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SKILL BASED EDUCATION AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT*

Abstract

Education is an instrument to achieve the goal of peace. Man is primarily distinguishable from the animals because of his sense of improvement. Education is an essential and integral component of human development and consequently, it may be regarded as a basic right beyond security and subsistence. Moreover, education is not a preparation for future life but life itself. Today is the era of competition, where survival of the fittest concept is widely accepted. So to cope with the needs of time in changing scenario skill based education is the best weapon to win the undeclared war against poverty, unemployment, unawareness especially against unemployability. Knowledge along with skills is the engines of economic growth and social development of a nation. Notable institutions like ITI, ITC, IIMs and newly incorporated Community College concept in India may play an active role in capacity building and fostering productive employment through multi-structural skill based certificates, diploma programmes to the poor, backward and of course job hunted youths. Side by side Government undertakings, public cooperation, helping hand from industrial establishments as well as various NGO's should take active participation to achieve this ultimate goal of success for skill based education and promoting productive employment. The ultimate beneficiary i.e. the common masses should take parts as watch dog and they always should remain conscious and aware, so that every measures taken and policies adopted by government become successful.

Key words- Education, Skill, Employment, Production and Development.

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1. Introduction

"We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet."-----

Swami Vivekananda.

Among all the creations of God, human life is the most sacred. It has two aspects, the biological and sociological aspects. While the biological aspect of human life is maintained and transmitted by nutrition and reproduction, the social aspect of human life is maintained and transmitted by education. In the primitive society, the primary needs of man comprised with food, shelter and clothing. With the progress of society and civilization, however, this primary needs have been extended to, food, shelter, clothing, education, recreation and health. He is endowed with intelligence; he wants to remain active, energetic and even original. So, it is the education which promotes his intelligence, enables him to be industrious and ensures his progress.¹

Education, as being a human right as well as an instrument of social change. It is the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, and safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour, promoting human right and democratic ideals and protecting the environment.² Education is essential and integral component for human development, and consequently, it may be regarded as a basic right, beyond security and subsistence. In fact, it may even be said that if subsistence is a basic right, then education is inherent to having the capability to subsist.

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Education can be described as an instrument of modification of human behaviour. Human nature changes constantly by the influence of its contact with the environment. The changes may be of two type's first, changes which comes from within and secondly outer changes, which comes from reaction against environment. Thus, Education may be described as the modification of human behaviour, resulting from continuous interaction with its environment.³

Education is not a preparation for future life, but life itself. Its scope is very wide, emotions and sentiments, all come within its scope. Education also includes manners, values, morals, tastes, skills, attitudes etc. in its scope.⁴

2. Constitutional Mandate

Education is the most effective tool and medium of human development. The Constitution of India by its 86th Amendment in 2002, introduced Article-21-A and making Right to Education a Fundamental Right. Now the children between the age group of 6 to 14 have right to get free and compulsory education in nearby school. In addition to this, a fundamental duty has been imposed on every parent or guardian under Article 51-A (K), to provide opportunities for education to his child or case may be, ward between the ages of 6 to 14 years.

3. Holistic Education

Holistic education is philosophy of education that has based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning and purpose in life through connection to the community, to the natural world and to the humanitarian values, such as compassion and peace. The aim of holistic education is to call forth from people an intrinsic reverence for life and a passionate love for learning.

The founder of 'Holistic Education Review', **Mr. Ron Miller** said that "holistic education is often used to refer to the more democratic and humanistic types of alternative education."⁵

In the year 1970, the term '**Holism**' was first introduced. A renowned group of scholars of literature in science, philosophy and cultural history provided an overreaching concept to describe the way of understanding education. A holistic way of thinking seeks to embrace and integrate multiple layers of meaning and experiences.⁶

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Today's child is the future of the nation. Each and every person's intelligence and abilities are different from one another. Holistic education is based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning and purpose in life through connection to the community, to the Natural world or to Spiritual values. Holistic education nurtures a sense of wonder. Its aim to call forth from young people on that intrinsic reverence for life and a passionate love of learning.⁷

4. Skill Based Education and Productive Employment

Skill implies knowledge. It also indicates about ability to do something. Present era is the era of experience. Therefore, skills are required in every sector of life. In developing as well as developed countries for maintaining both productivity and employment, skill development is necessary. Skill development is important as because it can combat poverty as well as unemployment from the masses in general. Education, training and lifelong learning foster a virtuous circle of higher productivity, more employment of better quality, income growth and development.⁸ Skill development is central to improving productivity. Productivity is an important source of improved living standards and growth.⁹

