

## **QUALITY EDUCATION- THE NEED FOR THE FUTURE OF NATION**

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### **Abstract**

Education is not just the process of imparting literacy and numeracy. It is actually a process of socialization that helps children to cope with the natural and the social environment. The quest of useful and relevant education would imply a much greater focus on integrating physical and mental development. The education system of the country is facing many challenges and the future of the country depends upon the students we prepare to shoulder up the responsibility for the future development. The students are required to be provided with their basic right to have quality education. Even the government of India has also taken various steps regarding provision of basic educational facilities to every section of society. Quality education results in outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. The present paper highlights the requirements for a quality education and the various programs, efforts made by government in this direction and the various factors that affect the quality of education.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the present scenario, it is an accepted fact that if you are not educated then you are not able to understand your surroundings. Today, it is must for a person to get educated. Even the people belonging to the backward or rural areas have accepted the need of education and are motivating their children to pursue higher education.

But the question arises here is:

Is the education provided in schools or colleges really helpful to gain knowledge or the students are just cramming to score higher percentages than each others?

The thing which lacks behind the concept of education is Quality of Education.

Quality education is not an easy concept to qualify. The future of country depends upon the students we prepare through our instructions. We need quality in education and the guidance we provide them should fulfill the basic requirements of quality.

Continuous improvement in the education system will help.

The President Pranab Mukherjee, on Saturday, June 1, 2013 expressed concern over Indian universities not figuring among the top institutions across the world and added that there is a need to improve the quality of higher education in India. He added: "We have over 650 degree

awarding institutions and over 33,000 colleges. But we are short of good quality academic institutions, on account of which many bright students prefer going abroad for higher studies.

Education is a self-motivated, continually evolving concept that keeps adapting to the changes around it. Likewise, the methodology used in teaching demands up to date approaches too.

We, the Educationists, need to empower students and to create learning process that should be experiential, effective, beneficial and thoroughly impactful.

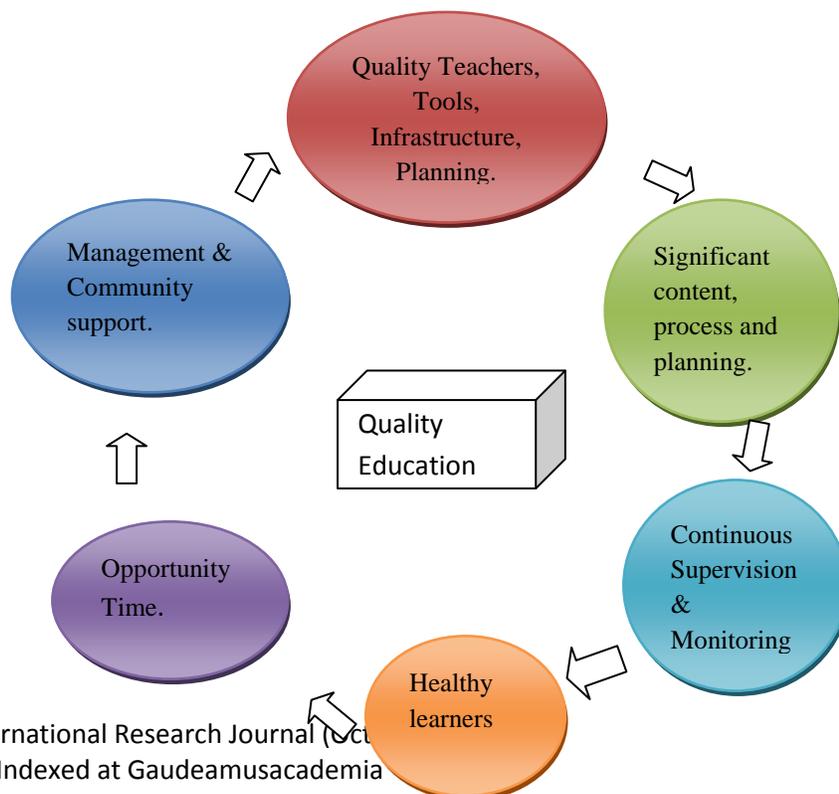
## **BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF QUALITY EDUCATION**

Quality education is directly related to the education pattern which is meaningful, worthwhile, responsive and ultimately beneficial to individuals and society.

