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Concept of Quality Education: A Need of Era

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ABSTRACT: Whatever progress our society has made over the centuries is because of education. Being the foundation stone of society, education brings reforms, helps in progress and paves way for innovation. The importance of quality education cannot be undermined in a society, which is why great personalities have extensively written on its need in a civilized society. It is because of education, that humans have been able to explore the vastness of the universe and the mystery of its existence in atoms. The concepts like gravity, cognitive dissonance, laser-guided surgical procedures and millions of more would not exist if education were not there to unleash our potential. In the 21st century, some countries are lagging in the race for quality education. Education International (EI), a Belgium-based organization, defines quality education as one that focuses on the social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of each student regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. It prepares the child for life and not just for testing. In 2012, the United Nations for the first time included 'Quality Education' in their Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Further, education in modern times is highly influenced and dependent on Information and Communication Technology which has paved the way for students to attain school or higher-level education. Quality education not only prepares a student for a job but also develops the overall personality of an individual. In the case of children, it aims at their complete upbringing where morals and ethics are taught as part of the curriculum to help them live a healthy lifestyle.

KEYWORDS: quality education, progress, sustainable development, technology, lifestyle, children, goals

I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations understand the supremacy of education for a brighter and prosperous future and is therefore of the consensus that quality education and not merely education should be a reality for all. In its Sustainable Development Goals, the UN has identified quality education as a major goal to ensure the 'transformation of the world'. [1,2] By quality education, the UN implies equitable and standard education for all that will promote lifelong learning and the urge to gather knowledge. Inclusivity and equitability are the foundations to be upheld in quality education and not a greater literacy rate. This is a revolutionary approach to understanding education and making it the means of changing the world. We all are aware of how technology changing the face of education. Not only has the mode of receiving education changed but the methods of teaching students have also evolved. Earlier, education was more of a monologue, but nowadays, teachers encourage students to maintain a two-way flow of information in classrooms. United Nations has identified a multitude of problems at the global level that if not addressed can lead to serious problems. To tackle such issues, the need for leaders and experienced professionals who are adept in their respective fields has grown. To encourage leadership and power to influence among the students, it has become imperative to employ a refined way of teaching practices. In the age of technology, information can be accessed from anywhere in the world. Even though providing quality education demands great efforts to shape the personality of a student, with the advent of new technologies, a student is just a click away from requisite resources. While sitting hundreds of miles away from an educational institute, the students can take online classes from the institution, avail benefits of online career counselling, and access a great volume of resources from free online libraries. [3,4] Covid-19 hit the world and education was one of the most important factors that were adversely affected. A majority of countries announced the temporary closure of schools impacting more than 91% of students in the world. As per the UN, approximately 1.6 billion students were out of school and nearly 369 million children depend upon school meals. To ensure that education doesn't stop at this time, UNESCO has created the following aims:

- Help countries mobilize resources and implement new and context-appropriate solutions to offer remote education by leveraging hi-tech, low-tech and no-tech methods
- Seek equitable solutions and universal access
- Make sure that there are coordinated responses that avoid overlapping efforts

- Facilitate the return of students to school when they reopen to avoid an increase in dropout rates

Here are some of the details about quality education that you must learn:

- Before the pandemic, projections showed that more than 200 million students would be out of school and only 60% of young people will reach upper secondary .
- More than half of the students that have not enrolled in school live in Sub-Saharan Africa
- 617 million youth worldwide lack basic mathematics and literacy skills
- In 10 low and middle-income countries, children with disabilities were 19% less likely to achieve minimum proficiency in reading[5,6]

The increasing number of crimes, wars, disease outbreaks, drastic economic downfalls, climate change, and many other factors have led to unexpected changes in societies around the globe. Due to this, the educationists and developmental organizations around the world emphasize the need for quality education and are stressing the need and uniting people towards achieving the goal. From educating a smaller group of people within their community to spreading awareness about the rising global issues, the educated people can work in an array of ways to achieve the goals. Besides formulating new methods, traditional methods like employing drama and art in education can also yield optimum results and help in enriching the educational process.

