

Original Article

Ensuring Quality in Higher Education: Pathways to Excellence, Equity, and Sustainable Development

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Nowadays, it is no longer necessary to demonstrate the importance of education and higher education for sustainable development, for democracy and peace, for a strengthening of the defense of peace as a human value, and for the respect and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The far-reaching changes now taking place in the world. The need of human values into a society based on knowledge and information, revealed importance of education and higher education. It is clear that higher education must change radically, must maintain quality by becoming forcible and at the same time divorce in its institutions, its structures, its curricula, and the nature and forms of its programmes and by mastering the information technologies which can help to improve the quality of education. Higher education should move ahead with excellence and maintenance of high standards using bench marking criteria. There should be continuous Quality assessment to maintain academic values.

Keywords: Higher education, quality, Quality assessment and maintenance.

Introduction

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“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” – Nelson Mandela. Also, education is the prettification of the inner world and the outer world. This process of remodeling includes Teaching, Learning and Evaluation. In the present era, educationalists realize that in education ‘learning is concerned with scholars whereas teaching is concerned with pupils and teachers. In the olden days, teacher was the only source of knowledge. The students learnt what the teacher taught. Teaching learning is one way communication of information, is no longer effective in modern conditions. The age of advancement has brought a factor called the “information explosion” in the developed and developing countries. In educational technology, which consists of various media of mass communication, a suitable child learning process and modern testing and evaluation techniques are essentially required. In a nutshell, there is a need for quality education. Quality is at the heart of education. Education must be available and accessible but also acceptable and adaptable. It must have a quality because it influences what learners learn, how they learn, and it becomes essential to see what benefits they draw from it. The world Declaration on education for All (1990) flagged the way for the concept of quality expressed in terms of need-based criteria. The skills, knowledge values and attitudes that teaching learning process promote must reflect and respond to the needs and expectations of Individuals. Teachers can play a key role to improve learning. They have a powerful impact on the students Quality education is not only important for catering learner’s basic needs but it is also important in cultivating the conditions for global peace and sustainable development. Today’s young generation need to learn in active and self-directed ways in order to flourish and contribute to their communities. According to a UNICEF paper entitled ‘Quality in education’ It is said that Quality education includes.



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1. Learners who are healthy, well nourished and ready to participate and learn and supported in learning by their families and communities.
2. Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive and provide adequate resources and facilities.
3. Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skill for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health nutrition HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.
4. Process through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well managed classrooms and schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities.
5. Outcome that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

As far as the definition of education is concerned with different content like economical, cultural etc. Quality education requires quality learners. Physical as well as good psychological health, regular attendance for learning, Parent's support for learning can enhance the quality of education.

The enhancement of education depends on the following elements:

Learner's Quality: The quality of education depends upon the quality of learner including health, family support, nutrition, positive attitude and behavior, Regularity and active participation in learning process.

- i) **Quality Learning Environment:** Learning is a process which is continuous and can take place anywhere. But the learning in suitable environment has always positive effect upon learners. It includes physical learning environment such as modern and well-equipped building, good infrastructure, adequate teaching material and resources, textbooks and other learning material for the students and teachers. Psychological elements such as safe environment, peace, teacher's behavior, discipline can have a positive impact on quality education.
- ii) **Quality Content/ curriculum:** Any kind of educational improvement can be achieved by suitable curriculum reforms. It is what we teach, what the students learn, what we examine for and what we give when students pass through. We should make it relevant to and continuous with the changing needs of the present and challenges of the future. While setting the objectives or determining the quality policy we must keep in mind what kinds of knowledge, skills, thoughts, and feelings we must communicate to our students. On the basis of broad objectives, goal or mission, curriculum planning should be done.
- iii) **Educational Process (Quality process):** Teaching is not a mechanical process of transmitting knowledge and information from the teacher to the student According to Burton, "Teaching is the stimulation, guidance direction and encouragement of learning." The highest quality teachers with deep knowledge of their subject can contribute well in this process. Training programmes, professional development programmes should help teachers develop teaching methods and skills. There should be student centered learning. Quality process should include teacher feedback mechanism to improve performance of the teacher accordingly. Another important factor which may affect this process is working conditions of the teachers. Teacher as well as students need administrative/ organizational support.
- iv) **Quality outcome:** Quality education aims a learning outcome with the particular knowledge skill or behavior that a student is expected to inculcate after a period of learning. Education systems across the world are based on the principle that education quality is defined by its contribution to the development of cognitive skills and behavioral traits, attitudes and values that are judged necessary for good citizenship and effective life in the community. After all Quality often means fitness for purpose. Institution must have in place adequate mechanism to assure itself and should motivate others that it is able to achieve its stated aims and objectives. Institutions should identify the major concerns of higher education related to quality such as preparing citizens to live in a globalized society, meeting the changing work culture. Internationalizing of teaching, learning and research, adopting the potential of the new information and communication technologies.

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