- **Quality Teachers and Teaching:** High calibre teachers are required to serve the purpose of providing quality education which may help the students to develop themselves professionally. Teachers are the most important educational resource and a critical determinant of quality. This affects educational quality since student achievement, especially beyond basic skills, depends largely on teachers' command of subject matter and their ability to use that knowledge to help students' learn.
- **Quality Tools for Teaching:** Use of information and communication technology like internet can be helpful in improving the quality of education. It also includes an effective choice of curriculum and teaching learning material.
- **Quality Infrastructure and Environment:** The teaching environment needs to be comfortable, safe and supportive. The environment includes the provision of adequate resources and facilities or infrastructure, co-operative parents, teachers, school or college environment. The environment needs to be healthy, protective and gender- sensitive.
- **Management and Community Support:** The quality education is not a concept of mere discussion. It requires active support of school management and community. A child seeking education is a part of such community and feels comfortable with its support.
- **Opportunity Time (Teaching-Learning Time):** There should be healthy teaching learning time and the students should feel comfortable in expressing their views and clearing their queries wherever required. It includes adoption of different classroom practices and processes.
- **Learners' Assessment and Supervision:** In order to serve the purpose of providing quality education, both at the classroom level as well as at the systematic functioning level, some monitoring systems had to be put in place. A strong need was felt for periodic monitoring and regular feedback within and outside the classrooms. Only classroom teaching is not enough where the teacher teaches and the students listen. Moreover, teachers should provide their students assessments to judge their inner hidden talents and try to improve them up.

- **Continuous Monitoring:** Monitoring in a broader sense has been defined as a continuous assessment of progress, diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses and provision for remedial/ corrective measures. Therefore, continuous and comprehensive monitoring and subsequent learning from one's own and others' experiences is crucial for effective implementation of plans and programs.
- **Healthy learners:** For the purpose of providing quality education, it is essential that the learners should be healthy, well- nourished, ready to participate and learn and supported in learning by their families and communities. Many elements go into making a quality learner, including health, early childhood experiences and home support.
- **Significant content:** It is required to include such content that is reflected in relevant curriculum and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.
- **Effective Planning:** It is needed to plan programs that focus on enhancing the quality of education programs.
- **Valuable Processes:** It suggests that such processes should be adopted through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities.

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.



## FACTORS AFFECTING THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY EDUCATION

- **Good health and nutrition:** Physically and psychosocially healthy children learn well. Healthy development in early childhood, especially during the first three years of life, plays an important role in providing the basis for a healthy life and a successful formal school experience (McCain & Mustard, 1999). It includes the following:
  - Adequate nutrition for normal brain development in the early years
  - Early detection and intervention for disabilities which gives children the best chances for healthy development.
  - Prevention of infection, disease and injury prior to school enrolment.

All of these help in early development of a quality learner.

- **Early childhood psychosocial development experiences:** Positive early experiences and interactions are also vital in preparing a quality learner. Children who participate in early intervention programs do better in primary school than those who do not benefit from formal early child programs. Psychosocial experiences include development of positive simulation, emotional control etc. A high level of quality in early childhood development programs can be achieved when health and nutrition components are combined with structured psychosocial development in the pre-school years.
- **Regular attendance for learning:** It is an accepted fact that to achieve academically, children must attend school consistently. A child's exposure to curriculum — his or her 'opportunity to learn' — significantly influences achievement, and exposure to curriculum comes from being in school. Students with higher rates of attendance have greater learning gains and lower rates of repetition.
- **Family support for learning:** It is of paramount importance that parents should support their children and motivate them to learn more. It is the responsibility of the parents to motivate and help their children in their learning stage.
- **Quality of school facilities:** Although, learning can occur anywhere but the positive learning outcomes generally sought through educational systems having quality learning environments. The quality of school facilities seems to have an indirect effect on learning, an effect that can be measured through the behavior and the curiosity of students to learn more. It ranges from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air gathering places.
- **Size of class:** It has been accepted that larger class size affect the quality of education and with the increase in the span of students under one teacher, the quality of education gets diminished.

