

EDUCATION AND QUALITY: A REVIEW OF ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS AND FACTORS SHAPING QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Education reforms in India is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted by United Nations in 2015. The focus of SDG 4 related to education is providing access, equity and quality in education across early childhood education, basic education, higher and tertiary education, and promoting lifelong opportunities for all by 2030. The symbiotic relationship of educational institutions in delivering quality education to students who are the main stakeholders is of utmost importance for the holistic development of nation. The review paper has aimed to assess the factors and initiatives of Educational Institutions for providing quality education for holistic development of students. The objective has been to map the evolution of education system from Independence to NEP 2020 and to analyze the methods and tools adopted by educational Institutions to plan, implement and to achieve excellence in providing education through knowledge enhancement, skill development and training of students. The key factors examined include curriculum, teaching methods, infrastructure, examinations, inclusive practices for the community development, challenges on quality delivery and NEP 2020. The data was collected by a thorough using relevant search engines like Google, JSTOR and Scopus indexed Journals with input of key words. The collected data has been analyzed for practices followed by educational institutions to maintain the standards and quality of education as per the policy framework envisioned by our government. The analysis has indicated an approach to integrate the development of faculty and Education

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institution and Management in development of students. The review has suggested to focus on Quality methods in delivery of education, collaborations with stakeholders, enhancement of research focus, supportive measures from government, curriculum and examination reforms, faculty development, innovation and technology reforms, governance and monitoring systems and management support for effective mobilization of resources for transforming education delivery for higher quality. In conclusion the communication by educational institutions to internal and external stakeholders and developing strategies to implement effective changes in education will help to foster holistic development of nation.

Keywords: Education, Quality, Sustainable Development Goals, Curriculum, Skill Development, Policy framework, Educational Reforms, Holistic Development.

Introduction:

India celebrated “Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav” last year and in these 75 years after attaining Independence, the progress in the field of education has been substantial. The leaders of Independent India had focused on plans for strengthening education for masses as a means for development of the nation. A lot of educational institutions (Public and Private) have been established and systematic plan for providing technical, general and scientific

education in the space of primary, secondary and higher education at graduate and post graduate level was devised. University Grants Commission and All India Council of Technical Education was established to streamline college education. Establishment of technical and management Institutions (like Indian Institute of Technology and Indian Institute of Management) has helped to educate and train students and has significantly contributed in the development of our country. The major changes that can be summarized in the field of education (Jack Gloop, 2023):

- Rise in Female literacy percentage from 8.9% in 1951 to 65.8% in 2018
- Increase in number of educational institutions from 1951 to 2021 (schools from 1.4 lakh 50, colleges from 578 to 42, 343 and universities from 27 to 1,043, 28 medical colleges to 612 medical colleges)

The Right to Education Act (2010) in India reiterates that education is a fundamental right of every child. Our Government has also initiated various programs and schemes like Beti Bachao, Beti Pado, Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), Global Initiative for Academics Network (GIAN), Impacting Research, Innovation & Technology (IMPRINT), Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP), Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNMTT), Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), National Digital Library, campus connect programme, Uchhatar Avishkar Abhiyan, Unnat Bharat Abhiyan for improving the quality of higher education. Recently, National Education Policy (NEP) has been implemented for meeting the requirement of quality education, innovation and research and also with the aim to make India a knowledge hub and power by equipping the students with the necessary skills and knowledge.

India's education reforms, such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Right to Education Act (RTE), are designed to ensure access to free and compulsory education for all children aged 6 to 14, aligning with SDG 4's target of universal access to quality primary and secondary education. Initiatives like the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India emphasize the enhancement of education quality by focusing on holistic development, skill-building, and flexibility in the curriculum, aligning with SDG 4's aim to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education. By aligning education reforms with SDG 4, India aims to contribute to the global agenda of achieving inclusive and quality education for all. Monitoring progress towards these goals provides a framework for assessing the effectiveness of education policies and initiatives in the country. The overarching goal is to create an education system that empowers individuals, promotes social cohesion, and contributes to sustainable development.

Quality in Education: Quality in education is not merely literacy and but encompasses a holistic approach to learning. It involves providing students with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for personal development, citizenship, and employability. Quality education is not solely about academic achievement but also include aspects like critical thinking, creativity, communication skills, and a sense of social responsibility.

Significance of maintaining quality in education is listed as:

- i) **Individual Empowerment:** Quality education empowers individuals by equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to make informed decisions, pursue further education, and participate meaningfully in

society.

