

Awareness of B.Voc Programmes Among Higher Secondary Students in Delhi NCR: A Study of Knowledge, Information Sources, and Educational Visibility**Preeti Gupta****Research Scholar ,Lingaya's Vidyapeeth****Dr. Sakshi Sharma****Assistant Professor, SOE, Lingaya's Vidyapeeth****Abstract**

India has made considerable progress in institutionalizing vocational higher education through the Bachelor of Vocation (B.Voc) programme, introduced by the University Grants Commission and subsequently reinforced by the National Education Policy 2020. Despite this policy momentum, a foundational question remains empirically underexplored - whether prospective students possess adequate awareness of B.Voc at the point of making higher education decisions. This study examined the level of B.Voc awareness among higher secondary students in Delhi NCR, with particular focus on the depth of knowledge, dominant information channels, and demographic variation in awareness patterns.

A quantitative descriptive survey design was employed. Data were collected from 249 higher secondary students using a structured questionnaire administered through simple random sampling. The analytical framework incorporated descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, and chi-square tests of independence to assess both the prevalence and distribution of awareness. The findings reveal a significant awareness deficit. A majority of respondents (64.3%) reported no prior knowledge of B.Voc, while 35.7% indicated some degree of familiarity. Among aware respondents, self-rated knowledge remained largely superficial - 48.6% described their understanding as very poor and 24.5% as poor. Information access was predominantly informal, with friends and family (41.6%), social media (30.3%), and the internet (28.1%) emerging as primary sources, while formal school-based guidance was notably absent. Statistically significant differences in awareness were observed across gender ($\chi^2 = 4.690$, $p = .030$) and academic stream ($\chi^2 = 7.673$, $p = .022$), though effect sizes were modest. The study concludes that B.Voc suffers not from complete invisibility, but from shallow, unevenly distributed awareness that is insufficient to support informed educational decision-making. Strengthening institutional outreach, structured career counselling, and targeted communication strategies are critical if B.Voc is to fulfil its intended policy potential.

Keywords: B.Voc, vocational education, student awareness, higher secondary students, Delhi NCR, NEP 2020, educational communication

Introduction

Each year, millions of students across India complete their higher secondary education and confront one of the most consequential decisions of their academic lives - the choice of an undergraduate pathway. This decision, however, is rarely made on the basis of comprehensive knowledge. Students tend to consider only those programmes they have encountered through their immediate social and informational environments. A programme that falls outside this awareness horizon, regardless of its structural merit or policy backing, effectively ceases to exist as a viable option for the majority of prospective learners. It is within this context that the visibility of the Bachelor of Vocation (B.Voc) programme warrants serious empirical attention.

The B.Voc programme was introduced by the University Grants Commission as a structured, skill-integrated undergraduate degree designed to bridge the longstanding divide between academic instruction and employment-oriented training. Distinguished from conventional degree programmes by its industry-linked curriculum, sector-specific specializations, and flexible multiple-exit provisions, B.Voc was architecturally grounded in the National Skills Qualifications Framework. The subsequent enactment of the National Education Policy 2020 further consolidated this direction, explicitly mandating the mainstreaming of vocational education and the systematic dismantling of hierarchical distinctions between academic and skill-based learning pathways in Indian higher education. The policy architecture supporting B.Voc is, by most measures, well-established. The UGC framework is operational, the NEP 2020 mandate is clearly articulated, and institutions across the country have progressively been encouraged to offer the programme. Yet policy provision and institutional availability constitute only the structural preconditions for student engagement. If the intended beneficiaries of B.Voc - students at the higher secondary stage - remain unaware of its existence, the programme's potential to reshape vocational participation in India is fundamentally undermined at the very first step. Awareness, therefore, is not peripheral to the success of B.Voc; it is a foundational prerequisite for any meaningful educational choice. Despite its significance, this dimension has received limited systematic empirical attention. Existing scholarship on vocational education in India has addressed issues such as social stigma, graduate employability, institutional implementation barriers, and student attitudes - yet comparatively few studies have directly examined whether higher secondary students possess sufficient awareness of B.Voc at the moment they are making their educational decisions. This gap is consequential. Students at the Class XI and XII level occupy a critical juncture in their educational trajectories, and the knowledge - or absence thereof - that they carry into this transition can shape their academic and occupational pathways for years to come. The present study addresses this gap directly. It investigates the level of B.Voc awareness among higher secondary students in Delhi NCR - a region selected for its educational diversity, institutional density, and comparatively strong information infrastructure. If awareness of B.Voc is found to be limited even in this relatively well-resourced context, the implications for other, less-connected regions of the country are likely to be considerably more pronounced. The study specifically examines the depth of student knowledge about B.Voc, the information channels through which awareness is acquired, and the extent to which awareness patterns vary across demographic variables including gender, school type, and academic stream. The findings are intended to provide an evidence base that supports more deliberate, structured, and equitable communication of vocational higher education options to students at the pre-enrolment stage.