Education is more important but skill is most important. It is true our young generation needs to be skilled in order to get employment. Nowadays we usually face these problems that a person is knowledgeable but not skilled enough to do a particular job. Skill based education is better as it is useless if we have knowledge but do not have the skill to apply it and fulfill our goal. Many people are knowledgeable but if they are skilled as well, they can get employment and have a good life but if we only have knowledge its useless without a skill to apply it. Knowledge is of no use without a skill to apply it. A student can get a good knowledge by just reading but skill to apply the knowledge can only be achieved by practice. Therefore, Education should be skill based then students will improve their skills and succeed in their life.

Knowledge along with skills is the engines of economic growth and social development of any country. Countries with higher and better levels of knowledge and skills respond more effectively and promptly to challenges and opportunities of globalisation. India is in transition to

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a knowledge based economy and its competitive edge will be determined by the abilities of its people to create, share and use knowledge more effectively. This transition will require India to develop workers into knowledge workers who will be more flexible, analytical, adaptable and multi skilled. In the new knowledge economy the skill sets will include professional, managerial, operational, behavioural, inter personal and inter functional skills. To achieve these goals, India needs flexible education and training system that will provide the foundation for learning, secondary and tertiary education and to develop required competencies as means of achieving lifelong learning.¹⁰

5. Vocational Education:

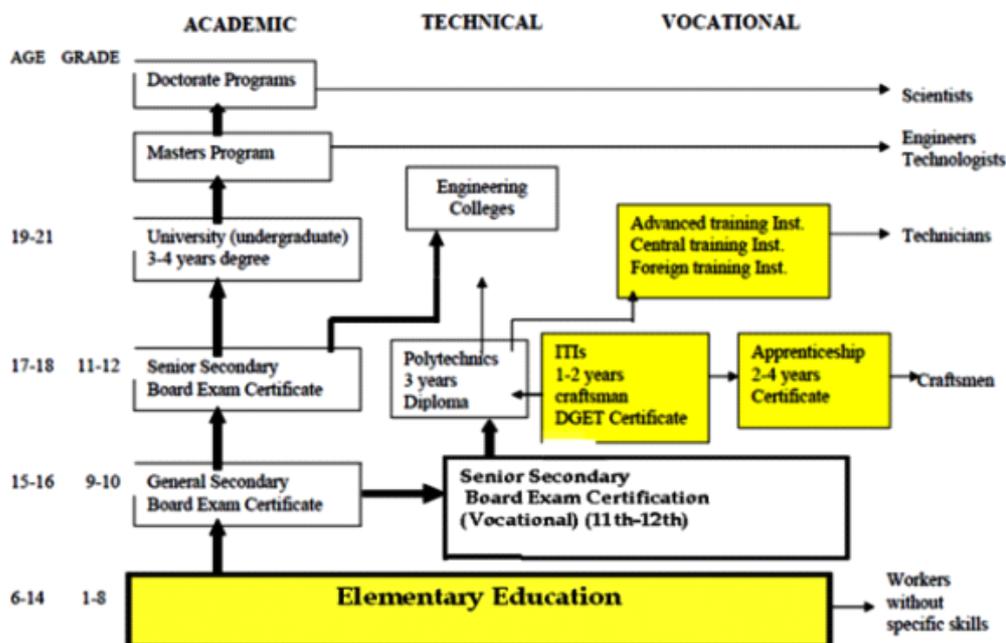
Vocational aim of education means providing education to a child through some vocation, so that with the help of this vocation he can earn his living in future life. This aim of education is becoming more and more popular with the advancement in the field science and technology. Vocational education is must to make a person, self-sufficient. This self sufficiency will develop in mental and moral strength, will boost up his life. The basic essence of vocational education is to increase the productivity of a person, so that he becomes a resource and assets of the society instead of being a parasite on it. Vocational education strikes a balance between economic and industrial development. It prepares a student for a useful life and occupation.¹¹

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an important element of the nation's education initiative. In order for Vocational Education to play its part effectively in the changing national context and for India to enjoy the fruits of the demographic dividend, there is an urgent need to redefine the critical elements of imparting vocational education and training to make them flexible, contemporary, relevant, inclusive and creative.¹²

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6. Current Scenario of Vocational Education and Training in India¹³