Everyone can participate in their ways to provide quality education around the world. Here are some of the targets that the UN has set in this section:

- To ensure that there is free primary and secondary education for girls and boys for effective learning outcomes
- To ensure that both girls and boys have access to quality early development development and pre-primary education
- Ensure equal access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education
- Increase the number of people, both youth and adults who have relevant skills for employment, jobs and entrepreneurship
- Eliminate all discrimination in education
- Ensure universal literacy and numeracy
- Ensure education for sustainable development and global citizenship
- Ensure building and upgrading inclusive and safe schools
- Expand higher education scholarships for developing countries
- Increase the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries

Here is how you can promote quality education around the world:

- Find a charity that works for quality education, donate or get involved in other ways
- Donate the books that you have used to those who need it
- Promote and take free online courses
- Visit local schools, see what school supplies they need and start a drive to provide it to them
- Mentor young children and help them with their homework or projects[7,8]

Here are some of the important dimensions of quality education that every organization should meet:

- Equity
- Sustainability
- Contextualisation and Relevance
- Balanced Approach
- Child-friendly Teaching and Learning
- Learning Outcomes

Every country has a unique education system but some of them are so interesting and well-run that they are much closer to the Quality Education in the world. Here are some of the top countries with the best quality education systems:

- Finland
- Japan
- Canada
- Germany
- Australia
- United States
- United Kingdom
- Denmark

II. DISCUSSION

A good teacher should have several qualities and some of them are:

- A good teacher should be a good communicator and must know not only how to communicate with the students but also with the other teachers and school authorities especially when it comes to sharing the problems of the students as well.
- A good teacher is a good listener and must know to listen to the students and know their needs
- Adaptability is a crucial value of a good teacher, especially in these times as schools are moving online
- Good teachers are empathetic and patient with their students and understand what they are feeling and need.[9,10]

Learners who are healthy, well-nourished, and eager to participate and learn, with their families and communities supporting them in their learning;... Outcomes that include knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and are related to national goals for education and good participation in society. Quality education is supported by three main pillars: availability to qualified teachers, the utilisation of quality learning resources and professional development, and the creation of safe and supportive learning environments. Quality education lays the groundwork for societal fairness. One of the most basic public services is high-quality education. It not only informs but also empowers residents, allowing them to participate as much as possible in their communities' social and economic growth. Education is a key to escaping poverty and enabling upward socioeconomic mobility. Education aids in the reduction of inequities and the attainment of gender equality, as well as the promotion of tolerance and a more peaceful society. Here are the three things that are required to provide high-quality education:

1. Study the content at your leisure at home, according to your learning needs.
2. Regroup in the classroom for hands-on workshops and conversations. Students are mentored by teachers.
3. With all of the insights from their class/group conversations, you may expand your knowledge at home.[11,12]

Teachers are not the only ones who are responsible for providing high-quality education. A public obligation must exist to ensure that all citizens have access to high-quality education. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are the three pillars of education. Thus, when it comes to building a career, attaining a quality education can have far more positive outcomes. It not only makes you fit for the desired role but also helps in shaping you as a better human being. We believe that everyone has the right to attain a quality education and one should not settle for less. When discussing or defining quality, it is important to distinguish between education and schooling. Some of the literature does make this distinction but much of it conflates the two concepts, in some cases using them as though they are completely interchangeable. Although rather dated, a broad definition of education is the development of desirable qualities in people of course, there is no agreement about the end of "desirable qualities" and what these are. Schooling, on the other hand, is about providing the service of „education“, i.e. of educating young people through institutionalised and universalised „organised“ learning. The concept quality in education is elusive and frequently used but never defined. A good quality education is one that provides all learners with capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being. The learning outcomes that are required vary according to context but at the end of the basic education cycle must include threshold levels of literacy and numeracy, basic scientific knowledge and life skills including awareness and prevention of disease. Capacity development to improve the quality of teachers and other education stakeholders is crucial throughout this process.

Quality Learner School systems work with the children who come into them. The quality of children's lives before beginning formal education greatly influences the kind of learners they can be. Many elements go into making a quality learner, including health, early childhood experiences and home support:

- Good health and nutrition. Physically and psychosocially healthy children learn well. Healthy development in early childhood, especially during the first three years of life, plays an important role in providing the basis for a healthy life and a successful formal school experience. Adequate nutrition is critical for normal brain development in the early years. . Prevention of infection, disease and injury prior to school enrolment are also critical to the early development of a quality learner.

- Early childhood psychosocial development experiences.[13,14] Positive early experiences and interactions are also vital to preparing a quality learner. Effective and appropriate stimulation in a child's early years influences the brain development necessary for emotional regulation, arousal, and behavioural management. A child who misses positive stimulation or is subject to chronic stress in the pre-school years may have difficulty with psychosocial development later in life.

