks not available in the local market	165	26.7
5	Textbooks need to be procured from outside Mizoram	149	24.11

A look at the above table 4 reveals the problems that the students of vocational courses face regarding textbooks. 32.69 per cent students have problem as textbooks are costly. Unavailability of textbooks for all subjects creates problems for 30.74 per cent students. 26.70 per cent respondents consider that textbooks are not available in the local market. It further states that textbook which are needed to be procured from outside Mizoram is a problem for 24.11 per cent students. 23.62 per cent respondents have problems because textbooks are not available in time.

Table 5: Problems of Students Regarding Contents of the Textbooks

SI.No.	Problem Faced	No. of respondent N = 618	Percentage
1	Contents do not help in developing my/our skills	21	3.39
2	Most of the contents are not related to the syllabus	23	3.72
3	Contents are difficult to understand	198	32.04
4	Unavailability of textbooks written in Mizo	196	31.71
5	Textbooks do not cover the whole syllabus	36	5.82

Regarding contents of the textbooks, the most frequently cited problems are: (i) Contents are difficult to understand and (ii) Unavailability of textbooks written in Mizo. Only 5.82 per cent students consider that textbooks do not cover the whole syllabus. A few students i.e., 3.39 and 3.72 per cent point out that content of the textbooks do not help in developing their skills and contents are not related to the syllabus respectively.

Table 6: Problems of Students Related to Teacher

Sl. No.	Problems faced related to teacher	No. of respondent N = 618	Percentage
1	Irregularity of teacher in taking class	121	19.58
2	Unfriendly attitude of teachers towards students	134	21.68
3	Insufficient number of teachers	59	9.55
4	Have only 1 Sericulture teacher	15	2.43
5	Do not have GFC teacher	11	1.78

Among the problems that the respondents faced, ‘unfriendly attitude towards students’ is the biggest ones stated by 21.68 per cent followed by ‘irregularity of teacher in taking class’ pointed out by 9.58 per cent. Insufficient numbers of teachers is a problem for 9.55 percent. Others problems for few students are availability of only one Sericulture teacher mentioned by 2.43 per cent and unavailability of General Foundation Course teacher pointed out by only 1.78 percent of the students.

Table 7: Problems of Students Related to On-The-Job Training:

Sl. No.	Problems faced:	No. of respondent N = 618	Percentage
1	The training centre is not well equipped	85	13.75
2	The centre is too far from school	91	14.72

The problems related to on-the-job training faced by students are that the training centre too far from the schools as stated by 14.72 per cent and the training centre not well equipped pointed out by 13.75 percent of the students pursuing vocational courses.

Table 8: Problems of Students Related to Methods of Teaching

Sl. No.	Problems faced regarding methods of teaching:	No. of Respondent N = 618	Percentage
1	The methods of teaching adopted by the teachers are not helpful/ effective enough	51	8.25
2	Difficult to understand the way the teachers teach us	133	21.52

3	Theory class is not helpful enough to understand the concept	105	16.99
4	Practical class is not helpful enough to develop skills	58	9.38
5	Time allocated for theory class is not enough	55	8.9
6	Time allocated for practical class is not enough	224	36.24
7	Textbook is not available, sometimes spent the whole class taking notes	25	4.04

Analyzing the above table 8, it is clear that the time allocated for practical class is not enough as mentioned by 36.24 per cent of the students studying vocational courses. 21.52 per cent students find it difficult to understand the way their teachers teach them. 16.99 per cent respondents find that the theory class is not helpful to understand the concept. Practical class is not helpful for developing skills for 9.38 per cent students. Time allotted for theory class is not enough for 8.90 per cent students. The methods of teaching adopted by the teachers are not helpful and effective for 8.25 per cent students. As textbook is not available and sometimes they spent the whole class taking notes, 4.04 percent of the students face problem.

Table 9: Problems of Students Relating to Test and Examination

Sl. No.	Problems Faced	No. of respondent N = 618	Percentage
1	Rarely have class test	39	6.31
2	Less gap during examination	15	2.43
3	Too many test topics at one time	13	2.1

Among a few students who have problems relating to test and examination, 6.31 percent students faced the problem as they rarely have class test. Besides, 2.43 per cent students face problem due to fewer gaps between each subject at examination and 2.10 per cent find it difficult to study too many test topics at one time.

Findings of the Study:

Problems of students regarding the vocational courses they pursue

- a) 49.35 per cent of the vocational course students were worried about further studies
- b) 35.60 per cent were worried about job placement
- c) 20.71 per cent said that the courses they chose were not their first choice
- d) 11.16 per cent thought about changing their subject into arts, science or commerce

Problems Faced by Students of Vocational Stream in Higher Secondary Schools in Mizoram

- e) 5.34 per cent of the students were not interested in the course they studied
- f) High admission fees was a big problem of students for 5.01 per cent
- g) General Foundation Course subject was difficult for 3.56 per cent of students.

Problems related to facilities for the students:

- a) Insufficient equipments was a problem for 39.80 per cent of students pursuing vocational course
- b) Irregular power supply was a problem for 32.36 per cent of students studying vocational courses.
- c) Congested classrooms created problem for 29.12 per cent of students pursuing vocational course.
- d) Insufficient furniture for all the students was a problem for 13.59 percent of vocational courses students.

Problems of students related to practical work:

- a) Number of practical classes conducted was insufficient for 38.02 per cent of students
- b) 26.37 per cent of students stated that supply of electricity was irregular.
- c) Too congested practical rooms/workshop/ laboratories was a problem for 22.65 per cent of students.
- d) Lack of required space for doing practical work was a problem for 20.71 per cent
- e) Insufficient number of computer created a problem for 3.07 per cent students.

