



Initial findings from the review of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy 2012



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'Synopsis of a study report'

Context

More than fourteen ministries, including the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MoLE), conduct technical and vocational education and training programmes in Nepal. Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT), functionally under the MoE, has been working as the sole agency to run long-term technical and vocational programmes at Technical School Leaving Certificate (TSLC) and Diploma levels. In addition, grade-eight-plus-four-year Higher Secondary Certificate programmes are also running under Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB) with affiliation. There are many other agencies under different ministries, NGOs and private sector that are running different short courses, ranging from just one day to three months or more. The government of Nepal developed TVET Policy (2012) with the aim of providing national TVET guidelines for systematizing TVET provisions in Nepal. For coordination with TVET-sector actors, the government formed TVET Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) in May, 2015. This committee is chaired by the Minister for Education where secretaries from line-ministries, together with representation from the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) are members.

Objectives

This synopsis presents a brief review of TVET Policy (2012) and examines the inconsistencies of this policy with other similar policies of Nepal. The objectives of the TVET Policy (2012) can be summarized as: (i) Expanding access and ensuring inclusion; (ii) Ensuring quality and relevance; and (iii) coordination for institutional arrangements and information management. These three objectives are discussed and summarized below.

Key Observations on the Policies

The review of TVET Policy (2012) included a comprehensive review of the TVET policies in place in the countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). In addition, it reviewed the possible impact of the new constitution enacted in 2015, Nepalese Industrial Policy 2011, National Youth Policy 2010, National Agriculture Policy 2004, Labor and Employment Policy 2062 B.S. and Foreign Employment Policy 2068 B.S. From the study of the policies of the SAARC countries, it is understood that the TVET policy of Nepal (2012) needs to be revisited and reformed in line with the SAARC TVET development trends. These trends in SAARC include skills development for employment or entrepreneurship, income and livelihood improvement. In SAARC TVET policies, it is observed that most SAARC countries have stated strategic targets of technical vocational education and training programmes and quantitative as well as qualitative targets for TVET outputs and impact in their TVET policies, but the Nepalese

TVET Policy (2012) is not explicit in many such areas, for example, long term targets, scope, legal arrangement, institutional structures modalities of operation and quality assurance. Clearly mentioned in the TVET policy is the role of the private sector given high importance but not much has been done in practice.

a. Expanding Access and Ensuring Inclusion

The constitution of Nepal (2015) has explicitly addressed the issues of geographical coverage, access and inclusion of all citizens including the marginalized and the Dalits in TVET programmes. TVET policy reform needs to address these concerns through decentralization, partnership with the private sector, flexible autonomy to private service providers and simple regulatory procedures for affiliation, accreditation and recognition of certificates of vocational programmes. The policy should have provision for working with the government, NGOs, cooperatives and the private sector to cover all geographical regions and communities. It also has to provide for different modalities, including center-based training, apprenticeship and mobile training for increased access to TVET.

The policy reform needs to emphasize involvement of industries, employers and other partners at various levels of TVET management ; including training design, curriculum development, training delivery and assessment. The SAARC countries have also ensured effective provisions of access and inclusion in their TVET programmes. TVET Policy (2012) has the aim of ensuring inclusion of disadvantaged groups by providing them with incentives like scholarships, government subsidized quota for access to TVET, minimum fee and preferred credit or subsidized schemes to encourage their access to TVET programmes and services. However, policy reform is needed to ensure access, inclusion and quality.

b. Enhancing Quality and Relevance

Recognition and integration of prior learning through skills testing and the establishment of National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) and National Vocational Quality Authority (NVQA) are important needs. It is observed that the current TVET Policy (2012) is not explicit about the testing, evaluation and authentication of TVET programmes, recognition of prior learning and apprenticeship. Therefore, reform in TVET Policy (2012) requires to elaborate more about testing and authentication of formal and informal TVET programmes, apprenticeship and traditional skills through the recognition of prior learning by means of skills testing against skills standards. These basics are not adequately addressed in the TVET Policy of 2012. Presently, the skills learned from different modes are tested and certificated by National Skill Testing Board (NSTB) under the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT). However, the TVET programmes coverage in terms of geography and regions is inadequate. TVET Policy reform is necessary to prepare a National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF) and administer it by transforming the existing NSTB into NVQA.

