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## **FAST GROWING INDIA STANDS IN THE BACK LINE OF QUALITY EDUCATION Why, Why and Why ...**

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Quality education is a holistic development of children in which they are equipped with the right mix of Attitude, Skill and Knowledge for the future, coupled with values which are enriched with content, reflective of the real world, so as to generate the right set of learning outcomes. The two pillars of Quality education are good teachers and a conducive learning environment. The challenge is teaching children who come from various backgrounds with various preconceived notions and measurement of quality education.

In today's context what does "Quality Education" mean? All the schools and colleges including other educational institutions are running after marks with a capital "M" in their examinations as the measure of "Quality Education". Some National level Education Boards are awarding up to 99.8% as the overall average percentage for the examination. In a year or two it may touch 100%. Hence children will indirectly state "we can do no wrong in examination even in language subjects we are better than the text books". Does this give us a true assessment of the quality in our education system?

Swami Vivekananda has defined Education as "Education is the manifestation of perfection already in men." Our existing education system neglects co-scholastic aspect of education and does not enable a person to stand on his own feet nor teaches self-confidence, self-respect, morals and values. These intangible qualities are never assessed in measurable terms like marks. Scoring higher marks increases unhealthy /unwanted competitions amongst students, parents, relatives and even institutions. They

forget their social, moral responsibilities and values required to produce a good human being. Every stakeholder is running after the monetary outcomes of education in terms of securing a high paying service in the private sector or Government sector. An outcome of this rat race has also been for industry unable to find the right persons with the right skill sets required for the designated jobs. Most of the time would then be spent by industry to develop the skill sets of hired employees with on job training. The unhired crop of students would just add up to the already large number of unemployment pool of India.

Govt. of India started realising the needs for vocational training, skill based education and soft skills etc. now has been mushrooming in the form of a separate department whose focus has been to develop employable skills sets for the growing youth of our country. Half of its population is under the age of twenty five. In a recent survey India is likely to have the world's largest workforce by 2027, with a billion people . As per information available on the official website of the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) in May 2018 , there are currently nearly 31 million unemployed Indians looking for jobs. India's literacy rate is 74% way below the world average of 84%. The basic definition of literacy is having the ability to read and write. India is home of largest population of illiterate adults in world accounting for 37% of the global total. India is ranked 123rd out of 135 countries in female literacy rate.

Are the initiatives made by the government to make this workforce employable? This is where we can say the steps taken are very small compared to the demand that we are looking at. Is our schools ensuring quality education are being provided to our children who will be the nucleus of the workforce in the next ten years? Our Secondary education is the base for the youth of tomorrow since till secondary education there is very little specialization and all children study and assessed with the same paint brush.

CBSE initiated the curriculum for Holistic Development of a child in school level in 2009 in the form of **Continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE)** but it was not implemented as per its real needs. It had been misused by so-called stake holders in the form of ensuring A1 grade or CGPA 10 for its students. The idea of all Formative assessment and one Summative assessment in the ratio of 30:70 (30% external examination and 70% school based internal examination) being under the schools internal marking and only 30% being left to Secondary Board exam for third party evaluation left blackboard wide open for schools to match up to "Quality Education" in their schools . Thus, in 2018 as a part of the HRD ministries change in policy , we are now back to the old pattern of secondary examination in the form of 80:20 (80% external examination and 20% school based internal examination) after much debate from all stakeholders . Hence we are back to square one and are again focussing upon only the so called academic /scholastic development based upon rote learning and ability to recall and pour out answers in a three hour examination which will determine how intelligent we are.

If we are to diagnose Quality in education then it means a child should focus on overall/ wholesome development altogether. A child should get the opportunity, should be promoted to explore his/her inner potentials according to his/her own interest. The traditional theory of intelligence has helped create a mind-set or paradigm as to what "smart" or "intelligent" is, who has potential or ability to be smart, and how we can or cannot become smart. This has clearly influenced current educational practices. It is still common educational practice to use the score from standardized intelligence tests to qualify children for various special programs. Supporting the new paradigm of intelligence, Howard Gardner of Project Zero at Harvard University has determined that intelligence is a pluralistic phenomenon, rather than a static structure with a single type of intelligence. According to Gardner's theory, one form of intelligence is not better than another; they are equally valuable and viable.