Objectives of the Study

The present study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the prevalence of awareness of the B.Voc programme among higher secondary students in Delhi NCR
2. To examine the depth of self-rated knowledge of B.Voc among respondents who reported prior awareness of the programme
3. To identify the primary information channels through which higher secondary students have acquired awareness of B.Voc
4. To determine whether statistically significant differences in awareness exist across gender and academic stream, and to examine descriptive variation across school type
5. To contribute empirical evidence toward strengthening the communication, outreach, and guidance strategies associated with B.Voc implementation under the NEP 2020 framework

Literature Review

Vocational Education in India: Policy Context and Programme Design: India's relationship with vocational education has historically been marked by structural marginalization. For decades, vocational pathways were positioned as remedial alternatives - options pursued by students who had not succeeded within conventional academic streams - rather than as legitimate educational choices in their own right. This perception, while gradually being contested, has not been fully displaced. The introduction of the Bachelor of Vocation (B.Voc) programme by the University

Grants Commission represented one of the more substantive policy interventions aimed at repositioning vocational education within the mainstream of Indian higher education. Unlike short-duration skill courses, B.Voc was designed as a full undergraduate degree, integrating industry-linked curriculum, sector-specific specializations, and multiple-exit provisions anchored within the National Skills Qualifications Framework. The National Education Policy 2020 further reinforced this trajectory by explicitly mandating the mainstreaming of vocational education and the reduction of the entrenched divide between academic and skill-based learning pathways (Ministry of Education, 2020). These developments collectively signal a substantive policy repositioning of vocational education - from a fallback option to a recognized higher education pathway.

Student Awareness of Vocational Education: What Research Reveals: Despite sustained policy advocacy, empirical research consistently demonstrates that school-level students in India possess limited and uneven awareness of vocational education options. Goswami and Khanna (2023), in a study published in the *Indian Journal of Vocational Education*, examined awareness among students in tribal districts of Madhya Pradesh and found that while genuine interest in skill-based learning was expressed, students remained largely unfamiliar with the formal programmes available to them. This distinction between interest and awareness carries important implications - low enrolment in vocational programmes cannot be attributed solely to disinterest; it may equally reflect an absence of structured knowledge about available options.

A 2024 study published in the *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* examined the perceptions of secondary school students and teachers toward vocational education and found that nearly 50% of student respondents lacked meaningful awareness of vocational programmes. Teachers in the same study identified inadequate institutional support and insufficient training as key reasons why school-level guidance on vocational pathways remained weak. These findings indicate that the awareness deficit is not merely an individual student problem - it reflects a systemic institutional failure in how educational options are communicated.

A study by Jena et al. (2025), published in the *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Modern Education*, investigated secondary students' orientations toward vocational education in Odisha and found that limited parental awareness and socio-economic constraints significantly shaped students' familiarity with skill-based programmes. The study noted that demographic variables - particularly gender and parental educational background - played a meaningful role in mediating students' perceptions of vocational pathways, findings that bear direct relevance to the demographic analysis undertaken in the present study.

Social Perception and Stigma: A significant factor contributing to limited vocational education awareness is the enduring social stigma attached to skill-based programmes. Research conducted among students in Arunachal Pradesh found that a substantial proportion associated vocational education with low academic ability and perceived vocationally trained graduates as undervalued in both labour markets and social contexts. This stigma generates a self-reinforcing dynamic: low social prestige discourages active information-seeking, which further perpetuates weak awareness and low enrolment. A study published in the *International Journal of Educational Research and Analysis* (2020) similarly observed that higher secondary students in Birbhum district held broadly positive attitudes toward vocational education, yet these attitudes did not translate into knowledge of specific programmes or readiness to enrol. This distinction between general attitudinal support and programme-specific awareness is analytically significant - endorsing vocational education as a concept is categorically different from knowing what B.Voc is, what it offers, and where it is available.

Information Channels and Guidance Gaps: How students acquire knowledge about vocational programmes is as consequential as whether they acquire it at all. The Arunachal Pradesh study found that students primarily received vocational education information through social media and family members, with formal school-based guidance occupying a peripheral role. A study focused on vocational programmes in the hospitality sector identified a comparable pattern, attributing students' limited understanding of vocational career pathways to the near-absence of structured career counselling within schools. When schools fail to function as reliable information sources, students are compelled to construct their understanding of B.Voc from fragmented informal conversations and incidental social media exposure - channels that are often incomplete, inaccurate, or insufficiently detailed to support an informed educational decision.

