



# Quality Education Process: Comprehensive Study of Higher Education Quality Aspects

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**Abstract:** Alvin Toffler- The associate editor of Fortune magazine has rightly said that the illiterates of the 20th century are not those who cannot read & write but those who cannot learn, unlearn & relearn. There are so many issues widely discussed in global education like students' enrollment issue, literacy rate, girl child education, skill development, infrastructure, technology etc. There are many higher education issues widely discussed in globe, but still quality has remained top instrument to tackle all the issues. Country like South Korea has proved that having excellent quality education transformed their economy into 12th largest in the world. This study, based on secondary data investigate many aspects such as quality syllabus up gradation, market orientation, teaching methods, technology, quality research work, vision of management, adequate resources etc. various case studies mentioned in the paper helps the stakeholders to improve quality further.

**Keywords:** Quality, correlation, Technical & Industrial skills, Quality standards, Continuous Process.

## I. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hence quality in higher education has been widely discussed & debated issue all over the world. There has been lot of contribution by many journals, Articles, research papers, University rating agencies etc. We have filtered some the contribution as a part of our review of literature given below.

1	Roadmap for Educational Innovation in Institutions of Higher Learning: Towards Inter-University Centre for Innovation by Prof. Anil k. Gupta, W.P. No.2012-06-01, June- 2012	The research paper discussed about technology & social media can create quality in classroom.
2	Inclusive Education & market Economy by Dr. Sapna Tejwani & Dr. Joan Silvia Thomas, Article Published in QUEST Journal, ISSN 0976-3317.	The research indicates how quality aspects can be connected with outside market economy.
3	International Initiatives in Assessment of quality & accreditation in higher education by Dr. MM Gandhi, Research India Publication, ISSN 2249-3093 volume-3.	The research discussed about various quality indicators prevailing all around the world.
4	UNESCO report on Guidelines for Quality Provisioning Cross-border Higher Education, 2005	The research indicates the cross border education can create sustainable quality.
5	A Study of Influential Factor on Quality of Education By Mohammed Abaalkhail & Zahir Irani, International Journal of Humanities & Applied Science (IJHAS) Vol. 1.No.3, 2012 ISSN2277-4386.	The paper investigates the major influential factors on quality of education in general from the British academician perspective

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This research paper has the following objectives:

1. Nature & significance of quality education for sustainable growth of a nation.
2. Defining the quality of education
3. Examining the important quality indicators.
4. Factors impacting on the quality of higher education.
5. Identifying the best quality practices as a part of recommendations.

## III. NATURE & SIGNIFICANCE OF QUALITY EDUCATION

If a country makes a lot of investment in literacy rate growth, infrastructure, technology, capacity building but if quality aspect is not given the top priority then all above investment will automatically be abolished. The developed countries like Japan, USA, and UK have direct correlation between the powers of their economy with excellent quality education system. Not just developed country but also developing country has shown the same caliber.

**Case study: South Korea - Correlating significance of quality education with economic progress.**

If we consider the developing countries, South Korea is one of the best examples where quality education has made them poor to the 12th largest economy in the world today. In 1940, Korea got freedom from Japan. After independence the war between South & North Korea broke out. It made both the countries poor. Poverty was at the peak having too much unemployment prevailing in the country. South Korea has a Literacy rate was nearly 22%. South Korea's development over the last half century has been nothing short of spectacular. Fifty years ago, the country was poorer than Bolivia and Mozambique; today, it is richer than New Zealand and Spain, with a per capita income of almost \$23, 000 [1]. The fundamental reason was only quality education with other aspects. The old generation of the country decided to focus on quality education for their child and made a lot of investment on education, they used to have skill oriented education with null physical infrastructure. They focused on technical aspects like steel industry, electronics, automobiles etc. After constant efforts on education, infrastructure etc, Korea was able to achieve 9% GDP growth for 30 years constantly [2]. Here we would like to conclude that for achieving substantial growth & transforming economy into world's top economy, fundamental reforms was only education. Hence the education system should be well directed towards the qualitative aspects.

