

Short Communication

School Accreditation: An Initiative towards Quality Education

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ABSTRACT

School accreditation is relatively new term in India intended to improve the quality in school education. There are many schools which were established to impart education with improper planning and without looking into the suitable location, physical environment, playground, supply of drinking water, toilets, boundary, etc. Progress of the nation depends on how we able to impart quality education to young children who will become the architect of our nation building. It is believed that school accreditation will ameliorate some of the educational related problems.

Key Words: School, Accreditation, Quality, Education

INTRODUCTION

Imparting education is one among the major public services that are delivered by the Government as well as Private Organizations. Providing education to large sections of diversified communities in India is a major challenge. Their educational needs, aspirations and expectations are also different. Though there are private institutes which are equally playing important role in providing educational services but it is beyond the reach of common man. Our education administrators and policy makers have been shown very keen interest in educational reformation and able to bring several changes.

School accreditation is one of such new initiatives gradually getting momentum in different parts of the country. The accreditation of educational institutions is not new to our education system. There is an apex body under University Grants Commission (UGC) to inspect educational accreditation but it is confined to only technical and higher education. Since last two years lot of changes are gradually

taking place and many schools in India are now interested to take up school accreditation. In the light of improving quality in education, school accreditation is an important initiative undertaken by the Quality Council of India (QCI).

The former President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in his inaugural address to QCI Second National Quality Conclave, in February, 2007, New Delhi has stressed the need for development of a standard for the schools to ensure quality of education across the nation. [1] According to his suggestion, QCI with its wing National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET) has come out with accreditation standards for educational institutions.

While talking about the school accreditation, it seems new to the reader and education practitioner. Question may arise what is school accreditation? The concept school accreditation is not a new subject altogether in western developed countries. Question may also arise in the mind that, Indians are doing well in education, why we

need school accreditation? Now the presence of Indian are felt in almost all subcontinent of the world. It is their education and profession which has taken them to different parts of the world. Of course it is true, but in India lots of works remaining to be done for improving the quality in education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study on school accreditation is a field study based research experience learnt during the visits in different schools of national union capital territory Delhi region. This short article is prepared based on both primary as well as secondary sources of data collection. The qualitative method has been used to explain the issues on quality education and school accreditation.

RESULTS

Merely providing adequate infrastructure, teaching-learning material, adequate teaching and non-teaching staff, conducive atmosphere in the school for learning are not sufficient requirements towards the quality education. Along with this, components of the curriculum, viz. syllabus, Co-Curricular Activities (CCA), pedagogy, examination and assessment, affiliation and accreditation standards are also important factors which need to be addressed while dealing with quality issues in education.

Parents generally search good school for their children's education. The lacks of uniformity in educational standards in our education system and increasing competition among private schools for their better performance have rapidly commercializing education. For many people, questions generally come in the mind that, how to decide which school is good? Which syllabus the child should follow? The first important point to note that, there is different education Boards provides affiliation to schools and conduct examinations. While imparting education school follows the patterns / rules prescribed

by the respective Boards with which it is affiliated. It is a difficult task for the parents to understand which Board affiliated school is good in what respect without having knowledge about curricula (including CCA and pedagogy), syllabi, examination and evaluation system, what are the innovative good practices of different schools.

Much like the socio-economic diversity in India, school education also offers a multifaceted model. Overall, the schooling in India is split in different levels - primary, secondary and senior secondary. The school age begins once the child is three years and is normally completed at the age of sixteen. The secondary and senior secondary level, which Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian Council of School Education (ICSE) and different state Boards offers from grade VIII to XII is the most important in terms of career goals and achievements. Like the International Baccalaureate (IB) schools, The recent initiative by Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), Government of India about no Board examination at 10th Class in Indian schools require well designed support system like adequate teachers, classrooms, proper building, library, computer, supply of water, playground, content relevant teaching learning material, improved pedagogy, etc. for effectiveness of education system.

There has been substantial work done on school curriculum, syllabus, CCA, pedagogy, examination and assessment and school affiliation system. But school accreditation is a relatively new term in Indian education system. There are different education Boards operating in India including International, National and State Boards. Except few, many states has its education Board. However, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Indian Council of School Education (ICSE) is a well known national education Boards. The former is under the control of Government of India and the later is the private one. Schools affiliated to any Board operating in India can seek accreditation if it

fulfills the prescribed accreditation standard. In order to get school accreditation school has to follow Quality Management System Standards. What is QMSS? It is a designed standard comprising of certain norms, procedures, policy documents, quality objectives and quality manuals, etc.

So far the school accreditation is concerned, the NDMC (Navyug Schools), Kendriya Vidyalayas, and MCD Schools in Delhi have shown interest to get accredited from the Quality Council of India. There has been major initiatives taken by the NDMC Schools and they are working for getting the accreditation from QCI. For making the education system effective and quality improvement, the former President of India late Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam “asked QCI to suggest an accreditation policy for all primary and secondary schools, particularly those run by the Government.” [3]

DISCUSSION

Understanding quality is a very critical subject in the context of school education. Quality as a subject of individual interest and choice, it varies from individual to individual and group to group. What is quality for somebody may not be same for the other person. Quality beholds in the mind of the people the way he capture the imagination. It is like the eyes that enjoys the beauty and like the choice of a particular colour among the varieties of different. It can also be referred like a particular test of food by individual amongst the varieties of dish.