Sharma and Vyas (2020), writing in the *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, found that urban and rural students differed markedly in their access to vocational education information, with rural students relying disproportionately on peer networks rather than institutional guidance. This differential access has direct equity implications: students in better-resourced, urban school environments are more likely to encounter vocational options through structured channels, while students in less-resourced settings may never encounter them at all.

B.Voc-Specific Research: While the broader vocational education literature is relatively developed, empirical work focused specifically on B.Voc as a higher education programme remains limited. Agarwal (2023), writing in the *Indian Journal of Vocational Education*, used semi-structured interviews with students already enrolled in B.Voc programmes at Ambedkar University Delhi and found that even committed students demonstrated significant knowledge gaps regarding the programme's structure, exit provisions, and long-term career value. If enrolled students exhibit such deficits, it is reasonable to infer that awareness among pre-enrolment students - those still at the higher secondary stage - would be considerably more limited. A 2025 study published in the *International Journal of Scientific Research and Analysis* identified limited public awareness, occupational misconceptions, and weak regional monitoring as three of the most critical barriers to the effective implementation of vocational education under the NEP framework. Importantly, the study argued that resolving the awareness problem demands more than improved communication - it requires structural reforms in how schools, colleges, and regulatory bodies actively engage prospective students and their families.

NEP 2020 and the Implementation Gap: Research examining the ground-level implementation of NEP 2020's vocational provisions has consistently highlighted a significant gap between policy intent and institutional reality. One such study found that while 70% of respondents endorsed the policy's direction on vocational education, actual awareness and programme uptake remained low - reflecting a disconnect between policy endorsement and informed participation. Pathak (2020) similarly noted that NEP 2020's articulation of vocational education objectives was clear at the policy level, but that translating this into student-level awareness necessitated sustained institutional engagement that had not yet materialized in most school contexts. Singh and Kaur (2025), writing in the *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* (Sage), identified information asymmetry as a central driver of participation gaps in vocational education and training programmes across India. Their analysis underscored that students in lower-resource environments are typically the last to receive information about new programme options - and by the time such information reaches them, their educational decisions have often already been made.

Research Gap and Study Positioning: The reviewed literature consistently reveals four converging patterns: school-level awareness of vocational education in India is limited and shallow; social stigma continues to suppress active information-seeking; formal institutional channels are failing to function as effective sources of vocational guidance; and the gap between B.Voc's policy visibility and its actual presence in students' educational awareness remains among the least-addressed challenges in vocational education implementation. Crucially, focused empirical work on pre-enrolment awareness of B.Voc specifically - among students who are actively in the process of making higher education decisions - is notably absent from the literature. Most existing studies address vocational education in broad terms or examine perceptions among already-enrolled students. The present study addresses this gap by directly measuring awareness levels, knowledge depth, information sources, and demographic variation among higher secondary students in Delhi NCR.

Methodology

Research Design: This study adopted a quantitative descriptive survey design, selected for its suitability in capturing the current state of a phenomenon without imposing causal assumptions. The primary objective was not to establish relationships between variables, but to systematically document the level, depth, and distribution of B.Voc awareness among higher secondary students. Descriptive survey methodology is well-established for this purpose, as it enables the structured measurement of attitudes, knowledge, and awareness across a defined population. The design additionally supported comparative analysis across demographic subgroups, which was central to the study's interest in understanding how awareness patterns vary across gender, school type, and academic stream.

Population and Sample: The target population comprised higher secondary students - those enrolled at the Class XI and XII level - across schools in Delhi NCR. The region was selected on account of its educational diversity, institutional density, and the meaningful variation it offers across school types and student backgrounds. The final sample consisted of 249 students drawn from four institutional categories: government schools, private schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas, and other school types. The deliberate inclusion of all four categories ensured that the findings reflected the breadth of schooling experiences within the region, rather than being skewed toward any single institutional profile.

Sampling Technique: Participants were selected through simple random sampling, a technique that affords each member of the target population an equal and independent probability of inclusion. This approach minimizes selection bias and strengthens the generalizability of findings to the broader population of higher secondary students in Delhi NCR. It also guarded against a common risk in educational survey research - the overrepresentation of schools that are more accessible or more institutionally cooperative.

Research Instrument: Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed specifically for this study and administered physically in-person across selected schools in Delhi NCR. For the purposes of the present study, the following items were utilised for analysis:

Section A - Demographic Profile comprised items capturing respondent gender, type of school attended, and location within Delhi NCR. These variables formed the basis for the demographic subgroup analysis conducted in the study.