- Regular attendance for learning When they reach school age, research demonstrates that to achieve academically, children must attend school consistently. A child's exposure to curriculum — his or her opportunity to learn' — significantly influences achievement, and exposure to curriculum comes from being in school

- Family support for learning. Parents may not always have the tools and background to support their children's cognitive and psychosocial development throughout their school years. Parents' level of education, for example, has a multifaceted impact on children's ability to learn in school. Parental education not only influences parent-child interactions related to learning, but also affects parents' income and need for help in the home or field — help that often comes at the expense of keeping children in school

Quality Learning Environments

- Quality of school facilities. Physical learning environments or the places in which formal learning occurs, range from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air gathering places. The quality of school facilities seems to have an indirect effect on learning, an effect that is hard to measure.

- Teachers' behaviours that affect safety. Relative to both girls and boys, parents, educators and researchers express important concerns about teachers who create an unsafe environment for students. Teacher behaviours affect the quality of the learning environment since learning cannot take place when the basic needs of survival and self-protection are threatened.[15,16]

- Quality Content Quality education cannot be based on a blueprint that is applicable in all situations. Solutions and adaptations of education systems must be based on the real needs of a country and/or community. Research on educational practices and projections about future needs society contribute to current understanding of the structure of school curriculum. In general, curriculum should emphasize deep rather than broad coverage of important areas of knowledge, authentic and contextualized problems of study, and problem-solving that stresses skills development as well as knowledge acquisition. Curriculum should also provide for individual differences, closely coordinate and selectively integrate subject matter, and focus on results or standards and targets for student learning

- Life skills. The term 'life skills' can be broadly interpreted and is often assumed to include such topics as health, hygiene, etiquette, and vocational skills. However, life skills are defined as "psycho-social and interpersonal skills used in every day interactions...not specific to getting a job or earning an income". A wide range of examples exist under the Life Skills, such as assertion and refusal skills, goal setting, decision making and coping skills. Life skills curriculum focuses on attitudes, values and behavioural change, rather than seeking to provide young people with a body of knowledge about a set of topics. As with literacy, age-appropriate life skills can be incorporated into other areas of study

- Teacher competence and school efficiency. Whether a teacher uses traditional or more current methods of instruction, efficient use of school time has a significant impact on student learning. Teachers' presence in the classroom represents the starting point.[17,18]

- Visionary leadership College principals and heads of school have a crucial role to play in the implementation of the reform. Their driving force is essential and their need for support is acknowledged. A more distributed form of leadership is encouraged within and across college networks. Dispersed, delegated and democratic forms of leadership imply greater empowerment where and when it matters. This means that college networks slowly become more responsible and accountable for matters dealing with school life.

In conclusion, a system that focuses on quality education allows children to develop and grow in school environments that are supportive and at the same time challenging, which nurture them to become confident, have good self-esteem

and willing to strive forward yet at the same time feel a sense of responsibility towards others in their community. We believe that all our schools can be such places where children of different abilities develop, learn and grow together.

III. RESULTS

Poor quality education is leading to poor learning outcomes in India, ultimately pushing children out of the education system and leaving them vulnerable to child labour, abuse and violence. Many classrooms continue to be characterized by teacher-centred rote learning, corporal punishment and discrimination. Learning assessments show that many of those children who are in school are not learning the basics of literacy and numeracy or the additional knowledge and skills necessary for their all-round development as specified under the Right to Education Act. Much remains to be done to ensure a child-friendly learning environment where all children benefit from gender-sensitive and inclusive classrooms, as well as the availability of improved water, sanitation and hygiene, and mid-day meal practices. Every girl and boy in India has the fundamental right to quality education, an education one that helps them to acquire basic literacy and numeracy, enjoy learning without fear and feel valued and included irrespective of where they come from.

For the first time in 10 years, reading and arithmetic scores have improved in public funded schools at early grades. In seven states (Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana, Telangana and Uttarakhand) reading level increased by 7 per cent at grade 3 level since 2014. This indicates that increase in learning is possible but takes time. Nevertheless, in grade 5 after more than four years of schooling, only half of all children could read a grade 2 level text fluently. The National Achievement Survey 2017 which was conducted for grades 3, 5 and 8 gave a similar picture with only 45.2 per cent of students achieving the targeted performance levels across all subjects and classes at the national level. States such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh with large populations of children from scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST) and minority communities have the lowest scores. In the NAS 2017 girls scored slightly higher or as the same level as boys. While governments both national and state have invested in large scale learning assessments, the challenge is in the use of assessment data for improving the delivery of education rather than letting it remain a simple data collection exercise. Successful performance in school is supported by a wide range of abilities, attitudes and socio-emotional competencies, beyond traditional literacy and numeracy skills - life skills significantly contribute to learning and are an aspect of quality education.[19] While there is an understanding around the importance of life skills, there is a possible lack of alignment between traditional curricula and a life-skills learning agenda and a lack of understanding of how these can be developed across the education continuum. The NEP brings this focus stressing the importance of leaning by doing. Since March 2018, schools in India have been closed and learning has shifted to remote home-based learning for those who can access it. School closures will impact learning across the education system. Gains in enrolment, school completion, and learning must not get eroded due to the combination of schools being closed and socio-economic hardships related to Covid-19.