- **Testing and grading:** Testing and grading system need to be reviewed to motivate the children to deepen and widen their learning. Overall performance of the student all round the year should be taken into consideration rather than to base the judgment on a single annual exam.
- **Behavior and character of teachers:** Relative to both girls and boys, parents, educators and researchers express important concern about teachers who create an unsafe environment for students. In some schools, male teachers sexually harass girls even with outside observers present. Thus, teacher's behavior affect the quality of the learning environment since learning cannot take place when the basic needs of survival and self-protection are threatened.
- **Discipline and Violence:** Often it has been seen that students develop violent kind of attitude during their higher classes. They consider themselves as supreme and do not tolerate anything that they don't like. Often disputes arise due to such a behavior resulting in violence which ultimately affects the quality of education provided to them. Many young victims of violence suffer lasting physical, psychological, social-emotional and behavioral effects. Students, teachers and administrators should agree upon school and classroom rules and policies, and these should be clear and understandable. Order, constructive discipline and reinforcement of positive behavior communicate a seriousness of purpose to students.
- **Provision of health services:** Provision of health services and education can contribute to learning first by reducing absenteeism and inattention. Sick children cannot attend school and illness is a primary cause for absenteeism. Today, school and colleges should arrange health check-ups in improving academic performance and to fight the problems of malnutrition, micronutrient deficiency disorders, infection etc.
- **Teacher feedback mechanisms:** This process should include both performance assessment and assessment of factual knowledge. Observations found that teachers are very poorly trained in evaluation techniques, and the reality is far from the continuous evaluation procedures recommended by official programs. Indeed, many teachers and educational systems continue to rely almost exclusively on traditional paper-and-pencil tests of factual knowledge that tend to promote rote memorization rather than higher order thinking skills.
- **Teacher beliefs that all students can learn:** Quality education puts students at the centre of the process and student's achievement must be the school's first priority. Since schools exist because of students, this would seem self-evident. Generally, it is the tendency of teachers to avoid working upon the weaknesses of the students. They should understand that the weaknesses can be improved but they hardly put any effort in this direction.
- **Student access to languages used at school:** The languages schools use for instruction can have an impact on learning and academic achievement in general. Research suggests that many benefits can be gained by beginning primary education in the student's home

language. Many of the parents and teachers believe that learning in the mother tongue can impair learning of other languages later.

- **Use of technologies in learning:** The use of technology can reduce global inequalities through vehicles such as Internet-based distance learning, interactive video and educational television. In areas where electricity and telephone lines are available, such approaches to learning may contribute significantly to improve the quality of educational processes. E-learning eliminates the barriers of time and distance, creating universal learning-on-demand opportunities for people and countries.

## **STATUTORY PROVISIONS REGARDING QUALITY EDUCATION**

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 has strongly stressed the need for a substantial improvement in the quality of education. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) also stresses the importance of quality education and suggests various parameters to be addressed in State and district plans to achieve the desired goal.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a Government of India's flagship program for the achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner, as mandated by 86th amendment to the Constitution of India making free and compulsory Education to the Children of 6-14 years age group, a Fundamental Right.

SSA seeks to provide quality elementary education including life skills. SSA has a special focus on girl's education and education for children with special needs.

SSA is being implemented in partnership with State Governments to cover the entire country and address the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations. Existing schools with inadequate teacher strength are provided with additional teachers, while the capacity of existing teachers is being strengthened by extensive training, grants for developing teaching-learning materials and strengthening of the academic support structure at a cluster, block and district level.

## **PROVISIONS UNDER SSA FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) will make efforts to take a holistic and comprehensive approach to the issue of quality. Efforts to decentralize the whole process of curriculum development down (grassroot level) to the district level will be made. It contains the following provisions:

Additional facilities: SSA will now introduce child-centered and activity- based learning.

Addition to learning process: Learning by doing, learning by observation, work experience, art, music, sports and value education shall be made fully integral to the learning process.

Changes in evaluation system: Suitable changes will be made in the evaluation system to make it more continuous and less threatening.

Monitoring performance: Performance of children will be constantly monitored in consultation with parents and shall not be restricted only to cognitive areas.