Section B - Awareness and Information Sources comprised three items directly relevant to the study's objectives: the primary channel through which respondents first learned about B.Voc, their self-rated level of knowledge regarding the programme, and whether they had compared B.Voc with other degree options. Section B employed nominal categorical and dichotomous response formats.

Items were intentionally kept factual and observational in nature to ensure responses reflected genuine pre-existing awareness rather than evaluative judgement. All items were formulated in clear, accessible language appropriate for higher secondary respondents, with careful attention to minimising ambiguity in response interpretation.

Validity and Reliability: A formal internal consistency coefficient, such as Cronbach's alpha, was not computed for the instrument. This decision is methodologically defensible on the following grounds. The predominant portion of the questionnaire comprised categorical, binary, and nominal items - including dichotomous awareness responses (heard/not heard of B.Voc) and nominal information-source variables - for which internal consistency analysis is psychometrically inapplicable, as such items do not constitute a reflective scale measuring a single latent construct (Field, 2018; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). For the self-rated knowledge item, a single-item measure was employed, and internal consistency coefficients are by definition not computable for single-item scales (Diamantopoulos et al., 2012). The validity of the instrument was instead established through face validity review, and the factual and observational nature of the majority of items further supports the adequacy of this approach for a descriptive survey design. Future studies employing multi-item Likert scales to measure B.Voc knowledge constructs should, however, report reliability estimates to strengthen psychometric credibility.

Data Collection Procedure: The structured questionnaire was administered physically to respondents through a direct in-person survey process conducted across schools in Delhi NCR during the latter half of 2024. Prior to participation, students were briefed on the purpose of the study and advised that their involvement was entirely voluntary. No personally identifiable information was solicited or recorded at any stage. A critical procedural safeguard was maintained throughout: no descriptive information about B.Voc was provided to respondents prior to questionnaire completion. This was methodologically deliberate - any prior introduction of programme information would have compromised the validity of awareness measurement by conflating pre-existing knowledge with knowledge acquired during the survey process itself. Responses therefore reflect authentic, pre-existing levels of awareness among higher secondary students.

Data Analysis: The data were analysed using JASP statistical software and proceeded through two sequential stages. In the first stage, descriptive statistics - encompassing frequency distributions, percentages, and cross-tabulations - were employed to characterize the distribution of responses across key variables, including B.Voc awareness, self-rated knowledge, sources of information, and school type. In the second stage, chi-square tests of independence were applied to assess whether statistically significant differences in awareness existed across gender, school type, and academic stream. Cramer's V was computed alongside each chi-square statistic to evaluate the practical magnitude of significant associations. This two-stage analytical framework ensured that the study moved beyond descriptive enumeration to provide inferential evidence regarding the demographic patterning of awareness.

Ethical Considerations: The study was conducted in accordance with standard ethical protocols for educational research. Participation was fully voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. No personally identifying information was recorded at any stage, and the confidentiality of participant responses was rigorously maintained throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Result & Analysis: This section presents findings from 249 higher secondary students across Delhi NCR, organized around five dimensions: general awareness of B.Voc, self-rated knowledge depth, primary information sources, and demographic variation in awareness across gender, school type, and academic stream.

Awareness of B.Voc Programmes: Of the 249 respondents, 160 students (64.3%) reported no prior awareness of B.Voc, while 89 students (35.7%) indicated some degree of familiarity. In a region as educationally active as Delhi NCR, the fact that nearly two-thirds of respondents had never encountered the programme is analytically significant. The more substantive concern, however, lies not in whether students have heard of B.Voc, but in the depth and quality of that awareness - as subsequent findings reveal.

Have you heard of B. Voc?

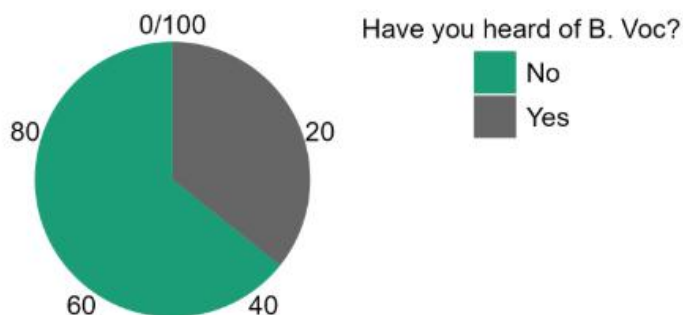


Figure 1: Distribution of Awareness of B.Voc Programmes Among Higher Secondary Students (n=249)

Self-Rated Knowledge of B.Voc

Respondents self-assessed their knowledge of B.Voc on a five-point scale. The distribution was markedly skewed toward the lower end:

- 121 students (48.6%) rated their knowledge as **Very Poor**
- 61 students (24.5%) rated it as **Poor**
- 17 students (6.8%) rated it as **Moderate**
- 40 students (16.1%) rated it as **Good**
- 10 students (4.0%) rated it as **Very Good**

Cumulatively, 73.1% of respondents placed themselves within the very poor or poor categories - demonstrating that surface-level recognition of the programme is categorically distinct from substantive programmatic understanding.

