

## Holistic Education-A Paradigm Shift from Quality Teacher Development to Quality Learner Development

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on the concept of development of quality learner rather than quality teachers. This paradigm shift focuses on holistic development of learners rather than focusing on the lopsided development of their personality. Here we are trying to bring out the factors that are contributing towards the development of quality learners including sound health & nutrition, early childhood experiences, regular attendance and family support. For holistic development of quality learners, attention must be paid towards imparting the foundation skills, specialized skills & transversal skills through education and training. Holistic development demands change in focus of education system from quality teacher preparation to quality learner formation.

**KEYWORDS** - ECCE, Holistic Education, Quality Learner, Effective Teaching, Effective Teaching

### INTRODUCTION

There has been a drastic change in the field of education in India. In ancient time, the focus of education system was basically on the development of all round personality of learner. Now the days, it has been shifted to the development of quality learner which is not only concerned with the economic growth or employability but focuses on learner's holistic development so that they can lead a happy life & contribute towards the welfare of society. The present scenario of education system witnesses the loss of interest for learning among the learners. The eagerness to write and learn and the quest for the further education have been lost. Who is responsible for it?.... our education system that emphasizes on the lop sided development of the personality of the learner. As after going through the drill of 15-16 years in the education machine, had students felt enriched in any other aspect of personality development or in happiness except narrowly focused cognitive development? His worth would have been increased but unfortunately his value came down to mere rupees 2000-3000 per month. Is our education system fostering or enhancing the inherited potentialities of the students? Or we are just imparting information of some narrowly comparted subjects in the schools in order to seek a job rather than preparing them for living a happy life or face the challenges of life. Why our education system do not evaluate the students on the basis of subjects they actually love to study according to their interest like gardening, cooking, music. Why the students are forced or pressurized to learn history, geography, and math? Our education system doesn't focus on making quality learners or prepare them for the life. A report from UNESCO states that before starting formal education, the superiority of children's lives they have significantly influence the kind of learners theywill become. Elements that affect the development of quality learner include sound health and nutrition, early childhood psychosocial development experiences, regular attendance & family support for learning.

### SOUND HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Children those who are physically as well as psychosocially fit do well in school and also learn efficiently. McCain & Mustard, (1999) found that healthy development of

children particularly in the time of initial three years provide basis for healthy life and it also proves helpful in providing successful experience in the formal setting of school. In the early years, adequate nutrition is essential for normal brain development and prevention of any sort health issues prior to school enrolment determine the development of quality learner at early stage. Government of India has initiated the mid-day meal scheme with the objective of improving nutritional status of primary school children. Child's social competence, cognitive skills, language, literacy skills are developed more when children are in early stages of development as compare to other stages of development (Blair, 2002; Posner and Rothbart, 2006; Shanker and Greenspan, 2009). Barnett and Ackerman (2011) reported that the child participating in early education programs showed substantial gains. Flook, Goldberg, Pinger and Davidson (2015) found that the experiment group taught through Kindness Curriculum yielded greater improvement in social competence and achievement, health and social-emotional development as compare to non-experiment group.

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES**

Positive early childhood experiences and interactions are of paramount importance for preparing a quality learner. In a recent study of Willms (2000), it was indicated that attendance at preschool stage is directly linked with parents involvement which results in high achievement rate and it leads to low dropout rate. While researches done in other countries i.e. Philippines, Sri Lanka and Turkey indicated that participation of children in early intervention program shows better performance as compare to those who are not part of early intervention programs. On the other hand, studies done in India, Morocco and Latin America revealed that intervention program proves more beneficial for disadvantaged children (UNICEF, 1998). Reynolds & Suh-Ruu (2004) indicated that children's cognitive, social & literacy skills are promoted by preschool programs. This program also increases their educational attainment level; reduces the grade retention as well as risk of delinquency. Better school achievement, higher IQ scores, lower rates of delinquency and grade retention have been found to be directly associated with preschool programs. The early childhood programs contribute significantly in the cognitive development of learners. In early years, early childhood program has positive impact on intellectual & academic skills which will continue throughout the primary classes. Additionally at young adulthood stage, academic, occupational, and social-emotional outcomes were affected with these early childhood program (Campbell and Ramey, 2007, 2010; Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, and Miller-Johnson, 2002). Campbell et al., (2002) also reported that children participating in early childhood programs spend more years in formal settings of education as compare to those who didn't attend such programs and they joined the college at the age of 21. The advantages of early childhood programs include improved cognitive effects & good psychosocial development. At this stage, brain development of students play an important role as it develops emotional regulation, arousal, and behavioral management. Effective stimulation helps in brain development. McCain & Mustard, also indicated that a child who does not have positive stimulation faces severe strain in the pre-school stage and in later life, they may have difficulty psychosocial development. Therefore, the elements (i.e. health and nutrition) that determine the quality of early childhood development programmes, must be coupled with structural psychosocial development, for achieving high quality in these programs.