The structure of current education system can be described as below:-



7. Government Initiatives¹⁴

National Vocational Qualification Framework: To stimulate and support reforms in skills development and to facilitate nationally standardized and acceptable, international comparability of qualifications, a "National Vocational Qualifications Framework" (NVQF) is being established by the Central Government. Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) has resolved to set up an inter-ministerial group which would also include representatives of State Governments to develop guidelines for such a National Framework. The unified system of national qualification will cover schools, vocational education and training institutions and higher education sector. NVQF will be based on nationally recognized occupational standards which details listing of all major activities that a worker must perform in the occupation or competency standards – a detailed listing of the knowledge, skills and attitude that a worker

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should possess to perform a task written by the particular employment-led sector skills council.

The National Skill Development Policy 2009 has proposed the following features for the framework:-

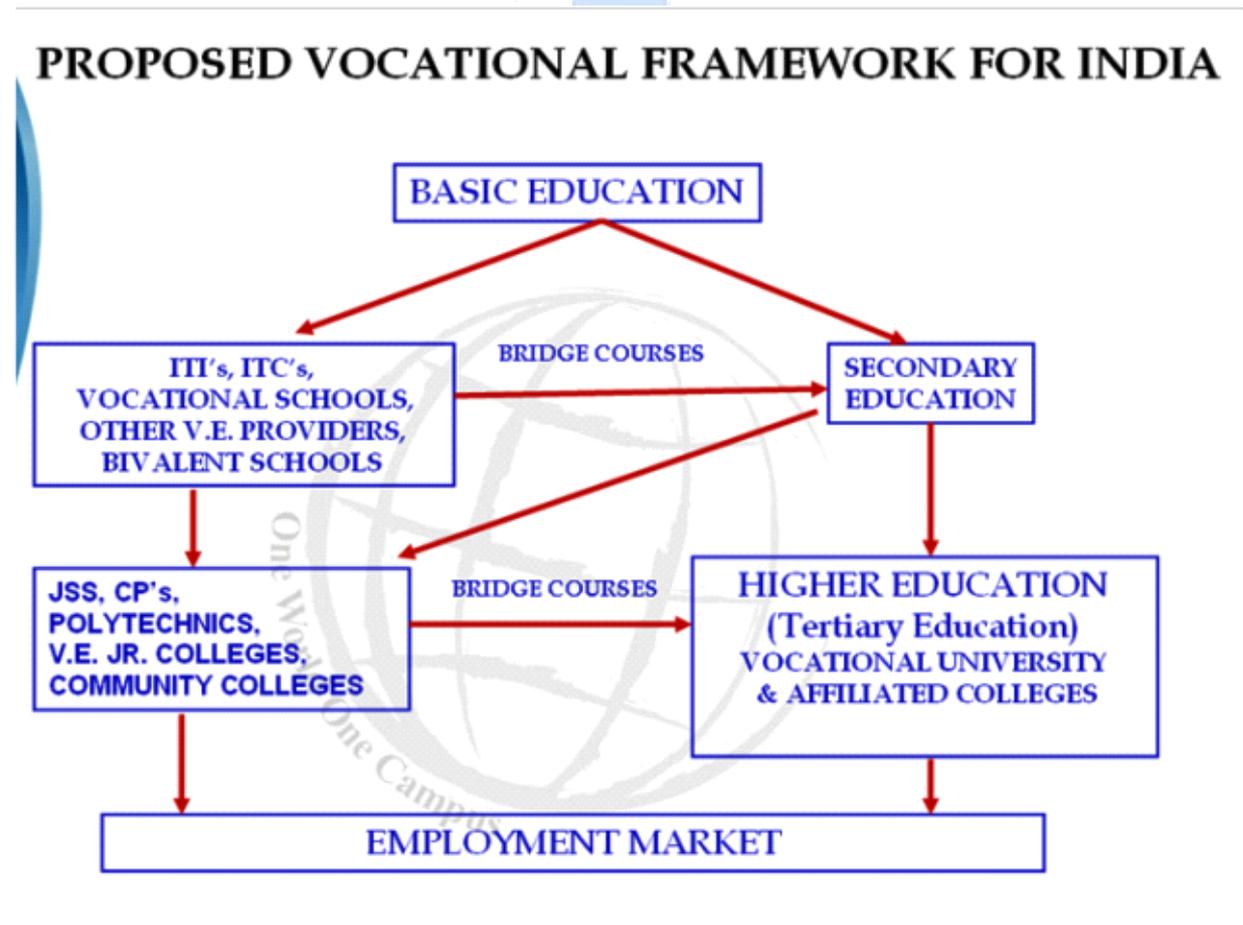
- Competency based qualifications and certification on the basis of nationally agreed standards and criteria;
- Certification for learning achievement and qualification;
- A range of national qualification levels – based on criteria with respect to responsibility, complexity of activities, and transferability of competencies;
- The avoidance of duplication and overlapping of qualifications while assuring the inclusion of all training needs;
- Modular character where achievement can be made in small steps and accumulated for gaining recognizable qualification;
- Lifelong learning through an improved skill recognition system; recognition of prior learning whether in formal, non-formal or informal arrangements;