According to the World Bank, five months of school closures due to COVID-19 will result in an immediate loss of 0.6 years of schooling adjusted for quality, bringing the effective learning that a student can achieve down from 7.9 years to 7.3 years. During this period of school closure, efforts have been made by governments to ensure continuity of learning for children while they have been home. Digital tools including internet based high tech tools like apps and online learning classes, social media platforms, television and radio were used extensively. India is now looking at delivering education programmes differently and speedily to employ solutions, that accelerate impact and achieve scale across interventions targeted at children and adolescents. COVID-19 presents urgency as well as an incredible opportunity to act and transform the education system through technology using it as an important tool of capacity building, inclusiveness and quality learning, without replacing the essential role of teachers/facilitators. While technology is not a silver bullet to solve the problem of inequities in access and learning, it has huge potential for changing how teaching and learning is delivered in India, if employed in a systemic and inclusive way, empowering teachers, frontline workers, children and adolescents and increasing access to and quality of learning. Currently around one-third of the 2.6 million secondary schools in India have ICT labs and a functional computer. Universal access to technology in homes is yet a dream in tribal belts, interior locations, rural areas, and amongst children with disabilities. Children with poor or no access to technology face most challenges in continuing to learn. There is disproportional access to the internet across state, further extending into the rural-urban schism, where 13 per cent people of over five years of age in rural areas can use the internet against 37 per cent in urban areas. Additionally, the digital dichotomy extends to the access to hardware and devices where the poorest students and marginalised communities, including girls, do not have access to smartphones, and even if they do, internet connectivity remains poor. The main area of UNICEF engagement and support is elementary education especially early

grades and the transition to secondary education. As schools remain closed and children learn remotely, UNICEF will engage with state government for expanding access to remote learning options. UNICEF will support the expanded use of technology and the use of online systems to improve governance in education, enhance capacity of teachers, teacher support systems, other education functionaries and participation of children for enhanced learning and skills development. But at the same time recognizing that quality learning requires quality teachers and teaching. Implementation of the National Education Policy being a priority UNICEF will provide technical support at national and state level in the key areas related to curriculum revision, learning assessment and reporting, foundational learning, life skills and career guidance.[20]

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Quality education is defined as one that focuses on the learner to prepare them for life, not just for assessments. It demands a shift in focus from the learner's gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and geographical location to their social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive development. This means that quality education doesn't just refer to the course material, but to the approach and intention of the teaching. In 2012, the United Nations listed quality education as one of their Sustainable Development Goals for the first time. Quality education shouldn't be a new concept because, shouldn't all educational bodies be focused on the needs and development of learners rather than their profiles? Unfortunately, this isn't always the case. Now more than ever, there is a need for quality education to remove biases and offer fair opportunities to all learners. Helping learners will also help communities and societies prosper. In such a racially and culturally diverse world we live in today, quality education needs to be commonplace, fast. For schools and educators, quality education will allow you to better align and integrate with communities. [19]

With technology changing the world of education, there are more opportunities for students, but not equal opportunities for all students. Quality education and its methods can help educators to bridge the gap between technology and student financing. Does this mean that underdeveloped or developing countries will have no use for quality education. No. In fact, there's reason to believe that poorer countries may benefit most from quality education. With 57 million children out of school, there is a pressing need for governments and societies to prioritise quality education. This will push them to fulfil education funding commitments, help all children to meet school entry requirements and provide a safe learning environment for every learner. Globally, more boys than girls have access to primary education. While most countries have gender parity in primary education, gender bias against girls still exists in some parts of the world, particularly in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. There were three per cent fewer girls than boys who enrolled in primary school. Although that may sound like a small percentage, it accounts for millions of young girls. On a larger scale, 103 million youth worldwide are still illiterate, with women making up more than 60 per cent. Aside from education, hundreds of millions of children worldwide rely on school meals and will have to look for an alternative source of food if they are unable to stay in school. Quality education aims to even out the playing field and make primary education available to all. By raising the standards for educators and doing regular training, educational institutions can upskill teachers and provide quality educators to all learners. This may require more resources, so it is important to access and prioritise school funding to make sure students and teachers alike are getting what they need. [20]

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