Enhancement in role of teachers: Teachers' role in preparation of textbooks and secondary learning materials will be enhanced.

Flexibility in timings: School timings will be made contextual.

Freedom to take decision: Based on a broad curriculum framework, districts would be free to define their content areas in their local contexts.

State and national level institutions will facilitate this process of decentralized arrangements for development of curriculum and evaluation systems. Some guiding principles in curriculum and evaluation reform will be as follows:

- Teacher and community participation in material preparation and in developing a school vision;
- Focus on good quality printing, illustrations for books along with the improvement in content; freedom from 'cheapest syndrome' in matters of children's books;
- Use of local dialects as language in classes one and two;
- Community-based and school-based projects for work experience;
- Association of local artisans/workmen in school activities;
- Primacy to cultural activities, art, sports, etc.;
- Content based and motivational training for teachers;
- Continuous assessment of students for their all round development;
- Facilitating child-to-child learning;
- Looking upon quality improvement as integrated part of holistic School Improvement Program.

## **IMPROVING QUALITY LEARNING THROUGH LEARNING ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS (LEP)**

For the purpose of LEP funds up to 2% of the total outlay can be utilized subject to pre defined conditions. Budget available under Project Management (up to an upper limit of 6% of the total State budget) can be considered for the same. Out of the said 6% funds available, each State/ UT would be expected to design a Learning Enhancement Program (LEP) using a maximum of 2% funds. The State would also provide a detailed plan of action for its project management related activities utilizing an upper limit of the 6% amount. For smaller districts where the management

fund is insufficient to accommodate quality intervention within 6%, the limit may be observed at State level.

**PROVISIONS UNDER LEP's:** The Following provisions will be considered during appraisal or approval of any Learning Enhancement Plan in a District/ State/ UT:

- (i) Focus on learning enhancement of students in selected subject areas over a stipulated period.
- (ii) Provision for learning achievement surveys (baseline, mid-term and end term) would be made in order to track children's performance over the period.
- (iii) Information about the background of children, their learning difficulties and challenges related to their performance along with the total number of children will be gathered.
- (iv) Information about the academic principles followed including strategies for learning tracking to be adopted during the program.
- (v) Strategies shall be made for evaluation, internally and externally.

## **EDUCATION FOR LIFE**

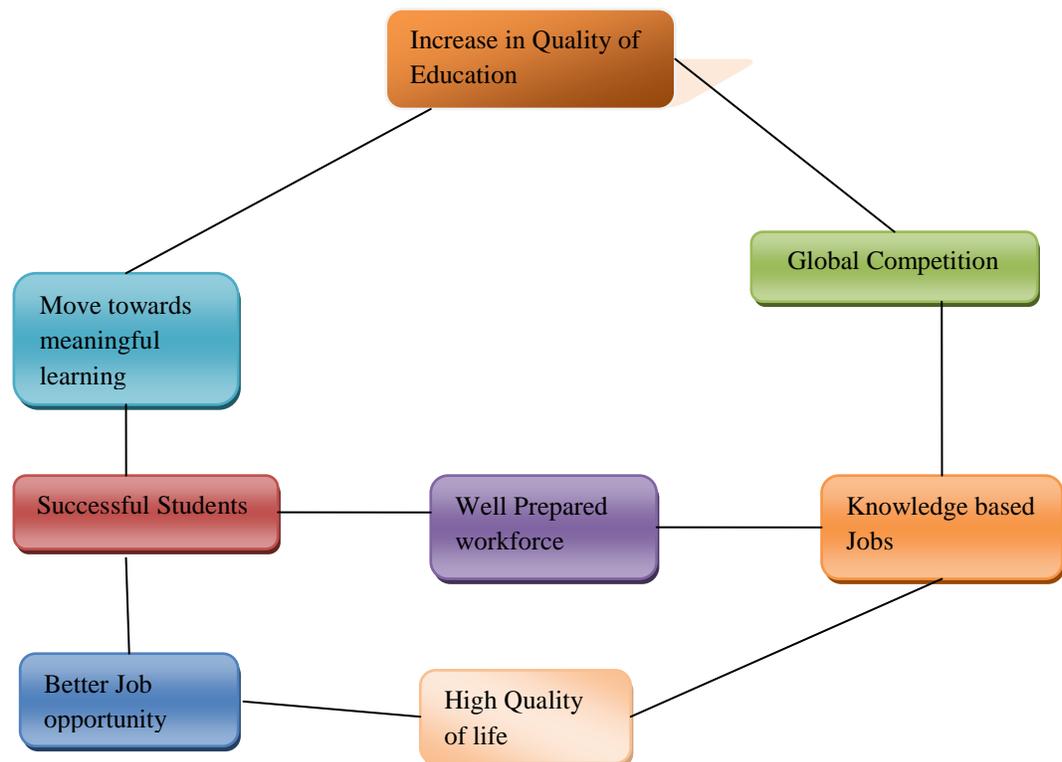
The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has decided to encourage States to focus on the aggregate development of children. Encouragement to sports, cultural activities, project work involving interaction with social and natural surroundings, activity based learning, exposure to life skills with regard to health, nutrition, professions etc. Such a focus will necessitate looking upon a school as a social institution that is the hub of community activities. Encouragement to work experience would require the introduction of children with professionals, farmers, artisans, in order to master the social and natural context.