c. Assurance of Quality

CTEVT has already developed curricula for TSLC, diploma programmes and various occupational skills standards have been in practice for skills test and certificates. Countries in South Asia emphasize need-based, market oriented curricula, thus Nepal TVET Policy (2012) lacks emphasis on the needs assessment of programmes by involving all concerned stakeholders utilizing baseline from a national TVET MIS system, to be created. To ensure competency-based learning through hands-on practice, TVET curricula should also incorporate at least 50 percent of the credit load on real work-place practice through on-the-job training. This kind of focus on 'real work-place practice' will enhance hands-on skills for employment and/or entrepreneurship. To ensure TVET training quality, it is necessary to revise training curricula at regular intervals. Conventionally, long courses should be revised every five year and short courses in every 3 years to keep pace with the emerging needs of technology and job markets. As in some SAARC countries, Nepal needs to offer TVET courses as per the National Vocational Qualification System (NVQS) of the country and also the concept of 'training license' to the TVET instructors/trainers should be included in the policy reform. The license should be provided to those who successfully complete the required training or meet the set criteria for quality instruction as per the performance standards set forth by the policy. To ensure the overall quality of the TVET programmes, there should be a provision for an external neutral third party evaluation to assess the quality of TVET programmes and services. This is necessary to be compatible with policies of TVET in the neighboring countries.

d. Coordination and Institutional Arrangements

There are several ministries and institutions working in the TVET sector in Nepal, but bringing these agencies under one umbrella, (i.e. under the MoE/CTEVT) could be practically difficult, but not impossible. Nevertheless, to facilitate all TVET providers and to encourage innovative approaches, CTEVT, as the apex body, needs to coordinate and control quality of TVET programmes, and play a pivotal role for effective coordination and functional institutional arrangements for enforcing standards and quality parameters.

The TVET Policy (2012) has envisioned establishing a high level TVET fund chaired by the Minister of Education with the representation of the major stakeholders. A technical assistance team has submitted its report on fund options to the Ministry of Education. This TVET fund has a provision of including and working with the private sector, financial institutions, micro-enterprises and employers to provide training and soft loans to targeted individuals, and also to ensure post-training support services such as linking with financial institutions, including placement support for employment or self-employment in businesses and industries.

The government needs to develop strategic plan for the TVET fund operation jointly with other ministries and align funding channels accordingly for TVET programmes. With regard to the vocational career path and technical and vocational education equivalency, policy reform should propose the training providers under different ministries to follow the National Vocational Qualification System and its subsequently recommended national qualifications and guidelines. However, the federal states of the government

of Nepal will still have responsibility to set standards for quality including oversight of implementation and management of the TVET programmes in line with the national goals. All the above-mentioned coordination mechanisms should have strong legal backing in the reformed TVET policy.

e. Monitoring, evaluation and information management

The policy reform should aim to develop an effective monitoring and evaluation system for TVET. Therefore, the MoE and CTEVT, as apex controlling and regulating bodies, need to develop an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system and the TVET National Standards in collaboration with the concerned ministries and the private sector. With regard to external independent evaluation, the indicators of achievement, effect, and impact should be included while designing such evaluation of the TVET programmes and services.

Current TVET Policy (2012) aims to establish a 'labour market information system' (LMIS) as a means of specifying skilled human resources needs. However CTEVT, so far, has been able to manage the database about its constituent institutions and affiliated institutions only. The establishment of labour market information system and skilled human resources forecasting system have not yet happened, thus information dissemination at present limited. CTEVT and MoE are in the process of establishing a central database system in which all TVET related information can be found and required reports can be generated for public information dissemination as well. This provision needs to be guided by TVET policy reform initiatives.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The current TVET Policy (2012) was approved by the government of Nepal in a different context from now and there are reasons for reviewing and reforming this policy. The key reasons are that the new constitution of Nepal (2015) has underscored the importance of TVET as a means to prepare skilled and competent human resources (including the disadvantaged and the Dalits) for economic development. Second, there are other six policies in Nepal related to technical and vocational skills training and services. Therefore, TVET Policy (2012) needs to be reformed to harmonize with them and address the issues of labour concerns. Third, there is a need to revisit and review the objectives and the potential gaps, such as inadequate information about the M&E system and coordination amongst TVET service providers including the private sector. Aligning TVET policy with other policies and strategies for reaching other critical sectors such as agriculture, migration, industrial and economic development needs are equally important aspects to be addressed in TVET policy reform.

In addition to regular and periodic review of the policy, a few key considerations to be addressed for the future are that there is a need to have policy dialogue on the TVET contexts of Nepal, TVET needs, gaps in policies, engagement of the private sector, provision for competency-based training (CBT) curricula development and providing training as per the global demands and competitiveness, also demanded for the implementation of National Vocational Qualification System (NVQS) in Nepal.

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