There are many accreditation bodies that have made contribution in this field. In Japan, National Institute of Academic Degrees & University Evaluation (NIAD-UE), in Europe, Standards & Guidelines for quality assurance (International co-operation in higher education & training), in India, National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC) have provided various levels of guidelines for developing quality assurance. Most of these bodies follow process which shows identifying quality criteria, implementation, monitoring, evaluation & feedback. Hence, quality is complex to understand in nature since each institute, courses, university & other bodies have made relevant contribution yet there is no single standard universally. Designing & implementation are also very dynamic in nature. It is a continuous process, which needs to be monitored time to time to improve its effectiveness.

**IV. DEFINING QUALITY**

What does quality mean in the context of education? Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993). Considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today, however. 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, numeracy 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-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;
- Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. [12]

As we said before, there are so many issues and aspects of education widely discussed in the education world. But quality in education has become the most critical issue in the education world today. Many schools, institutes & universities have their own set of quality standards though there are no universal standards or definition of quality. We define the quality of education as:

- Learning attitude towards education
- Education values which are directed towards specific object
- It should contribute the value to the society

**V. INDICATORS/STANDARDS TO DETERMINE QUALITY EDUCATION**

There are many indicators/standards used for quality measurement, but it has no universal system prevailing in the world. Since courses, curriculum, institutes, university, regulatory bodies etc does change often. So determining the general quality criteria is the best way to guide policy makers. However we have gone through the best institutes, journals, agencies who have made significant contribution in this field. Based on our analysis, we have classified quality indicators into two broad categories. First, traditional quality systems and second, Modern quality system. The Modern quality system has been further divided into two parts, one is process/method orientation & second, result orientation.

**Traditional Approach:****Case study: "Gurukul system" prevailing in 19th century in India.**

If we want to understand quality precisely, we must go back to the older "Gurukul system". In Feb. 2, 1835 Lord William Adams presented full details about indigenous education system in British Parliament (source-William Adams report house of command/Hansard/British Parliament). It was stated that India is having almost null poverty and unemployment due to excellent quality education pillars prevailing in the country. The report further assessed that 7, 32,000 revenue villages existed containing gurukul in each having strength ranging between 200 to 20,000. The education system was highly inclusive since there was no bias in terms of gender, caste and region with respect to education. As a result there was almost more than 90% of literacy rate. The way of teaching was quite efficient as they were taught a single subject for almost a year. So by the age of 21 to 22 starting



from the age of 5, they learn almost 18 subjects effectively. Each senior student used to teach their junior students as a part of learning program while faculty of gurukul has to go through special training centre built inside the gurukul. The orientation was more towards knowledge and learning rather than just information and results as it was highly emphasized towards innovations, Practice projects, and entrepreneurship. It's surprise for many educationists that funding was not a big issue at that point of time since their innovations used to produce lots of funds automatically. Also their innovations contributed to the society which even exists today. Choice based subject system was also existed but it was well directed [8].

#### ***Case study: Finland- Reflection of best quality education practices***

In a recent analysis of educational reform policies in Finland, in 1970s Finland has changed its traditional education system into a model of a modern, publicly financed education system with widespread equity, good quality, and large participation – all of these at reasonable cost. In addition to the gains in measured achievement, there have been huge gains in educational attainment at the upper secondary and college levels. More than 99 percent of students now successfully complete compulsory basic education, and about 90 percent complete upper secondary school. Two-thirds of these graduates enroll in universities or professionally oriented polytechnic schools. And over 50 percent of the Finnish adult population participates in adult-education programs. Ninety-eight percent of the costs of education at all levels are covered by government, rather than by private sources. [13]

No single thing can explain Finland's outstanding educational performance. However, most analysts observe that excellent teachers play a critical role. Among the successful practices that we can take from Finland are:

- The development of rigorous, research based teacher education programs that prepare teachers in content, pedagogy, and educational theory, as well as the capacity to do their own research, and that include field work mentored by expert veterans;
- Significant financial support for teacher education, professional development, reasonable and equitable salaries, and supportive working conditions;
- The creation of a respected profession in which teachers have considerable authorities and autonomy, including responsibility for curriculum design and student assessment, which engages them in the ongoing analysis and refinement of practice.
- There are no external standardized tests used to rank students or schools in Finland, and most teacher feedback to students is in narrative form. The focus is on using information to drive learning and problem solving.