- g) Open and flexible system which will permit competent individuals to accumulate their knowledge and skill through testing & certification into higher diploma and degree;
- h) Guidance for individuals in their choice of training and career planning;
- i) Comparability of general educational and vocational qualifications at appropriate levels;
- j) Nationally agreed framework of affiliation and accreditation of institutions;

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8. Proposed Education Model for India¹⁵

Based on the comparison of various education models across the world, the following education model in India is recommended by the Government for us:-



9. The Community College System

In view of the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), the present Government has initiated the Vocational institutions like Community College. In community college the system like B.voc, M.voc, Kaushal etc. to provide education to 'excluded' aspirants of formal education. It is expected that this type of 'remedial' system of education will definitely fulfil the norms of world class education. The main aim of this type of education is "include the exclude one".

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The Community College is an alternative system of education, which is aimed at the empowerment of the disadvantaged and the underprivileged (Urban poor, Rural poor, Tribal poor and Women) through appropriate skills development leading to gainful employment in collaboration with the local industry and the community and achieve skills for employment and self employability of the above sections of people in the society. The Community College is an innovative educational alternative that is rooted in the community providing holistic education and eligibility for employment to the disadvantaged. The Vision of the Community College is to be of

the Community, for the Community and by the Community and to produce responsible citizens. The Community College promotes job oriented, work related, skill - based and life coping education.¹⁶

10. Recommendations Regarding Vocational Education¹⁷

1. National Board for Vocational Education

A National Level Board for Vocational Education should be established, called as National Board for Vocational Education.

For Example, In Australia, there is a similar authority established by the state and federal government called Australian National Training Authority (structure may vary) which plays a major role in :-

- a) developing a national TVET system and national strategies with respect to vocational education
- b) ensuring close interaction between industries and TVET providers
- c) developing effective training market for public and private needs
- d) enhancing efficiency and productivity of TVET providers

2. National Vocational Education Policy

a. A National Vocational Policy should be formulated. The policy should establish equivalence for degrees, diplomas and certifications in the vocational education sector for lateral and vertical mobility across various learning sectors that is, secondary, vocational and higher education.

b. National Vocational Assessment & Accreditation Council should be established to formulate a regulatory and quality/standards framework.

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3. Introduction of SSC (Vocational)

SSC (vocational) or its equivalent 10th grade certification in vocational stream should be created on similar lines as HSC (Vocational) at both national and state level. Vocational Stream should be introduced at 8th Grade through Bivalent Schools which may provide both conventional and vocational stream of education at secondary level. Presently, in India only sporadic courses as electives are being offered to students under bifocal scheme. However, a separate vocational stream offered by means of bivalent schools does not exist. Statistics reveal that employers prefer students with some general education skills in addition to vocational skills. Thus, in all schemes related to SSC (Vocational) general education courses should be emphasized.

4. Credit Banking and Accumulation

In ITI's and ITC's or other vocational education providers, a credit banking system can be established to accumulate required credits in order to grant SSC certificate. This will be especially useful for non-formal and unorganized sectors that do not have any prior formal education.

5. Lateral/Vertical Mobility

To ensure vertical mobility, ITIs, Community Colleges and other State Vocational Education Institutions may be granted recognition and accreditation from the respective State Board for Vocational Education to award SSC (Vocational) certification. Vocational Education Providers, Community Colleges, JSS, Vocational Junior Colleges may also be allowed to award Diplomas and Associate Degrees in addition to HSC (Vocational) certification.

6. Industrial Participation

Private Participation from Industry and other players must be encouraged and it also helps for the success of the vocational education growth in India. Industry participation must be at all levels especially in Governance, Curriculum Design, Placements and Funding, Monitoring Outcome. Industry participation is also required for creating production oriented Research and Innovation Labs. A PPP Model can be also created where GOI and Industry can come together to invest in infrastructure and train students in latest skills.