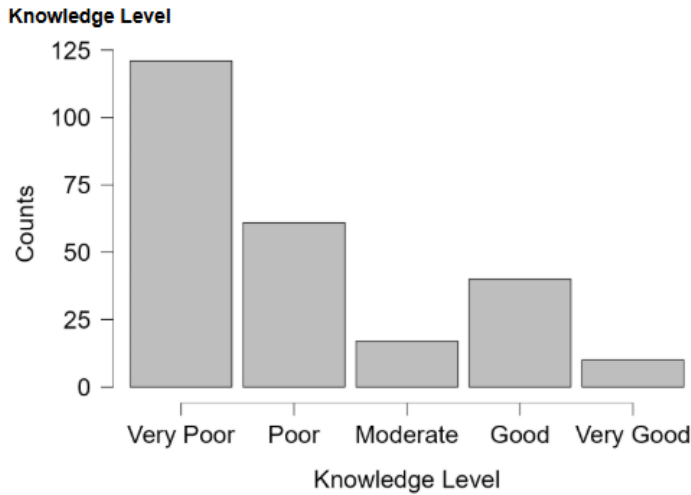


Figure 2: Self-Rated Knowledge Level of B.Voc Among Respondents (n=249)

Sources of Information About B.Voc

Among the 89 aware students, three information sources dominated:

- **Friends and family** - 37 responses (41.6%)
- **Social media** - 27 responses (30.3%)
- **Internet** - 25 responses (28.1%)

The conspicuous absence of schools, teachers, and career counsellors is among the most consequential findings of the study. Awareness of B.Voc, where it exists, was acquired through informal and incidental channels - sources capable of introducing a programme name but rarely sufficient to convey the structural detail or career-value framing necessary for an informed educational decision.

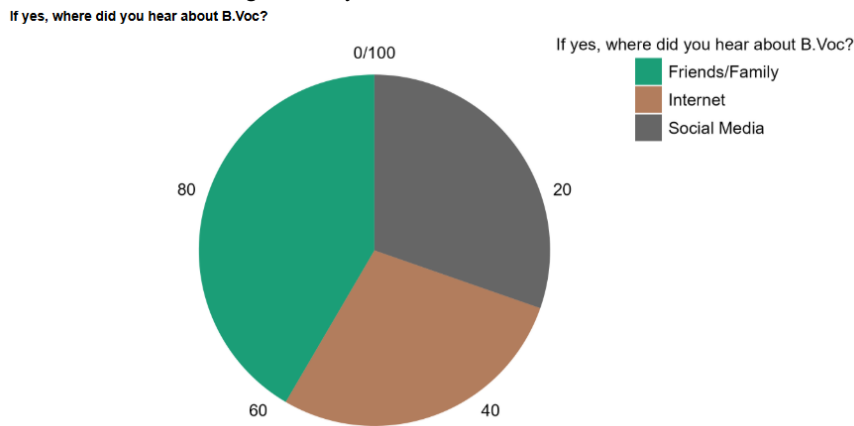


Figure 3: Sources of Information About B.Voc Among Aware Students (n=89)

Awareness by Gender

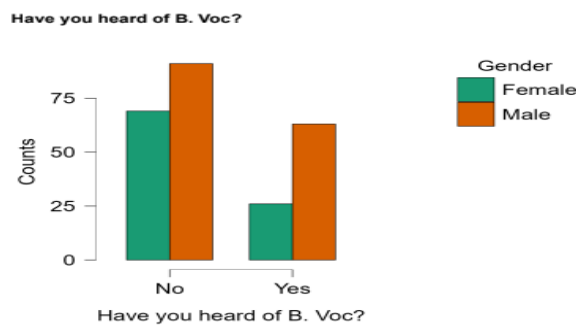


Figure 4: Awareness by Gender

Among female students, 69 had not heard of B.Voc while 26 had; among male students, 91 had not heard of it while 63 had. A chi-square test confirmed statistical significance:

- $\chi^2 = 4.690, df = 1, p = .030$

Cramer's V was **0.137**, denoting a weak association. The disparity is measurable but modest, raising questions about whether female students receive differential exposure to vocational education information through the informal channels that currently dominate awareness formation.