## **REGULAR ATTENDENCE IN SCHOOL FOR LEARNING**

Many researches also emphasized that children must attend school regularly for high achievement rate. According to Fuller et al., (1999) school curriculum provides the suitable set to learn that influences their achievement rate up to a greater extent and this exposure to curriculum comes by attending school on regular basis. Another study conducted in schools of Malawi also indicated that learners who attend school regularly had high achievement rate and low dropout rate and this finding is similar with many other researches (Miske, Dowd et al., 1998). Achievement rate of learners who remain absent is low as compare to those who attend school on daily basis (Rothman 2001; Zamudio, 2004). Geo-opah (2003) in his research indicated that truants usually repeat their classes. While another study showed that indeed truancy had significant effects on the academic achievement of the students. Boga (2013) found that educational achievement of secondary school students is negatively affected by truancy. Ngutor, moses and Solomon (2015) found that truant behavior has negative effects on a pupil's academic attainment due to its tendency to cause failures in terminal examinations and increase rate of dropouts. Henry and Yelkpereri (2017) also emphasized that academic output is affected by truant behavior of learners. While the pupils attend classes regularly perform better.

## **FAMILY SUPPORT FOR LEARNING**

Educated parents have a great influence on their children's learning capability & psychosocial development throughout their school years. The parents' educational level has a multidimensional influence on adolescents' capability to perform better in school. Willms (2000) found that children, whose parent's educational qualification is quite low, were three times more agreeable to have minimum test scores than those children having parental education level atleast of secondary schooling. It shows that parent's educational level influences their children's learning, as well as their own income level (Carron & Chau, 1996). Parents without formal education have limited ability to support learning of their children & also have limited involvement in their school-related activities. Davis-Kean (2005) found that European American children's standardized achievement scores are directly affected by parental education but not by their income level while on the other hand, both parental education and income have indirect effects on parents' achievement-fostering behaviors and later on children's achievement, through their effects on parents' educational expectations. Mahuro, hungi & Lamb (2016) revealed that parental involvement plays a major role in inspiring children to improve their academic attainment. For students to get full benefit in their educational career their learning depends on both pupil-teacher relationship & active involvement of parents in study. Chioma, Bernedeth & Joseph (2017) found that academic attainment of children is highly affected by parental involvement in their school activities rather than the parent's financial status. Therefore, the home curriculum contributes in developing quality learners. Pupils who have supportive & involved parents; positive experiences in early childhood are most likely to succeed in school. On the other side, for first generation learners, education system must focus on the content of curriculum & its transaction so that they can also lead towards a successful happy life and contribute to the sustainable development of the nation.

Lembo commented that various multifaceted factors including physical, psychological, economic and sociological are responsible for learner's school performance, but central root of failure of student is schooling process itself. When pupils 'fail' in school, it is the teachers and administrative practices that are

responsible for it. Therefore, teaching policies and practices should be improved to reduce the number of student's alienation from the educational process.

### **Role Change of Education System**

At this alarming time, we need to think that what kind of role our education system is playing? This paradox can be resolved by focusing on holistic education which can transform lopsided development to holistic development, incompetent workforce into competent workforce and helps in achieving ultimacy-towards highest goal. Holistic education is an enlightening journey of personal discovery initiating from formal education & continuing through out whole life. The goal of holistic education is to prepare learners for a perfect and productive life & equip them with foundational skills, attributes that are consistently challenged, developed and applied as a part of their lifelong learning. According to United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Report (2011), Education system should focus on development of skills, critical thinking, creativity. Most of the approaches used in education help in knowledge acquisition rather the development of fundamental skills. Therefore, there should be an interdisciplinary approach, focusing on solutions to real life problems. Holistic human development requires that education system ensure strong alignment between educational goals, curricula, pedagogies and assessment. Therefore, learning should be the core of any educational reform so that any changes in education sector can contribute towards improvement in quality of learning and thus supporting holistic human development. For holistic development of learners, attention must be paid towards imparting the following skills through education and training i.e.

**FOUNDATION SKILLS** (It include basic academic knowledge and skills learnt through formal education, non-formal, informal learning opportunities)

**SPECIALIZED SKILLS** (It includes technical and vocational education and training activities)

**TRANSVERSAL SKILLS** (These skills are not related to particular job, task but the skills that can be used in different situations and work setting)

(UNESCO, 2014)

Training of skills (foundation, specialized, transversal) ensures that the quality of teaching act as strong determinant that produces quality learners. Therefore, there is a need to shift the teacher's role from knowledge transmitter to learning facilitators. Therefore, effective teaching should be carried out in a cooperative and trustworthy environment. Research conducted by Kindsvatter, Wilen and Ishler (1992) found that effective teachers are flexible in their approach towards the students & focuses on classroom questioning. Wasserman (1992) stated that secret of good teaching is probing the right questions. To become an effective teacher mere technical understanding about instructional procedures is not sufficient, they must adapt themselves to the processes of instruction while delivering the lessons (Westwood: 1993).