## **IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY EDUCATION**

The merits of quality education are numerous. The achievement of universal participation in education will be fundamentally dependent upon the quality of education available. It offers a multiple set of benefits which are as follows:

- **Global Competition:** With the introduction of globalization, the economy has now reshaped itself into a 'knowledge economy' and a global competition phenomenon is now there. For getting success in the global environment one must be equipped with the tool of quality education.
- **Knowledge based Jobs:** In order to survive and achieve success in career, our students should be competent enough. This is possible only if our students have the quality in their education system.

- **Well prepared Workforce:** Quality education nourishes the students and their mental ability in the best way. If the students pursue good quality education, they seem to have least chances of failure in any task.
- **High Quality of life:** High quality education leads to better understanding of concepts, better command over knowledge, better job opportunities and ultimately better or high quality of life and standard of living.
- **Better Job Opportunities:** There is no dearth of jobs for the person who has pursued high quality education.
- **Successful Students:** One who has grabbed quality education will always succeed and will never face failure in life.
- **Move towards meaningful learning:** Quality education is that which provide better command over the concepts. It is not merely based on cramming thus leading to meaningful learning.



## SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

It is recognized that expanding access alone would be insufficient for education to contribute fully to the development of an individual and the society, but there is a problem of quality that persists throughout entire education system (Primary, secondary, higher and adult education). Emphasis should be given on increase in children's cognitive development by improving the quality of their education. Education should be such which allow children to utilize their full

potential in terms of emotional, creative and cognitive skills. It should enhance the child's personality, inner hidden talents, physical and mental abilities. Following are some of the suggestions that can improvise the quality in education.

- **Provision of accessible and affordable education:** It has been seen that there has been a substantial increase in the public expenditure for the purpose of getting quality education. There should be a system of providing quality education at affordable cost in order to make it available to everyone.
- **Quality through training:** Students should be provided training facility so that they can have practical understanding of what they learn rather than to give them theoretical knowledge only. Small projects should be given to the students which will give them a lot of exposure and will definitely add up to their creativity.
- **Less emphasis on marks:** Scoring good marks should not be the sole criteria to measure anybody's knowledge. But this system exists. In our country, scoring higher marks is more important than to understand things conceptually. Students just get the marks for a better position in class...it's the same as saying 'If no marks allotted for any of the tests, no one would even think of opening their book'...That's completely WRONG! Students should study to develop scientific temper, humanism, the spirit of inquiry and reform, not just because of any kind of 'PRESSURE', the 'pressure' their parents put on them at home –to score highest marks in the class or the 'pressure' teachers put at school. THAT SHOULD BE STOPPED! Emphasis should be made on all round development instead of laying stress on increasing the beauty of mark sheet with more and more marks.
- **Favorable attitude of teachers towards everyone:** It is the duty of the teachers to not to demoralize any student if he/she doesn't do well as intelligent students do. There is a need to improve him/her rather than to criticize. The consequential nervousness leads to wide disasters. Everyone should be taught fairly, no teacher should have any kind of grudge against anyone.
- **Affordable number of students in class:** It has been often seen that the number of students have been increasing but schools are not making arrangement of infrastructure for them leading to higher number of students per class by which individual attention per student suffers. Schools are concentrating only on the money they get by admitting a student in the class and are least bothered about the quality of education he/she gets in such a class.
- **Mental development of child should be the prime objective:** Parents who do not understand the importance of education should not deprive their children of good education! That's the root cause of all evil. Parents should understand that not just cramming books is called education rather they should motivate their children to choose their career according to their interest and whatever they think suitable for them. Students must be set free to explore their own potentials. Extra co-curricular activities should be given due importance. Why a student who is good at dancing, singing, drawing etc. does