#### ***Discussion of various Standards from above case***

1. Identifying new approaches towards examination, inclusion of practical exposure, skills development rather than result oriented exams.
2. Focusing on choice based credit system.
3. Ideas, patents, research work, class room Innovations for Self fund generation capabilities.
4. Directed towards external changes in environment.
5. Social contribution
6. Content organized in a limited number of subjects

#### ***Connecting it to the present scenario in India.***

The government of India is highly focused towards 'Make in India' campaign. Since India's raising population & unemployment amongst youth is very critical. According to the census of 2011, 65% of the population in India is below 25 year age. We have massive job employment requirement & low employment rate prevailing in the country. The best solution to tackle this issue is to build more & more SMEs, culture of entrepreneurship. Also we need huge funding to build our education system in respect to accessibility, quality, and technology etc. our institutes, universities, & other stakeholders can stand by their own feet by learning gurukul system in many aspects. Also India can solve many core issues such as poverty, unemployment, growth etc. Hence Education is best instrument to achieve superior growth.

#### ***Mini Case study: Recent E-Commerce boom in India, Snapdeal.com***

Recently emergence of E-Commerce in India can't be ignored. Kunal bahl, founder & CEO of Snapdeal.com has said that India is a natural entrepreneurs hub. If we consider a case of an uneducated & handicapped household lady of 63 years started to use snapdeal platform via phone application. She got business ideas & started to sell sarees online with null employment. Within few months she used to have RS 15 lakh turnover having RS 5 lakh net profit. She only manages inventory online. There are 10 lakh upcoming entrepreneurs are expected by his company for next 5-7 years (Khas Mulakat, Nov 1, 2014). In our opinion, academics can learn lot from this study since classroom innovations can make entity self reliance in terms of funds, skill development, quality assurance initiatives, further career assistance to students etc [9].

## **VI. MODERN QUALITY PARAMETERS**

### ***A. Process/method oriented***

*Curricular aspects* (NAAC, India) - It includes syllabus design, Curricular enrichment & up gradation, feedback system etc. Hence it's advisable to connect syllabus with external environment changes such as Industry review, practice studies etc.



*Teaching- learning evaluation* (NAAC, India) - it includes the teaching methods, teacher quality, learning, student enrollment & profile etc.

*Governance, Leadership & management* (NAAC, India) – it includes managements vision for quality, internal quality assurance system, teacher empowerment strategies etc.

*Research, Innovations & consultancy* (NAAC, India) - It includes research papers, classroom innovations by students & faculties, Knowledge consultancy with external bodies like industry, government or non-government organizations.

*Technology orientation*- It has been said that in the 21st century, technology will never be replaced but those teachers will be replaced automatically who are not using technology. Hence technology plays vital role when it comes to accessibility of education. Access of education & quality has remained two sides of coin in the past anywhere in the world. But technology can be used to narrow the gap amongst two.

## **B. Result orientation**

CWUR uses eight objective and robust indicators to rank the world's top 1000 universities [10].

1. *Quality of Education*, measured by the number of a university's alumni who have won major international awards, prizes, and medals relative to the university's size
2. *Alumni Employment*, measured by the number of a university's alumni who currently hold CEO positions at the world's top companies relative to the university's size
3. *Quality of Faculty*, measured by the number of academics who have won major international awards, prizes, and medals
4. *Publications*, measured by the number of research papers appearing in reputable journals
5. *Influence*, measured by the number of research papers appearing in highly-influential journals
6. *Citations*, measured by the number of highly-cited research papers
7. *Patents*, measured by the number of international patent filings

## **VII. BASIC FACTORS AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **a. Maintaining the value by identifying the correct equilibrium:**

Most of the time developing countries face a problem of quality when they concern more on accessibility. The educationist needs to understand the concept of marginal capacity of expansion. We believe that additional capacity should not be exceeded to the ratio of additional population of students. In simple words, there has to be an additional strength of students as compared to the additional capacity building. A country like Japan has been following this criterion since many years. Because, equilibrium which offers less students with more capacity deteriorates not just the quality of specific course but also hampers the investment value. Also policy makers should not restrict choice of subjects or courses since it also affects quality at greater extent. So, the identification of correct equilibrium is extremely important which must enable the parameters such as accessibility, quality, and value.