4.1.1 School Education: Quest for Quality

Education is the backbone of development of any nation and according to former President of India late Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, quality education alone will take nation forward. Quality is multidimensional and one can find quality in different spheres of our day to day life. In search of quality, it may be referred to governance, judiciary, legislation, executives, bureaucracy, industries, education, health, education and public

services. However, the major concern here in this work is to discuss about the quality school education.

If we look at the school education in India today, every year millions of students are moving primary, secondary and higher secondary level to higher education institutions. In the global rankings of 400 higher education institutions India hardly finds a place and it tells the story of quality concern among our various stake holders of education system.

Therefore, several question arises, what went wrong to our educational institutions? Why they do not find a place among best 200 higher education institutions? Is it the school education which is considered as basic foundation for education or the quality concern has been declined in our higher education institutions? Now this is the time for us to introspect ourselves and understand our entire education system.

The evolution of modern day Indian education system has a long historical root. For our general understanding, it is learnt from the existing literature that our education system moves from gurukul ashram to philanthropic organizations and to modern government undertakings. In the process of transformation in the field of education, the close restrictive monopolistic education system to modern liberal open commercial and state run education system.

India’s education system could not evolve as a unitary homogenous entity because of its diversity and structural and functional dynamics. There are different school boards, different syllabi, different pattern, different medium of instructions, and many more. There are so many challenges before the government to address various multi dimensional diversified issues of educational institutions in the context of quality education.

It is considered that primary education to higher secondary education (school education) is much important for the career point of view of the students. Because school education is the foundation

stone for build up the career. Therefore along with reformation in higher education, there is the requirement of immediate attention to improve the school education. Many parents are aware about the importance of school education. When the children grown up and become eligible to enter from primary level to secondary level and to higher secondary education, parents starts thinking and enquiring which education board is better? Which medium school is better? Private school or government school offers good education? Parents hang on around all these questions finally take decision as per the affordability and availability of seats in a particular school. Enlighten people are aware about their ward's education and future career. Each year India has been producing millions of educated unemployed youth. India's economic growth is the jobless growth. Our education system needed to be reformed and education need to be linked with industries and institutions according to their demands.

4.1.2 What is Educational Accreditation?

According to Wikipedia, "Educational accreditation is a type of quality assurance process under which services and operations of an educational institution or program are examined by a third-party accrediting agency to determine if applicable standards are met. Should standards be met, accredited status is granted by the agency." In order to fulfill the customer expectation and satisfaction Indian Standard Bureau (ISB) has started to certify the various industrial products and Institutes with a standard like ISO9000, ISO 9001, ISO15700, etc.

Similarly, educational accreditation is a type of quality assurance process and operations of an educational institutions or program are evaluated by an external body (Accreditation Body) to determine whether the applicable standards are met or not. If the applicable standards are met, accreditation status is granted by the agency. For the educational purposes QCI, NABET has prepared a standard to certify

the schools or educational institutions. It has designed a Quality Management System Standard (QMSS) and a checklist to major the quality in school education. In the light of school accreditation one need to know what is the meaning of quality in school education? Why there is the need to go for school accreditation? These question are seems to be general but thought provoking and require careful understanding. Cliff suggested "quality is somewhat problematic: like beauty, it lies in the eyes – or rather the mind of the beholder." [2] Dewny viewed that, quality can be defined as, "meeting, exceeding and delighting customer's needs and expectations with the recognition that these needs and desires will change over time." For higher education institutions and Universities in India, NAAC under UGC is taking care of accreditation where as for school education QCI NABET is the accreditation body in India.

CONCLUSION

There are many schools which were established to impart education with improper planning and without looking into the suitable location, physical environment, playground, supply of drinking water, toilets, boundary, etc. The school accreditation is not much popular in India and it has to go a long way. School functionaries need to be sensitized about the accreditation standards. Their willingness, motivation and leadership will play a major role to bring changes in education system. One major aspects of school education is the infrastructure facilities. Especially in government schools, one can find the minimum required infrastructure including school building, tables, chairs, computers, almirah, toilets, water supply points, supply of electricity, etc. which required periodical maintenance. There are many schools where infrastructure maintenance is given less importance and this leads to damage and wastage or short lasting of infrastructure.

Pressure of teaching in schools with shortage of teachers and shortage of classrooms, engagement of teachers other

than teaching works like census, election duties, and invigilation duties for different competitive examinations, etc. are also affecting teaching-learning activities. Many schools also lack proper documentations, poor maintenance of records on school activities, etc.

Future belongs to our young generation. Progress of the nation depends on how we able to impart quality education to young children who will become the architect of our nation building. It is believed that school accreditation will ameliorate some of the educational related problems.

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