

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT

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## QUALITY EDUCATION: ISSUES, CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

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### ABSTRACT

*Education being the social system of society plays a key role in moulding, shaping, reforming and reconstructing the society from time to time. It has been recognized and regarded as the potent instrument of social transformation of our modern society. Effectiveness of education is very much determined to the extent it has been able to achieve its goals. What happens in classrooms and other learning environments is vitally important to the future of our citizens, and indeed to the future of our republic. Education of acceptable quality must address basic learning needs; enrich the lives of learners and their overall experience of living and well being. According to UNESCO, there should be some guiding principles for planning and implementation of education. When learners are in an environment that provides possibilities for full participation of community as well as equal opportunities, then we can say that the education is of high quality. It is also of utmost importance that the curriculum is flexible enough to provide possibilities for adjustment to individual needs and to stimulate teachers to seek solutions that can be matched with the needs and abilities of each and every individual. Hence, there is a great need to think and implement the quality issues in education at different levels from different perspectives so that we can provide good education according to societal needs.*

### KEYWORDS

quality education, reforms in education.

### INTRODUCTION

**T**he principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done."  
*Jean Piaget*  
 "All children and young people of the world, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, with their hopes and expectations, have the right to education. Therefore, it is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of the children."

- B.Lindqvist, UN, 1994

The future of our country and the world depends on our children and college students receiving the best instruction. World over Education is recognized as a vehicle for rapid economic and social development. It plays an important role in the all round development of a child. The aim of education imparted should be to bring changes not only in the amount of knowledge gained but also in the abilities to do so, to think and to acquire habits, skills and attitude, which characterize an individual who is socially accepted and adjusted. However, challenges still remain with respect to ensuring education of good quality.

### WHAT IS QUALITY?

Now the question arises as to what actually quality mean? The concept of quality has been drawn from industry. According to ISO8402, quality is "The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy implied or stated needs." Thus quality is perceived in terms of customer satisfaction and fitness for function. According to ISO 9000:2000, "Quality is defined as the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfills requirement." Here, Degree means that quality can be used with the adjectives such as poor, good and excellent. Inherent is defined as existing, characteristics can be quantitative or qualitative and requirement is the need or expectation of customers and other parties.

### QUALITY IN EDUCATION

Quality can be judged to exist when a good or service meet the specification that has been laid down for it. Therefore, a quality finished product must do what it claims to do and fulfills the demand of their customers. Education has no finished products (not even the graduates), they are on the way 'to be'. Education only charges the human propensities to evolve and unfold it till the last breath, a process that covers the human journey from 'womb to tomb'. Human beings continue to learn, evolve 'to be'.

Likewise, Quality in Education is not an end in itself, but a means by which the end product is judged to be up to standard. It aims to create life long learners that can fit in this society. It has been rightly said, " **Quality is not a chance, but a choice; quality is not an accident, but a design; quality is not destination, but a continuous journey**"

### QUALITY EDUCATION

According to UNESCO (1996), Quality education must be supported by the four pillars of learning i.e. learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. It deals with continuous improvement of the process, implementing, evaluating and decision making in the educational system.

### ACCORDING TO UNICEF QUALITY EDUCATION INCLUDES:

- **Learners** who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and Supported in learning by their families and communities;
- **Environments** that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;
- **Content** that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeric and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.
- **Processes** through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities.
- **Outcomes** that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes

### QUALITY EDUCATION IN INDIA

In spite of producing largest work force of qualified doctors and engineers, Indian education system is facing serious challenges especially at various education levels. These include universal access to an infrastructure of quality, improving retention, efficiency and effectiveness of the schools. In India there are approx 8.8 lakhs elementary schools, 3-4 lakhs upper primary schools, 1.46 lakhs secondary and senior secondary schools, 20 central universities, 215 state universities, 100 deemed universities and Other institutions include 16,885 colleges. However only a few are able to provide quality education in terms of norms, global educational standards and value system.

The ASSOCHAM Eco Pulse (AEP) conducted ' A Comparative Study of Emerging Economies on Quality of Education'. It was carried out on the basis of 20 parameters relating to primary, secondary, tertiary education and higher education and demography and data provided by UNESCO, IMF, WEF, and Financial Times was used for the purpose. The draught of education in India has reached the extreme as it ranks sixth among the seven emerging economies of the world, in terms of education quality. The country has scored only 3.3 points in the study, in terms of primary, secondary, tertiary and demographic parameters, while

Russia topped the chart with 7.3 points. As per the Assocham study, India was at the last position in terms of quality of secondary education while Russia and Brazil had maximum scores.