Hence disequilibrium causes problems such as

- More examination & degree centric students
- It builds inadequacy in the education system which means few institutes, college or universities become world class while most of the other remains poor quality in many aspects.
- Consequently it reduces the value of teachers, course, institute or university which further impacts the nation deeply.

### **b. Failure of primary education:**

The government is trying to improve the literacy rate of their respective country; however developing countries do focus more on access of education. Hence the accessibility & quality have become two sides of coin. Countries like India & Africa are losing ground on quality assurance aspects due to more weightage towards accessibility. The current policy of primary education of India i.e. passing every students up to 8th standards has also raised many questions against quality aspects. The ASER 2012 report indicated that in 2008, only about 50% of the Standard 3 students could read a Standard 1 text in rural area [3]. There are so many articles which have shown concern on primary education in India [4]. Now when these students go for higher education, they find difficulty in terms of language, course adoptability parameters, so they either become degree oriented or they leave the education.

**Recommendations**- Hence technology can break the gap between accessibility & quality assurance. Broadband connection & digitalization process can help to tackle this issue. More privatization can also be a solution.

### **c. Investment:**

Education should not be considered as a cost to the nation but it's a fruitful investment. The responsibility of financing higher education is shared by both public and private sector. Even in public sector it is a joint responsibility of Central/Federal government as well as State government. If we consider the case of India, being a developing economy, amongst competing governmental priorities higher education is treated as a "merit 2 good". About 80 per cent of the public higher education funding has been sourced from State governments and about 20 per cent from the Centre government. Of the 80 per cent State government funding about 82 per cent goes in non-plan expenditure, i.e. routine administration and maintenance and hardly in capacity building [5].



**Table-1**  
**Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP for all levels of education**

Name of the country	Average % of GDP on Education	Year
South Korea	5	1980-2008
United States	6	1980- 2008
United Kingdom	5	1980-2008
Japan	5	1980-2008
India	3	1980-2008
Finland	6	1980-2012

[14]

Research in higher education institutions is at its lowest ebb due to an inadequate and diminishing financial support for higher education from the government and from society. Many colleges established in rural areas are non-viable, under enrolled and have extremely poor infrastructure and facilities with just a few teachers. Due to the limited funds, the institutions cannot afford enough number of qualified teachers or not able to pay remunerable amount to the deserving faculties.

There are so many people in various parts of various countries which are still out of reach. Government need to rethink on these areas to implement more on the policies. Money plays a vital role for the education system which needs to unique for all globally recognized syllabus and curricula.

**Recommendations** – The debate of less or more fund is not just enough but how to utilize available fund effectively is more important.

- The focus should be more on classroom innovations, patent development, internal fund development initiatives, industry- academia interface etc.
- There is difference between maintenance and development of educational organization. Management's orientation should be more towards development. Hence entity should move towards the self reliance approach & branding.
- Entity should build more skill & Industry orientated courses.

#### **d. Quality of teachers:**

Teachers are fundamental aspect of assuring quality by any means. The compromise on lack of qualified faculties may further damage the internal quality system. Teaching professions have never been an attractive career since lack of monetary aspects not attached compared to other professions. Many countries pay lip-service to the importance of attracting and retaining a high-quality teacher force, but few have pursued this goal as single-mindedly as Finland. Finland has managed to make teaching the single most desirable career choice among young Finns through a combination of raising the bar for entry into the profession and granting teachers greater autonomy and control over their classrooms and working conditions than their peers enjoy elsewhere. Consequently, teaching is now a highly selective occupation in Finland, with highly-skilled well trained teachers spread throughout the country. The quality of the teaching force seems very likely to be the major factor that accounts for the high level of consistent performance across Finnish schools.

Also brainwashing in domestic level reduces the framework. In backward area, teachers do not prefer to take up jobs compared to urban areas.

**Recommendations** – Government should make education profession more attractive in terms of more monetary incentives. More benefits should be provided to those teachers who work in backward areas.

- Motivate those professionals who are really passionate for educational field.