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In India, **National Skill Development Corporation India (NSDC)** is a one of its kind, Public Private Partnership in India. It aims to promote skill development by catalyzing creation of large, quality, for-profit vocational institutions.

7. Role of Academicians

Academicians i.e. teachers may play a pivotal role in the field of vocational education for ensuring quality education and for which teacher's training is a must. Higher salaries must be offered to attract skilled teachers. Continuous skill development and up-gradation of teachers can be done through Teachers Training Programs conducted by Teacher Training Centres.

11. Life Skills-Based Education

Life skills have been defined by the WHO as "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". They represent the psycho-social skills that determine valued behaviour and include reflective skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, to personal skills such as self-awareness, and to interpersonal skills. Practicing life skills leads to qualities such as self-esteem, sociability and tolerance, to action competencies to take action and generate change, and to capabilities to have the freedom to decide what to do and who to be. Life skills are thus distinctly different from physical or perceptual motor skills, such as practical or health skills, as well as from livelihood skills, such as crafts, money management and entrepreneurial skills. Health and livelihood education however, can be designed to be complementary to life skills education, and vice versa.¹⁸

Expected learning outcomes include a combination of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills with a particular emphasis on those skills that related to critical thinking and problem solving, self-management and communication and inter-personal skills.¹⁹

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12. Shortcomings of Skill based Education In India-

Skills based education is marred by multiple access barriers like limited infrastructure facilities, quality of training, rigid entry requirements, lack of financial support, and negative perceptions. These shortcomings exist more for the disadvantaged, especially women and rural communities. Developing our human resources reservoir that not only feeds to the domestic market but also the global workforce and labour crunch is the urgent growth imperative. Indian workforce needs to be trained across the four levels, from White Collar to the Rust Collar workers linking them to job opportunities and market realities.²⁰

The skills challenge doubles up for us with a swelling young working age group population. Often referred to as the 'Demographic Dividend', the skills vs. jobs requirement mismatch often leads to economically inactive working age group people. While this impacts the economy and the particularly the growth of the domestic industry, it is a huge social and civil risk. The skills challenge magnifies for India on three accounts:

- **Quantity:** For a billion plus people country which though is the second largest supplier of skilled manpower to the world and boasts of over 65% of the total population below 35 years, having a robust skills training and certification system which reaches out to most if not all people is a mammoth task.
- **Quality:** Given the volumes and highly input oriented training systems often students completing their skills diploma's and certificates are not attuned to the industry and application of these skills. Quality of delivery, instruction, and output hence, mars productivity resulting in on the job losses for the industry, slowing down the economic activity sometime derailing the growth engine.

- **Access:** India has a very large geographical spread, difficult terrain and varying social economic conditions which make implementation of standardised, quality control skill instruction a huge challenge. Learners often have no access to training programs due to the inability to pay fees or entry barriers to training.²¹

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13. In North- East Region

With the growing population and decreasing job opportunities in the Government sector, skill development is the only solution to provide gainful employment to the younger generation. The conditions of North- eastern region are very much backward in this regard. Recently, a meeting was held at the NITI Ayog in New Delhi on Skill Development, where some of the Chief Ministers of North-eastern states made an appeal for creation of a dedicated fund for skill development to address infrastructural gaps in the region. It also gives a major boost to upgrading skill and developing entrepreneurship among the younger generations of the region. It is to be noted that the Assam Government has decided to set up the Rs. 1,000 crore **Rajiv Gandhi Skill Development Institute** as a part of its '**Make in Assam**' concept. Likewise, the Centre government also take a policy decision to for opening more IITs, IIM and NITs in this region to tackle the problems of skilled manpower shortage in North-east.²²

14. Conclusions-

In view of the above discussions, we may humbly say that education is important but skill based education is most important. Today's world is the world of competition; the fittest can only get the chance of survival in this earth. Therefore, skill development is necessary to compete the world of competition.

