# QUALITY IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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**Abstract**

A quality education is one that focuses on the whole child - 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, not just for testing. *It is believed that education leads to empowerment: a process of strengthening individuals, organisations and communities so they get more control over their own situations and environments. Quality education is a crucial factor in combating poverty and inequality in society. Teachers are at the heart of quality education. Schools should have a sufficient number of trained teachers, receiving good quality pre-service and in-service training with built-in components on gender sensitivity, non-discrimination, and human rights. All teachers should be paid domestically competitive salaries. Quality determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits. It is the teaching and learning process that brings the curriculum to life, which determines what, happens in the classroom and subsequently the quality of the learning outcomes.*

*Keywords: Education, Quality Education, Teacher, Students, Primary and Secondary Schools*

## Introduction

Today in the modern time of science and technology especially computer & Mobile with internet facility, it is very difficult to strict to the measures of quality in education. The generation which has seen the orthodox family structure and the generation of present time have different ways of looking into the situation and have different living style of their life. Both the generations have to understand the narrow line of difference between education and quality education.

According to UNICEF

 "A quality education is defined by five elements: the learner's outside experiences, learning environment, content of education, learning processes, and education outcomes. Learners must be healthy, well-nourished and supported by their families and communities. The learning environment should be safe, healthy and stimulating. Appropriate education content

is relevant to the learner and presented in a well-managed classroom. Learning outcomes should meet promote participation in society".

According to VVOB's  (An NGO) Definition of Quality Education

"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."

**What is quality education?**

Quality education is not an easy concept to qualify. At a time when we are discussing a quality education for all our learners it is important to take time to understand this concept.

"What are considered to be the basic requirements of a quality education - one that is meaningful, worthwhile, and responsive to individuals and social needs - and does each and every student, without fail get those requirements.

Two principles characterise most attempts to define quality in education: the first identifies learners' cognitive development as the major explicit objective of all education systems. The second emphasises education's role in promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and in nurturing creative and emotional development.

Quality determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits. It emphasises the need of a stimulating pedagogy. It is the teaching and learning process that brings the curriculum to life, which determines what, happens in the classroom and subsequently the quality of the learning outcomes.

In the following lines some quality issues are mentioned which directly impact on teaching and learning:

1. Relevant aims: Policy dialogue must arrive at a relevant balanced set of aims describing what learners should learn and why; the development of cognitive, creative and social skills and values; respect for human rights, the environment, peace and tolerance and cultural diversity. These put citizenship, democracy and human rights at the fore.

2. Subject balance: how subjects are defined, how many are taught and the time allocated to each.

3. Good use of time: Positive correlations are noted between instruction time and student achievement at both primary and secondary levels. Between 850 and 1,000 effective hours (not necessarily official hours) of schooling per year is broadly agreed as a benchmark.

4. Pedagogic approaches for better learning: Child-centered active pedagogy, cooperative learning and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills need to be present.

5. Language policy: Language of instruction is a policy choice affecting curriculum, content and pedagogy. A balance needs to be struck between enabling people to use local languages in learning and ensuring that they have access to global languages.

6. Learning from assessment: Regular, reliable, timely assessment is a key to improving learning achievement. The goals are to give learners feedback and improve learning and teaching practices. Formative assessment is needed as a complement to formal examinations.

How can we provide quality education? A detailed answer to this question is beyond the brief of this short article.

**Common Quality Issues in Education**

The education system from the highest levels of government right down to the classroom needs to deliver the knowledge and skills that students need, and to respond as those needs change.

Quality tools and processes can help in checking and maintain the quality in education system. Some starting points such as

a) **Accountability.** Methods are needed to judge the performance of processes within the system. Accountability means establishing: (i) A systematic method to assure stakeholders (educators, policy-makers and the public) that schools are producing desired results. (ii) Common elements that are applied to all participants. These should include clear goals, progress indicators and measures, analysis of data, reporting procedures and help for participants not meeting goals, and consequences and sanctions. From accountability methods, the need for continuous improvement can become clear.

b) **Alignment.** A curriculum must match relevant testing programs, evaluation measures and requirements.

**Centre view:** Student requirements have been determined by the central/state government in the RTE act. Annual progress is needed to meet proficiency standards for all students mandated by 2013-14. This accountability system is based primarily on assessments, but also can include other reliable and valid indicators, such as graduation rates from high

school. Academic Achievement Standards are the goals and report cards are the reporting procedures. Seeks to ensure that students are performing at grade level.

**State view:** State criteria and assessments are in place and are responsible for ensuring:

The criterion or standard of performance is communicated clearly to local agencies, districts and schools. Students are performing at grade level.

**District view:** District standards and assessments need to be in place to ensure:

Schools have measurable objectives, intermediate goals and a collection of baseline data. What they are asking of the students aligns with the criteria or standards of performance. The criteria or standards of performance are communicated clearly to the schools and students. Students are performing at grade level.