Problems of students related with textbooks:

- a) Textbooks were costly for 32.69 per cent of students pursuing vocational course.
- b) 30.74 per cent students of vocational course had problem due to unavailability of textbooks for all subjects
- c) Unavailability of textbooks in the local market was a problem for 26.70 per cent of students studying vocational course
- d) 24.11 per cent faced trouble as textbooks were needed to be procured from outside Mizoram.
- e) Unavailability of textbooks in time brought about a problem for 23.62 per cent of students.

Problems of students related to contents of the textbooks:

- a) Contents were difficult to understand as 32.04 per cent of the students.
- b) Unavailability of textbooks written in Mizo was also one of the major problems regarding contents of the textbooks for 31.71 per cent students.

- c) For 5.82 per cent of the vocational students, textbook not covering the whole syllabus was a problem
- d) Most of the contents not related to the syllabus became a problem for 3.72 per cent students of vocational course.
- e) Contents not helpful enough in developing their skills came to be a problem for 3.40 per cent of the students.

Problem of students related to teacher:

- a) Unfriendly attitude of teachers towards students was a problem for 21.68 per cent of vocational students
- b) Irregularity of teacher in taking class was also a problem for 19.58 per cent students of vocational courses/
- c) 9.55 per cent of students stated that the number of teachers was insufficient.
- d) For 2.43 per cent students of Sericulture course, availability of only one teacher was a problem.
- e) Unavailability of General Foundation Course teacher was a problem stated by 1.78 per cent of the students.

Problems of students related to on-the-job training:

- a) The training centres were too far from the schools for 14.72 per cent of the students
- b) The training centres were not well equipped as pointed out by 13.75 per cent of the students.

Problems of students regarding the methods of teaching:

- a) Time allocated for practical class was not enough for 36.7 per cent of students
- b) 21.52 per cent students found it difficult to understand the way their teachers teach them.
- c) For 16.99 per cent respondents, the theory class was not helpful to understand the concept.
- d) Practical class was not helpful enough to develop skills for 9.38 per cent of students
- e) Time allocated for theory class was not enough for 8.90 per cent of students.
- f) The methods of teaching adopted by the teachers were not helpful and effective enough for 8.25 per cent students.
- g) Spending the whole class for taking notes a number of times was a problem mentioned by 4.04 percent of students

Problems of students relating to test and examination

- a) 'Rarely have class test' was stated as a problem by 6.31 per cent of the students.
- b) Less gap during examination was a problem for 2.43 per cent students.

- c) For 2.10 per cent of students having to study too many test topics at one time was a problem.

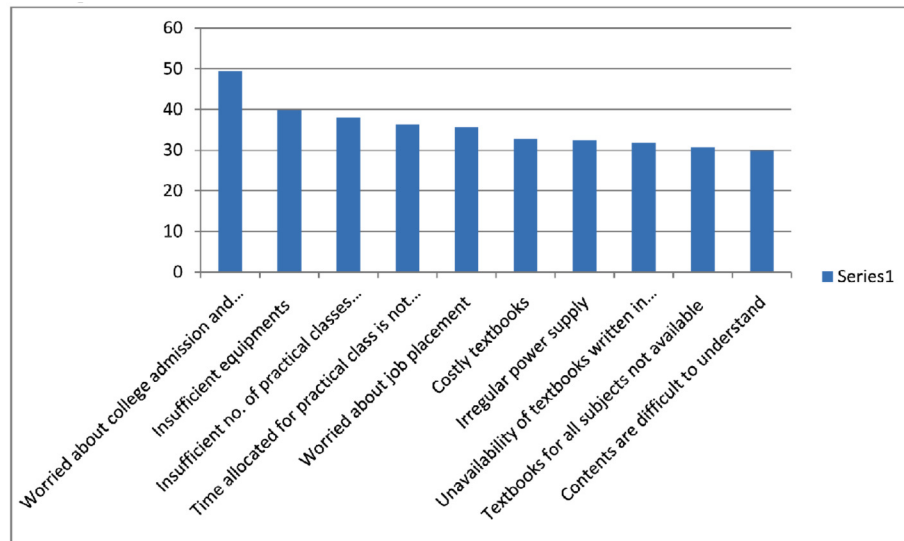


Fig. Top ten problems faced by students of vocational courses

Conclusion:

Almost 50 per cent students of vocational course are worried about college admission and further studies which shows that they have no confidence to earn their livelihood after completing higher secondary education and still chose to continue their studies. As most of the colleges could not give admission to students of vocational stream due to limited seats even for Arts subject, many students who want to change their subjects face problems. Insufficient number of equipment is the second highest problem. The curricula developed by the Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE) had listed the entire range of equipment required for each course. It is the

responsibility of the state agencies to assess the minimum requirement of equipment for the development of basic skills and to provide this to the institutions. Maintenance of equipment is also the responsibility of the State Government.

The fourth highest problem of the students is insufficient number of practical class. The National Review Committee (1978) recommended that for making vocationalisation of education successful, learning must be based on work. Thus, schools that do not allot the required total instructional time for practical and theory should make new routine. The fifth highest problem is about job placement. In the case of students of Computer Technique, even though they study for a duration of two years and are supposed to

have enough skills, the employers prefer to hire those who have certificate in three months diploma course in Computer Application. They suggest that if separate certificates could be provided, they would be able to get job immediately after completing HSSLC. Lastly, it is important for the authorities to look into the problems faced by the students and to take necessary actions.

Reference

- Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education (2000). *Scheme of vocationalisation of secondary education*. New Delhi.
- State Council of Educational Research & Training, Mizoram. (2009). *Annual Report 2008, 2009*. Aizawl.
- Sharma, R.N. & Sharma R.K. (2006). *Problems of education in India*. New Delhi: Atlantic publishers and distributors.