Effective teacher show the following behavior-

The teacher:

- provides an additional demonstration
- praises the students more frequently who perform well in classroom
- rewards the students; sets shorter-term goals for learners according to their capacity
- monitors the students closely; provides assistance to learners as they work
- asks questions that varies in the degrees of complexity.

Wang (1992) commented that building dynamic learning environments is still a continuing challenge in schools that cater the need of diverse learners.

So the teachers are required to be equipped not only with solid pedagogical and subject specific knowledge but also with requisite transversal skills such as empathy, communication, leadership, and teamwork. According to Batten, Marland and Khamis (1993), the characteristics of good & effective teacher include:

- demonstrate the lesson in an easy and understandable manner to students
- makes classroom teaching more enjoyable
- cares about the class, always listen the problems of students & helps them in getting solution
- behaves well in the classroom & knows what he or she is talking about.

When teacher is efficient & skilled, he can provide an enriched environment to the learners that self-motivate them for effective learning. "Four Aces of Effective Teaching" (Walls, 1999) shows the strongest link between teaching and the learning. These Aces signify a consolidated way of thinking about "process" of teaching as it effects "product"(development of quality learner). The four Aces of Effective Teaching with respect to effective learning are given as:

1. Outcomes – It focuses on the utilization of outcomes-based instructional orientation. This ace helps the teacher in designing, delivering the course content and also helps in assessment of learning as a measure of effective instructional methodology. While in case of effective learning, outcomes help students to focus on clearly stated learning objectives that school and teachers want students to achieve. These outcomes inform students about their graph of success of where they are going and how they will get there.

2. Clarity - The clarity of instructions considered to be the second ace of effective teaching as well as effective learning. Instructions should be given in such a way that nothing is left out on the chance. On the other side, the students will show the clarity of instructions/ information gained and its usage in appropriate way. Clear directions and explanation regarding the content & course organization are provided to learners by effective teachers. It is actually a two way process. If teacher imparts instructions in clear & concise way, then students will also show the clarity of instructions gained and its usage in appropriate way. They should be able to set up connections between the new material and the concepts that they have already acquired in their minds. This strategy is known as curricular scaffolding in which teacher provides assistance to pupils to create a link between new and previous knowledge, in the form of organized knowledge.

3. Engagement - According to it, pupils perform best of their capacity when they are involved in the work that they are supposed to do. It focuses on two dimensional model of teaching. According to this, a teacher should create a vibrant educational setting that provides pupils chance to practice each concept that they have learnt. Third ace for effective learning suggest that if the students will be provided with ample opportunities to select different activities according to their interest then learner show high degree of attention, interest, passion in the completion of that particular activity. Such activities are planned for making quality learners.

4. Enthusiasm - It tells about the importance of Enthusiasm in effective teaching. If teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and their model of teaching, it is of surety that students also show enthusiasm & interest in learning that subject. Effective teachers show a high level of zeal that reflects their professional competence and commitment. Teachers show their passionate behavior to create dynamic learning

environment, for selecting subject content, for encouraging & motivating the students to participate in the classroom. For effective learning, the learners will feel enthusiastic if they are encouraged to choose their own projects; if they know the importance of learning & its worth in real life situation. Success rate of student is essential to maintain existing learning environment in the classroom. Therefore, dynamic and creative learning environment is necessary for higher student achievement and teacher satisfaction.

These Aces helps in removing the chaos from present educational set up and systematically enhance the student learning for holistic development.

#### CONCLUSION

Holistic education stresses on development of learner as a whole. The personality of the learner is multifaceted. Teaching learning process should be designed with the focus on the learning outcomes viz a viz, healthy, happy, peaceful and productive learner who could contribute for sustainable development of the nation. Children should be taught in such a way that they not only feel mentally enriched but physically too & which enables them to lead a happy and peaceful life. As mahatma Gandhi has said, "Education should not confine itself within the boundaries of a classroom. Rather true education is the one which gives an opportunity to think beyond the confined rules- which is taught in the nature that demand mental fitness of the trainee." Any education system that satisfies the multiple hunger of student & prepares them for life is a true criteria of teaching. But unfortunately our present education system has lost its importance. ASER (2017) highlighted that "many children in elementary school need urgent support for acquiring foundational skills. About 25% of 14-18years age group still cannot read basic text fluently in their own language. Youth in this age group who have completed eight years of schooling, a significant proportion still lack foundational skills like reading and arithmetic" Hence the goal of education system should be the development of quality learner.

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