**School view:** Principals and teachers translate district standards into student-friendly language and effective teaching and learning. Through achievement, aptitude or competency tests they:

Create a common assessment based on standards for all students around certain areas of the curriculum. Ensure students are performing at grade level.

**Grade, classroom and student view:** Teachers of individual grades and classes work with criteria and assessments from higher levels to ensure that students are performing at grade level and provide additional assistance/service to students who are not.

c) **Assessment.** Schools need measures for assessing how well students are doing. These measures should incorporate feedback from students, parents, the community and other stakeholders.

Types of assessment include: **External assessment**, such as state or district tests, communicates what the state or district considers important to teach and learn in school. **Classroom assessment**, the day-to-day assessment of students by teachers in the classroom, communicates to students and parents what the school and teacher value in student performance. **Alternative assessments** are not typical standardized tests. Instead, they involve practices such as demonstrating a skill, answering open-ended questions, assembling portfolios of work and instructor observation of students.

d) **Student requirements.** Businesses speak of "customer requirements" what it takes to satisfy the people who consume the product or service being offered. Some of the same methods for achieving customer satisfaction in the business world apply in education as well.

Organizations offering more resources for accountability, assessment, alignment, and student requirements:

- **The American Association of School Administrators**, a 13,000-member organization for educational leaders.
- **The National Education Association**, an organization of 2.7 million members at every level in education, from pre-school to graduate programs.
- **The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory**, dedicated to providing high-quality, research-based resources to educators and policymakers, particularly in Midwestern states. See for example the NCREL report **Skills and Competencies Needed to Succeed in Today's Workplace.**

**UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Quality Education:**

Last September, the United Nations (UN) ratified 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to serve as benchmarks for every nation to ensure global prosperity, protection of the planet, and an eradication of poverty.

Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations Goal 4 of the SDGs was a unique goal focused purely on education. This is the first time such a standalone education goal has been set and ratified.

Goal 4 of Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning.

The call for a Quality Education - not merely access to any education is a grand step in ensuring that all children and not just those from high-income countries have a quality education.

But what do we mean by a quality education?

There are some who argue that the threshold of quality education is met by focusing only on literacy and numeracy, but the SDGs are recognition that this definition is insufficient and outdated. Education is not simply a content delivery system; rather, it is a system designed to help all children reach their full potential and enter society as full and productive citizens. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon set the SDG process in motion in 2012 by declaring that every child must be in school, and the quality of those schools must improve so that students are prepared to be productive citizens, ready to lead the future.

Education must fully assume its central role in helping people to forge more just, peaceful and tolerant societies.

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations: We must make sure that what comes out of the indicator roundtables taking place in 2016 defines and addresses the term Quality Education.

Too many times, we have seen the meaning of words be adjusted, stripped, diluted, or subjected to complete metamorphoses. Words and phrases like accountability and data driven have had their well-intentioned and appropriate meanings changed. Accountability is now code for teacher evaluations linked to student academic achievement, while data driven too often equates to test scores only.

The meaning of a Quality Education is one that is pedagogically and developmentally sound and educates the student in becoming an active and productive member of the society. A Quality Education is not one that is measured purely by a test score or by how many words per minute a 5-year-old can read. To hark back to these simplified measurements is to do a disservice to both the student and the phrase Quality Education itself.

A quality education is one that focuses on the whole child - 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, not just for testing.

A quality education provides resources and directs policy to ensure that each child enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle; learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults; is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community; has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults; and is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

A quality education provides the outcomes needed for individuals, communities, and societies to prosper. It allows schools to align and integrate fully with their communities and access a range of services across sectors designed to support the educational development of their students.

A quality education is supported by three key pillars: ensuring access to quality teachers; providing use of quality learning tools and professional development; and the establishment of safe and supportive quality learning environments.

The statement also describes the current state of education in the world and calls on educators to promote a whole child approach to education:

The SDGs reflect a global consensus in our young century that education is a human right and a public good that is critical to the health and future of the world. But ours is a world of severe challenges, with millions of students under fire, unsettled and unschooled due to conflict and governments globally failing to meet their funding commitments to education, especially with regard to their poorest citizens. Education advocates have a responsibility to

promote policies that integrate schools, communities, and nations into a system that supports development of the whole child, ensuring that each student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

**Conclusion**

We must make sure that a Quality Education is just that - an education that serves each child pedagogically and developmentally. An education that which is inclusive and is structured to realize the potential of each child regardless of location or economic status. Don't let the words change their meaning 'a quality education is needed for all'.

Quality education provides the foundation for equity in society Available freely to all citizens from early childhood into adulthood. Quality education is a human right and a public good. Quality education is one of the most basic public services. It not only enlightens but also empowers citizens and enables them to contribute to the maximum extent possible to the social and economic development of their communities.

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