- ii) **Socio Economic Development:** A well-educated population contributes to the overall development of a nation by fostering innovation, productivity, and economic growth. It reduces poverty and promotes social equity.
- iii) **Global competitiveness:** In an increasingly globalized world, nations with a high-quality education system are better positioned to compete in the global economy. A skilled workforce attracts investment and facilitates technological advancement.
- iv) **Innovations and Problem solving:** Quality education encourages critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. These qualities are essential for addressing complex challenges and driving innovation in various fields.

The growth of the education system in India since independence reflects a continuous effort to expand access and improve quality. Quality education is a key driver of individual and societal development, with far-reaching implications for the overall progress of a nation (Solanki P.2019).

Aim and Objective of the study:

This review paper has been aimed to assess the factors and initiatives of Educational Institutions for providing quality education for holistic development of students. The objective of this review study:

- To map the evolution of education system from Independence to NEP 2020
- To analyze the methods and tools adopted by educational Institutions to plan, implement quality initiatives to achieve excellence in providing education through knowledge enhancement, skill development and training of students

Methodology:

The review article has dealt with the the role of stakeholders and factors shaping quality of education in India through the lens towards holistic development of nation perspective. The research papers and data was collected by a thorough search using relevant search engines like Google, J STOR and Scopus indexed Journals, documents, images. The collected data has been analyzed for practices followed by educational institutions to maintain the standards and quality of education as per the policy framework.

Evolution of Education in India: The mapping the evolution of the education system in India from Independence to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 involves understanding the changes in objectives, methods, and tools adopted by educational institutions. The goal has been to analyze how these institutions plan, implement, and strive for excellence in providing education with a focus on knowledge enhancement, skill development, and student training.

In the Post-Independence period the objective of education was Priority on eradicating illiteracy, expanding access to primary education, and establishing universities and the method used was Policy formulation by leaders emphasis on basic education; establishment of universities and educational institutions. Now with the implication of NEP 2020 which emphasis on holistic development, flexibility in learning, and integration of technology; focus on knowledge enhancement, skill development, and vocational training and the method

adopted is introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promotion of multidisciplinary education; integration of technology in education emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, and vocational training.

The evolution of the education system in India reflects a dynamic process of adaptation and reform to address evolving challenges and aspirations. The NEP 2020, with its emphasis on holistic and flexible education, aligns with contemporary educational needs, aiming to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. The analysis of methods and tools reveals a multifaceted approach, encompassing policy, infrastructure, teacher capacity, technology, and curriculum innovation, to achieve excellence in education.

The role of stakeholders in education:

The government plays a pivotal role in shaping the quality of education in India through policy formulation, resource allocation, and regulatory mechanisms. Three agencies that evaluate quality of institutions and / or programs through an external quality assurance in India are: the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) set up by the UGC in 1994 to accredit institutions of higher education's; the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) established by the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) in 1994 to accredit programs in engineering and related areas and the Accreditation Board (AB) established by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) in 1996 to accredit agriculture institution

The central and state boards of education establishes frameworks such as the National Education Policy (NEP) to guide the educational system, allocates funds for infrastructure development, and enforces standards to ensure a consistent quality across educational institutions. Additionally, government initiatives like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) aim to address access and quality challenges at the primary and secondary level.

Educational Institute and management, schools, colleges, and universities are crucial stakeholders responsible for implementing educational policies and ensuring quality in teaching and learning. Institutional leadership, faculty competence, curriculum design, and the availability of resources significantly impact the quality of education. Establishing a conducive learning environment, investing in faculty development, and adopting innovative teaching methodologies contribute to enhancing the overall quality of education.

Factors shaping Quality Education in India:

1. Role of Education Institutions: All higher Education Institutions (HEI'S) have developed an internal framework for the ensuring delivery of quality education. The internal quality assurance measures help to achieve the external quality assessment determined by NAAC. The HEI'S set up Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) plan activities for achieving academic excellence. The activities include measures like- creation of learner centered environment, Faculty development and participatory teaching learning process. Effective benchmarks have been set by the respective institutional IQAC's and involve all stakeholders like students, parents, faculty and other relevant stakeholders in the quality process for establishing an effective feedback system. The other functions of IQAC involve organizing knowledge and skill enhancement activities like workshops, seminars and conferences on related themes and documenting the various measures taken for improving quality parameters in HEI'S.

UGC initiated schemes for maintaining Quality in HEI'S which have been implemented by institutions include Students Induction Programme (Deeksharambh), Learning Outcome based Curriculum Framework (LOCF), Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy (STRIDE), Life skills (Jeevan Kaushal), Evaluation Reforms, Guru Dakshta-Faculty Induction Programme (FIP), Inculcation of Values & Professional Ethics: -"Mulya Pravah-Guidelines" and Good Academic Research Practices (GARP) (Rimpi Phukan, 2022).