#### **e. Connecting & Upgrading quality assurance**

World is changing fast in the era of 21st technological century. Industries are also changing rapidly. So it's advisable to continue up gradation of education system with rapid pace in terms of curriculum, technology, skill development etc. Hence if we talk about booming country like India, there are big opportunities in the sectors like tourism, manufacturing as a part of 'Make in India' program, retail sectors, digitalization etc. These new themes can be well connected with new courses developments, classroom innovations, industry-academia tie ups etc.

### **VIII. SUGGESTIONS**

- Phill Fisher, the famous investment consultant, has rightly said that in evaluating organization, the management is 90%, industry is 9% and other factors are 1%. Management has to give the top priority to quality and for that they have to build leaders and create teams to achieve high standards of quality. For achieving excellence in quality, management needs clear vision, connecting internal quality assurance with external environment, continuous monitoring & follow up. Management should have entrepreneurship approach towards education. Kerry Walton the granddaughter of Sam Walton, the founder of Wall mart has started a new trend in school education in US and she has set the best example of entrepreneurship in US. [6]
- Create specialized training centre for teachers to be more competitive as they join institute or university. Skill development cell is also best way creating platform where industry-academia interface can be done. Teachers &



students both must be part of these learning initiatives. Sometimes bureaucratic structure does not allow implementing such ideas.

- Considering funds as an investment instead of expense. Hence education must focus to be more efficient in terms of finance. If we look at Gurukul system closely, the finance was generated inside by students & faculty having excellent innovation capacity. Even after passing out students used to get fund for new start ups. We conclude that in long run education entity needs to become more efficient & self reliance by adopting similar approaches. For Instant Many private universities provide such environment to students & faculties to create new patents, innovation corporate consultancy, social initiatives which help them to build more funds. If faculties & students connect with external opportunities with their learning, positive outcome can be achieved at greater extent.
- The method of teaching must enhance towards knowledge orientation rather than information orientation.
- Rethink on implementation of existing primary education policies such as right to education.
- Maintaining the balance between accessibility and quality of education by identifying correct equilibrium.
- Create learning environment or culture rather than degree orientation approach, we also suggest to decrease examinations at higher education as a part of student assessment, From Gurukul case we believe there should be practice projects & research orientation. Assessment should be based on how skillfully student has done work rather than what is outcome of assignment.
- Invest in quality resources such as various technology & digitalization.
- According to Prof Anil Gupta, the faculty of IIM-A, given the widespread popularity of social media, it is amazing that not many academics have used it to teach beyond the class and learn from the students beyond the walls. As experimented by posing questions on Face Book and LinkedIn and have found very interesting quality and quantity of response, sometimes this response help me to moderate my class even better. It will be useful to create social media platforms for generating learning opportunities.
- Online courses have become a powerful way of democratizing knowledge. Some of the leading universities have been offering courses online mobilizing thousands of students from more than hundred countries. In mid 90's when World Wide Web was not around the way we know it and one has to use FTP to transfer files, Prof Anil Gupta, the faculty of IIM-A, had taught an online course on which a doctoral student from Cornell University did the research[11]. He had students of all ages from northern America to Pacific and extremely experience professional to young people. We must encourage faculty members teaching more and more course online. In some cases, even if institutional certificates cannot be given, faculty should be empowered to issue a personal certificate depending upon the performance of the students and their proficiency. Courseera, Udacity and MITX (MOOC-Massive Open Online Course) are some of the initiatives which are going to transform the educational environment around the world. India cannot lag behind. We must encourage all institutions of excellence to put all the content of their courses in multiple formats online.
- Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) should be developed further.
- There is a need of increasing awareness for better counseling. The students who are confused choosing their course or are unaware of the courses should get a counselor to help.
- When things come to implementation, the bureaucratic structure creates the bottlenecks to the system.
- Cross broader education system should be promoted to capture global opportunities. [7]

## IX. CONCLUSION

Quality is a continuous process, it must planned, monitor, implement & follow up. One has to understand the dynamics of quality & prevailing system. There is no reliability on any quality assurance program but policy maker needs broader ideas & comprehensive analysis of the subject to identify the proper system. The paper can help to shape internal quality assurance system for policy makers. Also it helps them to find correct approach towards quality education. Highly qualitative systems not just bring sustainable economic growth but also create superior values in the society.

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