While releasing the survey, ASSOCHAM President Mr. Sajjan Jindal said, "Serious attention needs to be paid towards the education system. India may stand to lose its competitive advantages against the other countries in the long term if corrective measures are not taken to strengthen the Indian education system qualitatively". Therefore, we can conclude that there is a need for quality education at all levels of education.

### CHALLENGES IN BRINGING QUALITY EDUCATION

Education always has been goal-oriented and quality education determines what students learn, how well they learn and what benefits they draw from their education. With the changing social and educational needs, following challenges are identified in bringing quality in education:

#### COURSES AND PROGRAMMES

- Courses and programmes should maintain a balance between the needs of the student and the aims of our education system.
- Appropriate opportunities for pupil as per their choice should be given.
- The Programme should contribute to a continuing interest in learning and self-development.
- The various elements of the Courses should be planned and taught in an appropriate sequence to meet the range of needs, abilities and aspirations of pupil.
- To promote, progress and continuity in pupil's learning.

#### PUPIL'S LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- Extend to which the learning environment stimulates and motivates people.
- Pace of learning
- Learning, independent thinking and active involvement.
- Interaction with others, work collaboratively in different circumstances.

#### MEETING PUPIL'S NEED

- Choice of task, activities well matched with the need of people.
- Provision for pupil with differing abilities and aptitude.
- Identification of learning needs and barriers, which hinders learning, should be clearly addressed.
- Child progress in developing positive attitude, personal and social skills like self- esteem

#### AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED AND MOTIVATED TEACHERS

- Well-qualified teachers teaching subject as per their qualification.
- Communicative competence as reflected in clarity of thoughts and expression.
- Creative competence as signified by reflective character of teaching.
- In-service training is necessary to upgrade their teaching capabilities (theory and practical).
- Working conditions of teachers
- Salaries given to the teachers

#### INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES

- Proper building
- Classroom space for learning
- Proper space for activities
- Drinking water and toilet facilities
- Playground and play material facilities
- Library and resource room

#### TRAINING FOR CITIZENSHIP

- Participation in co-curricular and other activities
- Proper guidance and consultation about the field the child wants to take as per his/her interest, which in future will contribute to employment.

There is definitely a need to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges being faced by our education system. There is a wide gap between social expectations from the field of education and resources provided to it. Thus we can say that there is a need to improve quality of education to meet the challenges before it and to make it accessible to every individual as it has become the defining and deciding element in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in context of new social needs and responsibilities especially in the developing countries like ours.

### MEASURES FOR IMPROVING QUALITY IN EDUCATION

- Curriculum should be inter-disciplinary, continuously reviewed and highly differentiated with respect to different levels and kinds of learner's abilities.
- Increase the relevance of education by adjusting learning processes, curriculum and content as per learners need
- There is a need to bridge the gap between latest developments both locally and globally by facilitating IT education
- Strengthen the training, status and remuneration of teachers in order to improve teacher performance and motivation.
- With the coming of the new information and communication technologies, the teachers should gear up to adjust themselves in 21<sup>st</sup> century. They should be well equipped in using technology effectively.
- Method of teaching should be interactive, participatory and highly diverse methods like role play, field work, laboratory, experimentation etc should be used.
- Invest in books, material and equipment to provide a stimulating learning environment- at the very least, every child in school should have access to books which they can read for themselves
- Continuous research into measuring quality, developing appropriate indicators and building local capacity to collect and interpret local data
- No improvement of quality is possible with corruption all around. There is a need to bring transparency in our system

### NEED OF HOUR

Our education system is facing serious challenges and due to lack of serious implementation of policies. Our system has been divided into a dual system-one set of schools meant for the poor and those who are unable to pay for quality education, and the other set of schools are those who give quality education involving higher user cost. The real challenge to the success of educational reforms lies in removing the gap between these two sets of schools. And this can be done effectively by overcoming the Quality challenges in our education system.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 has strongly articulated the need for a substantial improvement in the quality of education. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) also emphasizes the significance of quality education (the physical spaces of schools can be transformed into learning spaces only if certain basic provisioning is ensured. This provisioning includes, an adequate number of teachers in schools, facilities for training of teachers, structures to provide regular on site academic support, grants to facilitate development of teaching learning material to aid classroom instruction, textbooks for children from special focus groups etc) and suggests various parameters to be addressed in State and district plans to achieve the desired goal.



Therefore, in this age of globalization and privatization with increased competition and to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our education system should be radically transformed. Quality development should be more emphasized to make education relevant for present day. India is required to set up a chain of educational institutes which are accredited, globally acceptable, highly competitive, transparent, accountable and dependable. Thus we need to stress quality education, as it is the nature of market economy that only those will survive who are efficient and maintain high productivity and quality.

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