	χ^2	df	p-value	Cramer's V
Gender × Awareness	4.690	1	.030*	0.137

* $p < .05$

Awareness by School Type

Private school students demonstrated markedly higher awareness - 42 of 76 private school respondents (55.3%) reported familiarity with B.Voc, compared to considerably lower rates across other categories:

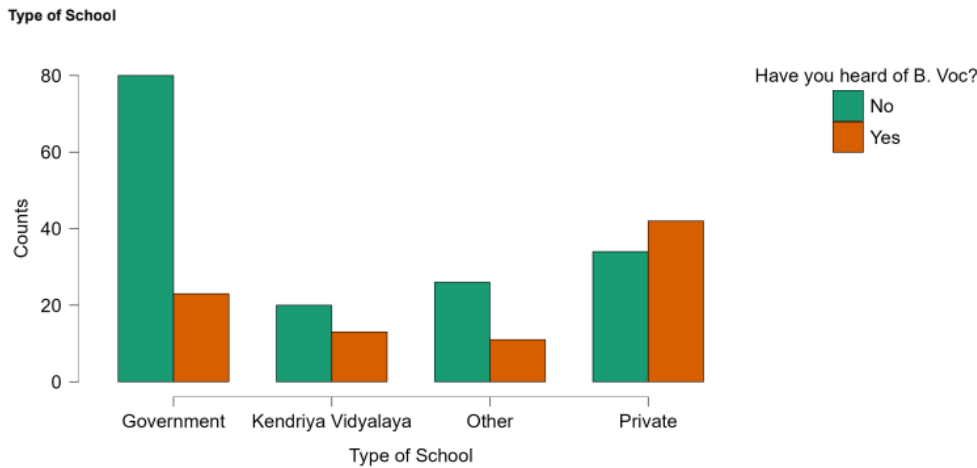


Figure 5: Awareness by School Type

School Type	Not Heard of B.Voc	Heard of B.Voc
Government School	80	23 (22.3%)
Kendriya Vidyalaya	20	13 (39.4%)
Private School	34	42 (55.3%)
Other	26	11 (29.7%)

This pattern reflects predictable structural differences in career guidance infrastructure and information access across school types - a descriptive finding that is both clear and practically meaningful in its equity implications.

Awareness by Academic Stream

Science stream students demonstrated noticeably higher awareness than those in Arts and Commerce:

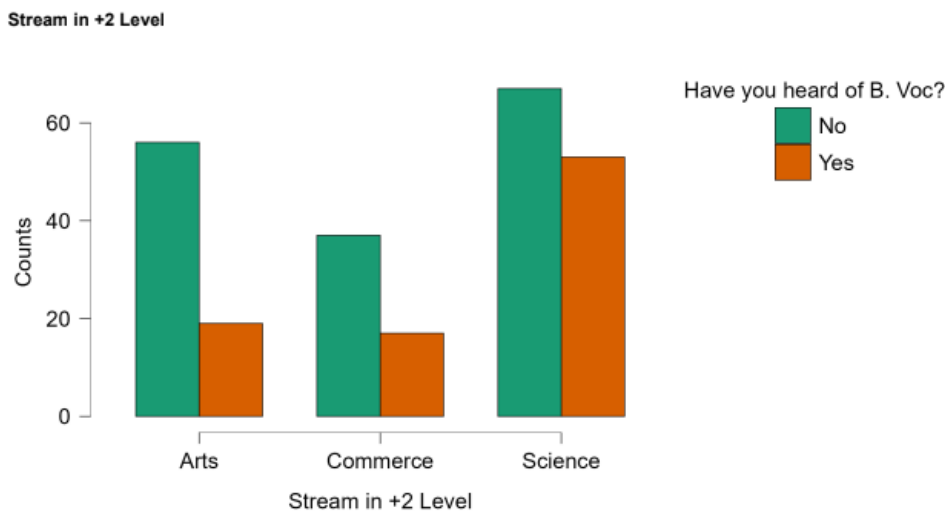


Figure 6: Awareness by Academic Stream

Stream	Not Heard of B.Voc	Heard of B.Voc
Arts	56	19
Commerce	37	17
Science	67	53

A chi-square test confirmed statistical significance:

- $\chi^2 = 7.673, df = 2, p = .022$

Cramer's V was 0.176, again indicating a weak association. Consistent with the gender finding, stream differences are statistically present but do not constitute defining boundaries in the distribution of awareness.

Discussion: The findings present a picture that is analytically nuanced. B.Voc is not entirely unknown - 35.7% of respondents reported some familiarity. However, familiarity with a programme name and genuine understanding of what it entails are fundamentally different conditions. Nearly three-quarters of all respondents rated their B.Voc knowledge as very poor or poor - a disparity that represents the central analytical challenge this discussion addresses.