not get any extra marks? The examination system should be changed in such a way that the parents, teachers and society start giving importance to conceptual understanding and overall development and this is the right way to give children, the opportunities to open up mentally.

- **Promotion of Innovation:** A change in our education system is necessary to innovate new ideas and new concepts, but this is possible only when we change our mindset to do something different and are willing to contribute towards the development of our country.
- **Teachers' training and re-organization of teaching methods:** Community-making and nation-building ideas are to be inculcated in our teaching community. What we need are committed teachers who are cared for and valued. We need to recognize teaching as an art and a skill. Major rethink is needed for schools, learning and teaching to fundamentally refashion them. We need to introduce a program of an ongoing formation where our teachers are periodically encouraged to update their overall tool kit for imparting valuable training to our student community.
- **Development of skills for life:** Presently, teaching is primarily text book oriented. It doesn't provide anything for life. In order to improve the quality of education, the content must be focused towards developing essential life skills like self awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, effective communication skills, problem solving, interpersonal relationship, ability to cope up with emotions, coping with stress, empathy, respect, discipline, decision making, basic manners and etiquettes.
- **Exploring talents:** The education system in our country is completely flawed. We seem to focus on preparing for exams and scoring marks. Seldom has there been an emphasis on exploring our talents and potential or encouragement to take up sports and arts as career options. The flaw is deep rooted and would require a genuine effort to cope up the evil.
- **Encouraging their mind ability:** Students of this generation are smart enough to understand the technology with ease. Internet has opened their world to a wealth of information. Students in their primary are creating their own accounts in all the social websites. Web chatting is the order of the day. They flip through the mobile with ease and sophistication.
- **Development of responsible citizens:** Along with the conceptual knowledge and self exploration, our system is also missing social learning and awareness about responsibilities amongst the future citizens. The end product of such an education is self centered foot soldiers not broad minded leaders. We should inculcate into the process of making good citizens along with employable individuals. In case of adult education, there is need to focus on awareness about socio-economic problems rather than focusing only on increasing literacy.
- **Let the student free from comparison:** The campaign of unnecessary comparison of one child with the other and creation of unnecessary bias towards the future career

opportunities is not allowing the proper and normal of growth of children. In fact, they lose their innocence and are become restless about future in the name of 'maturity'. The holistic personality of the child is the first & foremost objective of any education system. Even inborn qualities like curiosity are killed in the spirit of the child in most cases. Many experiments and efforts are taking place now in many institutions in the name of fine-tuning of personality but there is a necessity of functioning of unbiased motivators at schools and colleges which will help the students very much.

- **Stress on Quality rather than Quantity:** When it comes to education, it is the quality which matters and not the quantity. Extra co- curricular activities serve as catalyst in an individual's all round development. It is the duty of the parents first and teacher second, to impart value education to the children. Seminar, debates, participations, cultural activities, case study base study should be promoted to enhance the level of quality in education.

## CONCLUSION

Although much has been thought, written and suggested for the purpose of providing quality education to the children. But there are certain loopholes in this entire system of education, examination and evaluation. There is nobody to shoulder up the responsibility although every one of us is responsible and are contributing to the evil. Our society and we ourselves are the major factors to be blamed upon. We too are dragging our children to this bog and suppress them to score good marks either way. The objective of this paper is to awake the society and the community to come forward to contribute to end up the evil. We need to understand that quality of education is not only related to scoring top marks in the class rather it is related to the enhancement of the overall personality of our future administrators.

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