Children need to be exposed to learning of Life skills, values and morals . They are to be exposed to the relationships, nature and its events, surrounding of them through not only in their mother tongue but it should be trilingual approaches (mother tongue, Hindi and English). We are to set up a flexible curriculum based on observation, play and relationship up to the age of 5+ without focussing upon only the books and writing . Once they are able to identifying objects/things, events happening in around , effective verbal communication from grass root level and gradually they will be entering to the framed curriculum from standard one at the age of 6 +. In this way , the base of the students and the entire education system will be quite meaningful and purposeful. Within the age of 6yrs, children will communicate in three languages without creating any pressure on writing skill. First they will be exposed in listening and speaking skills to mother tongue at home by parents then in collaboration with teachers in Hindi and English. During this period of three years they should be 1) Picture Smart 2) Letter Smart 3) Colour Smart 4) Number Smart 5) Sound Smart 6) Nature Smart 7) People Smart which will help them to be Smart in i) Words ii) Body iii) Vision iv) Direction v) Life vi) Value and vii) Self. All those Smartness are related to Multiple Intelligences like Linguistic, Emotional, Creative, Spatial, Navigational, Naturalist, Logical, Musical, Intuitive, Sensory, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal and Existential.

Often we talk about multiple intelligences of the children but fail to understand and helps the children to explore & expose towards it in a planned way. At the age of 1+ yr parents are pressurising children to learn Rhymes which they can't see, touch, feel and involve . For example: Twinkle twinkle little star....., BAA BAA BLACK SHIP.....One, two buckle my shoe ....., Machli jal ki rani hai..... and many more. All those are the common practices throughout the country without considering the interest, involvement In this. Students might be scoring 100% marks or highest most grades in examinations but fail to underscore and in later life correlate with the situations . Finally, the teaching learning process confines into QUANTIFYING THE EDUCATION system. For Example, a child of 1+yr is able to operate our smart phone today just by observing minutely without any extra efforts because they are well exposed to it by their parents . They say 'Maa' just because they listen to it

and feels the warmth of mother. I do believe that our education system is just imposing or promoting Rote Learning only. As a result, students become alienated not only from curriculum, institutions, relationships, society but also from themselves. The proper coordination amongst Play, Relationship, Interest, Intelligence, Day to day Activities, Academics, Core Values, Life skills etc. will lead towards “QUALITY IN EDUCATION”.

How to achieve it ? Parents are the first stake holders so they are to initiate the process with a very positive mindset and good practices in their day to day activities which will inculcate values in the newly born baby. Present technology claims that if a mother is in rigorous and uncontrolled usage of electronic gadgets during Pregnancy, baby may born with CWSN category like Autistic, ADHD, Dyslexic etc. So teaching learning process of Values start from the beginning and it continues as a part of Quality Education. For quality education, well combination of 3 H’s (Head, Heart & Hand ) will be required at every stage of learning. Let children learn with their interests & choices not by chance. So, they will enjoy their learning comfortably and happily. Finally, every child may not be the Master of everything but must be a Master of a specific area and lead their life successfully with joy, happiness, peace and emerge as a good “HUMAN BEING”.

To ensure effective quality education our curriculum and pedagogy should be reflective of the future requirement and our assessment pattern should not be based on the saying “All eggs in one basket”. When we look back nostalgically at our strong “Gurukul System where Learning and Development of the child was the focus area rather than marks, we need to reflect back to see where did things go wrong in our education journey. We need to Change and what better way than adopting the Japanese Management style of “Kaizen” which means change for the better . Today in the age of Globalization we need to prepare our children to become “Global Citizen” and understand the importance of “Collaborative learning “ and “Digital literacy” . Learning and Learning outcomes need to be well defined for each subject at the start of the year and constantly reviewed by the school head rather than just craving for marks. In conclusion, in the words of John Ruskin who was a leading English art critic of the Victorian era had stated “*Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent effort*”.