Partial Awareness as a Distinct Policy Problem: The challenge confronting B.Voc is one of partial, shallow awareness rather than complete invisibility. Earlier research - including Goswami and Khanna (2023) in the *Indian Journal of Vocational Education* and the 2024 study in the *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* - established that school-level vocational awareness in India is frequently limited. The present findings are broadly consistent with this, but add an important qualification: awareness is partial rather than wholly absent. For policy purposes, this distinction matters - if the objective were simply to ensure students have heard the term "B.Voc," that threshold is partially met. The harder challenge of equipping students with sufficient programme understanding to support a confident educational decision remains far from achieved.

The Informal Channel Problem: The information source findings are among the most consequential in this study. Dominant channels - friends and family (41.6%), social media (30.3%), and internet (28.1%) - indicate that awareness has been acquired through incidental exposure rather than deliberate institutional communication. This aligns with findings from vocational hospitality sector research, which linked the absence of structured career counselling directly to limited vocational pathway understanding, and with Sharma and Vyas (2020), who documented the dominance of informal peer networks in vocational information flow. The present study adds specificity: this deficit applies to B.Voc in particular, even within the well-resourced educational environment of Delhi NCR.

Gender and Stream Differences: Statistically Significant, Practically Modest: Gender ($\chi^2 = 4.690$, $p = .030$) and academic stream ($\chi^2 = 7.673$, $p = .022$) both yielded statistically significant awareness differences, with male students and Science stream students demonstrating proportionally higher awareness. Effect sizes - Cramer's V of 0.137 and 0.176 respectively - indicate measurable disparities, not categorical divides. The gender finding warrants reflection: Jena et al. (2025) identified gender and parental education as significant mediators of vocational programme familiarity, suggesting awareness gaps may reflect broader structural inequities rather than individual information failures alone. The stream finding is similarly revealing - Arts and Commerce students, who may benefit most from a skill-integrated programme, are precisely those with the lowest awareness rates.

School Type and Structural Inequality; Private school students were considerably more aware of B.Voc than their government school counterparts - an expected but important finding. It confirms that awareness is partly a function of school resource levels and guidance infrastructure, meaning generic communication campaigns will be structurally insufficient. Improving B.Voc visibility in low-awareness environments requires targeted, institution-specific outreach.

The Policy-Visibility Gap: The findings reinforce a conclusion consistently advanced in recent scholarship: policy provision does not automatically generate student-level awareness. A 2025 study in the *International Journal of Scientific Research and Analysis* identified limited public awareness as a primary barrier to vocational education implementation under NEP - an assessment the present findings empirically corroborate. Singh and Kaur (2025), writing in the *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* (Sage), identified information asymmetry as a central driver of VET participation gaps - a characterization the present data clearly supports. Without active, structured communication efforts, students will continue to default toward familiar pathways - not as an informed choice against B.Voc, but as a consequence of never having been meaningfully introduced to it.

Limitations of the Study: While this study contributes meaningful empirical evidence on B.Voc awareness among higher secondary students in Delhi NCR, several methodological limitations warrant acknowledgement. First, the study was confined to a single metropolitan region, and the findings may not be directly generalizable to semi-urban, rural, or geographically dispersed educational contexts, where awareness deficits are likely to be considerably more pronounced. Second, the sample comprised 249 respondents drawn from four school categories, and while simple random sampling was employed, the relatively small representation of Kendriya Vidyalaya and other institutional categories constrains the statistical robustness of subgroup comparisons - particularly for school type, for which a formal chi-square test could not be reliably computed. Third, the study relied on self-reported awareness and self-rated knowledge, both of which are subject to social desirability bias and respondent subjectivity; objective knowledge assessments would provide a more precise measure of actual programme understanding. Fourth, a formal internal consistency coefficient was not computed for the self-rated knowledge scale, which represents a psychometric limitation that future studies employing multi-item scales should address. Finally, the cross-sectional design of the study captures awareness at a single point in time and does not account for how awareness may evolve as students progress through their higher secondary education or are exposed to institutional guidance over time. These limitations collectively point to productive directions for future inquiry, several of which are addressed in the Recommendations section.