- 2. Government initiatives:** An approach called F.I.T. has been suggested by consultants KPMG in a report presented to the Government in 2019. The paper introduces the FIT approach, focusing on three key levers – Financing, Innovation, and Technology. This non-linear strategy is proposed as a pathway framework to strengthen the education system and pave the way for education for all. The approach acknowledged the need for large-scale transformation and identifies these pillars as the backbone for driving progress. With a decade left to achieve SDG4 targets, the paper provides actionable suggestions for states to implement the FIT approach and expedite progress. It also offers recommendations to non-state actors, emphasizing their crucial role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

India's education reforms, such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Right to Education Act (RTE), are designed to ensure access to free and compulsory education for all children aged 6 to 14, aligning with SDG 4's target of universal access to quality primary and secondary education. Government initiatives like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) aim to address access and quality challenges at the primary and secondary level.

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, unveiled after a gap of over three decades, represents a landmark initiative aimed at transforming the country's education landscape. Encompassing a wide range of reforms, the NEP 2020 seeks to address the evolving needs of a dynamic society and globalized economy. This literature review explores the key aspects and implications of the NEP 2020, examining its potential to reshape the educational framework and meet the aspirations of a young and diverse nation. Key themes and objectives are, Holistic and Multidisciplinary education, Flexible academic structure, Higher Education Reform (Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit points), Teacher training and Professional Development, Language Policy and Technology Integration.(MHRD 2020-NEP2020)

- 3. Demand and supply:** The need for employment readiness in education is an important quality initiative to be considered seriously by HEI'S. (Srinivas, 2023)
- 4. Infrastructure:** Literature has cited that poor infrastructure facilities for classrooms, library, staffroom, laboratories, technology facilities have a direct impact on quality as perceived by the stake holders (Srinivas, 2023, UGC Mandate 2021, Rimpi Phukan, 2023)
- 5. Efficient Management:** the role of management and administrative efficiency in HEI'S is required for financing, recruitment and in adhering to the norms set by government in delivery of quality education
- 6. Privatization:** Dr. Piyush Solanki (2019) in his research has stated that private institutions might compromise on quality to gain profit which may affect quality of education provided in their institutions.

Suggestions for improvement in Quality of education by HEI'S:

From the review of literature, it has been observed that educational institutions play a major role in imparting quality education. The suggestions and recommendations to overcome the challenges have been listed below (Richi Simon, 2018)

1. Methods and tools chosen for delivery of education to be more participatory, student centric and flexible to meet traditional as well as technological methods for imparting education
2. Reforms in the assessment and evaluation methods
3. Collaborations with other HEI'S (National and Global) for pursuing research, innovation and exchange of teaching practices
4. Academic and administrative audits as per norm of government
5. Infrastructure development
6. Recruiting skilled, trained, experienced and permanent staff in Higher Education Institutes
7. Online lectures and programs promoted for constant growth of the working citizens.

Conclusion:

This research paper aims to provide a holistic understanding of the role of educational institutions in shaping quality education in India, considering historical perspectives, policy frameworks, stakeholder perspectives, and initiatives for skill development. The communication by educational institutions to internal and external stakeholders and developing strategies to implement effective changes in education will help to foster holistic development of nation. Effective leadership skills are increasingly valued in every workplace and proficiency in these skills remain imperative when it comes to the curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular goals of colleges and universities. The future of higher education holds the great promise, due in part to advancements in technology that the potential to improve access to and quality of such education, innovations in organizational quality. This research paper has delved into the multifaceted landscape of education in India, with a particular focus on the pivotal role of stakeholders and the diverse factors influencing the quality of education. Through an exhaustive review of existing literature and empirical evidence, it is evident that the quality of education in India is a complex interplay of various elements, ranging from government policies and infrastructure to teacher competency and community involvement. The findings underscore the need for a holistic approach that engages all stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, parents, and communities, in a concerted effort to elevate the standard of education. Furthermore, the significance of contextual factors such as socio-economic conditions, cultural nuances, and regional variations cannot be overstated. As India strives to achieve inclusive and equitable education, understanding and addressing these intricate dynamics becomes imperative. This paper not only sheds light on the current state of education in India but also provides a foundation for future research and policy initiatives aimed at fostering a conducive environment for the enhancement of educational quality across the nation. Ultimately, the pursuit of quality education is not only a national imperative but a global aspiration, and this research contributes valuable insights to the ongoing discourse surrounding education and its transformative potential in India.

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Cite This Article:

Dr. K. P. Anuradha & Ar. Govalkar U. (2024). Education and Quality: A review of role of stakeholders and factors shaping quality of education in India. In Educreator Research Journal: Vol. XI (Issue II, pp. 1–7). **ERJ** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10904342>