Society changes according to the changing needs of the time under different socio, economic and political conditions. The rapid changes in the modern times have given rise to new problems and issues. Now the society is circumscribed with varieties of new problems. The needs and aspirations of the human being have been increasing day by day. In every field, specialised person is needed. In their hands things are made more perfect and beautiful. Therefore, education should be action oriented, that is should reach the goals of the society as well as meets the demands of the time. Although Government has initiated many schemes, no fruitful result has been achieved till today or it may not be wrong if, someone says that these schemes cannot touched the untouched people. Person's having skills but lack of platform to show their abilities, they remain unrecognised or unable to get a suitable job. For eg. The conditions of Weavers,

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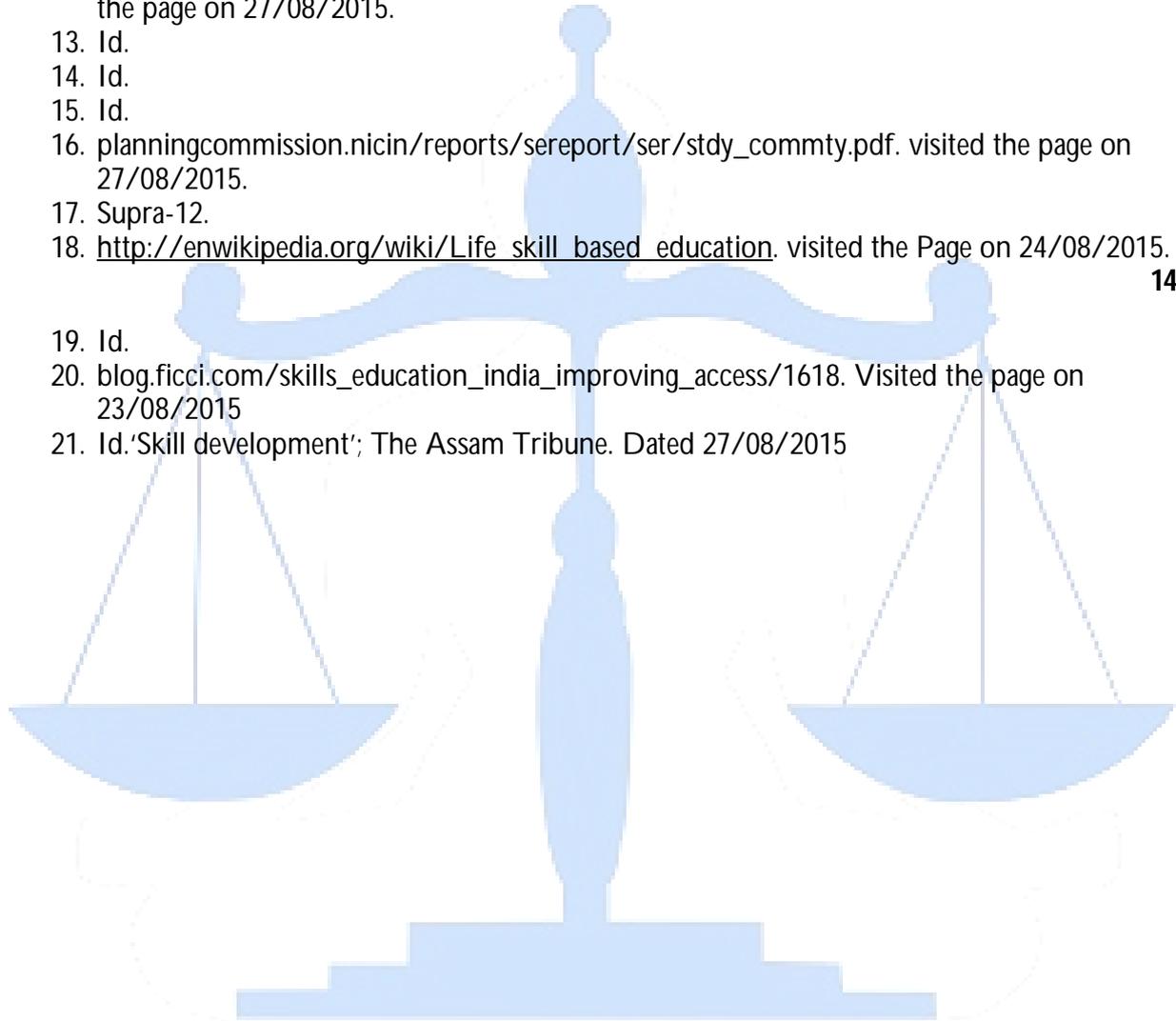
Sculptors, Potters etc. are still deplorable in India. Hence, skill based education is not the solution of the day, if it is not able to reach the untouched one. It is the time to change the whole scenario of education system, now the research of every branch of education is inevitable otherwise our condition would be like a trusty crow.

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