Conclusion

This study sought to address a foundational question in vocational education implementation in India - whether higher secondary students possess adequate awareness of the B.Voc programme at the point of making consequential higher education decisions. The evidence, drawn from 249 students across Delhi NCR, indicates that the majority do not, and that those who have encountered the programme retain only a superficial understanding of what it entails. The primary finding - that 64.3% of respondents had never heard of B.Voc - is significant in isolation. Yet the more analytically consequential finding lies beneath this figure. Among students who reported some familiarity with the programme, 73.1% rated their knowledge as very poor or poor. Furthermore, awareness, where it existed, had been acquired predominantly through informal channels - friends, family, and social media - rather than through schools, career counsellors, or any form of structured educational guidance. These three findings are mutually reinforcing: B.Voc exists as a policy construct and as an institutional programme, but it has not yet achieved meaningful presence in the educational consciousness of the student population it is designed to serve. The study further established that awareness was unevenly distributed across demographic groups. Male students demonstrated modestly higher awareness than female students; Science stream students were more aware than their counterparts in Arts and Commerce; and private school students showed considerably higher awareness than those enrolled in government schools. While these differences were statistically significant, effect sizes were modest - indicating measurable disparities rather than categorical divides. Collectively, they suggest that awareness is partly a function of the informational environments students inhabit, and that certain student groups are systematically less likely to encounter B.Voc through any channel, formal or informal.

The broader contribution of this study lies in its empirical attention to a dimension of vocational education that has been consistently underexamined. Perception, social stigma, and graduate employability have received sustained scholarly attention, while awareness - the foundational precondition for any informed educational choice - has largely been assumed rather than measured. The present findings demonstrate that this assumption is empirically unwarranted. Bridging the gap between B.Voc's policy promise and its ground-level reach necessitates treating

awareness not as a peripheral communication concern, but as a core implementation priority deserving deliberate and sustained institutional investment.

The implications of these findings extend well beyond the Delhi NCR context. If awareness deficits of this magnitude exist in one of India's most educationally active and institutionally well-resourced regions, comparable conditions in smaller cities, semi-urban areas, and rural settings are likely to be considerably more severe. Cultivating the kind of deep, accurate, and institutionally supported awareness that enables students to meaningfully consider and confidently choose B.Voc cannot be achieved through discrete communication campaigns. It demands sustained, structurally embedded effort - integrating vocational guidance into school systems, institutional outreach strategies, and regulatory communication frameworks at every level of the education ecosystem.

Recommendations

For Policymakers and the UGC: Student-level awareness must be reconceptualized as a measurable implementation outcome within the B.Voc policy framework - not assumed as a natural consequence of programme availability. A national awareness audit, extending the regional approach of this study, would establish a baseline for tracking progress and identifying demographics where the visibility deficit is most acute. Official informational resources on B.Voc - covering programme structure, specializations, exit provisions, and career pathways - should be developed in accessible digital and physical formats, and awareness-building should be formally embedded within NEP 2020's vocational implementation framework with defined targets and state-level accountability mechanisms.

For Schools and School Administrators: Schools must integrate vocational higher education into routine career guidance activities. Current counselling disproportionately favours conventional undergraduate pathways, leaving skill-based options like B.Voc largely unaddressed - particularly for Arts and Commerce stream students who stand to benefit most. Teachers and counsellors require targeted orientation on B.Voc's structure, eligibility, and career outcomes, as effective guidance is contingent on institutional knowledge. Schools should additionally organize structured awareness initiatives - orientation sessions and institutional interactions - to introduce the programme through formal channels rather than leaving students dependent on incidental exposure.

For Colleges and Universities Offering B.Voc: Institutions must invest in proactive school outreach through career fairs, open days, and classroom presentations, reaching students before enrolment decisions are finalized. Social media and internet platforms - currently the dominant informal awareness channels - should be deployed strategically for substantive programme communication: concise, student-oriented content addressing academic experience and alumni outcomes will outperform generic institutional promotion. B.Voc should be presented confidently as a rigorous, employment-relevant undergraduate degree, not positioned defensively as an alternative for students who did not access conventional programmes - institutional framing has material consequences for student perception.

For Career Counsellors and Guidance Professionals: Counsellors must deliberately incorporate vocational degree pathways into every career guidance interaction. The study's finding that formal guidance professionals are not meaningful information sources for B.Voc likely reflects a structural deficit in knowledge and support rather than professional indifference. Professional development programmes should therefore include current, contextually relevant information on B.Voc, enabling counsellors to guide students with accuracy and confidence.

For Future Research: Future studies should extend this inquiry to semi-urban and rural contexts, where awareness deficits are likely more severe than those documented in Delhi NCR. Comparative multi-state studies would map the national landscape of B.Voc awareness and identify regions requiring urgent intervention. Research into parental knowledge as a mediating factor in student awareness would be particularly valuable, given that friends and family emerged as the dominant information source in this study. Longitudinal research tracking how awareness evolves across Class XI and XII - and how it translates into actual enrolment decisions - would further strengthen the evidence base for vocational education communication policy.

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