

A Study on Acquisition of Green Skills among School Students of Vocational Courses under National Skill Qualifications Framework

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Abstract

Environmental degradation and climate change are having a severe impact on the long-term economic activities around the world. Many countries have recently placed a greater emphasis on green growth to achieve a resilient, low-carbon, and resource-efficient economy that leads to improved quality of life. This gradual shifting towards greener economy model will result in the creation of green jobs and the greening of existing jobs for which workers with green skills will be needed. As a result, it is essential to develop green skills in TVET institutions. In India, green skills have been incorporated into school vocational curricula by Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education, Bhopal. This study examined the acquisition of green skills by students in senior secondary government schools in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh where vocational programmes under the National Skills Qualifications Framework were introduced. Data was obtained from a sample of 80 students in class XII who had chosen vocational courses at the secondary level from four selected senior secondary government schools using a self-developed questionnaire. The results revealed that the students were well aware of the green skills, which they had been learning from class IX. However, there were varied responses with low mean and high standard deviation from students about their involvement in practising green skills, despite the fact that the majority of students followed green practises. It is proposed that the existing employability skills syllabus in vocational courses be updated to cover the most recent developments in green technology and green jobs.

Key Words: Green Skills, Green Technology, Green Jobs, Vocational Courses, National Skill Qualifications Framework

Introduction

Environmental deterioration and climate change have compelled humanity to reconsider and redesign its development paths over the years. Concurrently, human resources are essential for long-term economic prosperity. As a result, the green economy has arisen as a new economic paradigm aimed at achieving economic growth while also conserving the environment. The expansion of green technology has contributed to the fourth industrial revolution and has led to the creation of generic green skills, particularly in green jobs. Green skills come under the ambit of vocational education and training as it plays a significant role in providing skilled workforce and thereby strengthening a country's economy.

Green skills refer to 'the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a society which reduces the impact of human activity on the environment' (CEDEFOP, 2010). According to Pavlova and Huang (2013), elements of green skills should be included as an added value in technical and vocational education so that people who are scientific and technical, resourceful, law abiding, and with integrity do not harm the environment in their daily lives (Kamis et.al., 2017).

As countries are developing skill frameworks to combat climate change and embrace a more sustainable approach to economic growth, green job creation is likely to rise in the coming years. Green jobs are important in all major industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, construction, transportation, tourism, and renewable energy. The acquisition and improvement of skills has far-reaching ramifications for all elements of education and training. The fundamental goal is to use energy and natural resources more efficiently, produce less waste and pollution, and protect the environment and ecosystems. There are three potential benefits: increased economic growth and employment, greater long-term mitigation of environmental damage, and a reduced risk of negative consequences. In this setting, individuals should possess the necessary work skills for transitioning to ecologically sustainable and socially inclusive economies. However, little is known about, how this shift affects skill demand and education and training provision in our country.

Against the backdrop of emerging green jobs, green skills must be taught to students from an early age in order to ensure that the country's human capital have the correct attitude and understanding of the need of balanced environmental development in all parts of life. Simultaneously, students must ensure that the relevant abilities are thoroughly learned in order to enter the labour market. Apart from that, children should also be taught how to protect the environment from further deterioration and how to contribute to making it a healthier and more progressive place to live. However, due to a lack of environmental education, some pupils are unaware of the concerns that affect the environment. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of media or public forums that serve to educate kids. (Kamis et. al, 2017).

In this context, Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), Bhopal, a constituent unit of NCERT and UNESCO-UNEVOC network centre, included employability skills in the vocational curricula of the job roles, green skills being one of its components. This would work towards greening of the future workforce. In the next section studies on green skills at school level have been presented for better clarity and identifying the research gaps in the area of our study.

Review of related Literature

Bashir et.al., (2022) conducted a survey on environmental awareness, attitude and participation among 200 secondary students from both private and public schools in Jammu & Kashmir. The study discovered a considerable variation in student awareness and attitude based on gender. Male students were more environmentally conscious, whereas female students were more positive and engaged in environmental activities than their male counterparts. Environmental awareness did not differ significantly across students from rural and urban locations. Environmental awareness was higher among private school students than among government school students. Government school students had a more positive attitude toward the environment and engaged in more environmental activities than private school students. Overall, students in secondary schools were found to have a modest level of environmental awareness.
