

# Quality education endorses soft skills and professional success

Shagufta Nazneen Ansari<sup>1</sup> & Salma Kuraishy<sup>2</sup>  
*Junior Research Fellow<sup>1</sup> & Associate Professor<sup>2</sup>*

Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India<sup>1 & 2</sup>

## ***Abstract***

Much discussion on quality education was centred on systems input like pupil teacher ratios, curricular content and infrastructure facilities. But recently attention is being paid more to educational processes which involve the classroom environment and teaching strategies used to convert the inputs to meaningful learning experiences for students.

This paper aims to establish the relationship between for quality education and soft skill endorsement leading to development of students and teachers. Several definitions regarding quality exist in terms of education, which testifies the multifaceted and complex nature of the concept. Efficiency, quality, effectiveness and equity are often used synonymously and it can be achieved through soft skill development. Endorsement and enhancement of soft skills in teachers and students holds an important place in the dispersion of quality education. Soft skills refer to those interpersonal skills, which make a person unique and competent at work or in life. It enables a person to build constructive working relations with other team members. It involves self-mastery, emotional and social intelligence, stress management, communication skills, presentation skills, time management and other skills which unlock the genius within an individual. This paper discusses about the quality education and its interrelatedness with soft skills. It also sends word that how quality education can head to the enhancement of soft skills and further accelerate the professional life of an individual.

***Keywords:*** Quality education, soft skills, professional development.

## ***Introduction***

**"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."**

**Nelson Mandela**

Education is of utmost importance amongst all of us. It is one of the most important factor responsible for shaping the future and personality of an individual. A well educated person proves to be a good citizen, more

dependable worker, a right thinker and a correct decision maker. Here upon quality is the earnest endeavour for human being especially in the area of education. Quality in the discourse of education has become a universal concern presently and has been extensively defined by Downey, Frase and Peters (1994) as, meeting, exceeding, and delighting peoples' needs and prospects with the realization that these needs and desires will be gratified over time.

Quality education provided by professional and trained teachers is the right of all children, youth and adults, and should not be the prerogative of a defined group. The right to education is not only about the right to access education but also the right to experience and have a good quality education. Education must be available and accessible but at the same time it should also be adaptable and acceptable.

Quality education is a dynamic concept guaranteed by international law, states that "Quality is at the heart of education. It influences what students learn, how they learn and what benefits they draw from their education" (EFA GMR 2005, Education for All – The Quality Imperative). Quality education is subject to economic, social and environmental conditions and it evolves with time. However, international human rights law provides a general legal framework that guarantees quality education. Article 26 mentions in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, education shall be directed towards the direction of fuller development of the human personality and to strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Predominantly quality education is not only necessary for meeting peoples need only but also primal in furthering the circumstances for sustainable development and global peace. All youngsters need to learn in active, self-directed and collaborative ways in order to develop and contribute to their communities. They also need to acquire attitudes, values, skills and basic knowledge as well. Their teachers, peers, communities, curriculum and learning resources must help them to equip with the relevant competencies for 21 centuries employability skills also known as soft skills.

### *Dependence of Quality education on quality teaching*

Quality learning is evaluated and clearly characterized on the basis of the quality teaching. According to Fenstermacher & Richardson (2005) "when teaching is done well in the task sense, we call it good teaching. When teaching results in learning it's said to be successful teaching and when teaching is both successful and good, we can call it quality teaching". Quality teaching does not happen itself or takes place in some vacuum. It needs physical space and efforts and is entirely related to the whole education system which contributes to teaching.

Wilson, John I. (2006). Wrote in his journal article, “*Twenty-First Century Learning for Teachers: Helping Educators Bring New Skills into the Classroom*” that there is more concentration on the test scores, accountability and school restructuring, educators have lost sight of the ultimate goal of education: empowering all students to achieve personal and professional success when they pass out from school. He emphasized that teachers should make their students to learn rather than stuffing them just with data and they should not confine their students to the classes in spite it should be an entry point for them to understand the world. In order to implement 21<sup>st</sup> century learning in schools, there should be empowerment of teachers through training and availing them with adequate infrastructure necessary to integrate new skills in the classroom teaching and learning. In his article he provided a framework for helping educators in bringing new skills to the classroom.

Ameetha Pand and Purohit Deepti (2005) in their study “Soft Skills Training Requirement for a New age Teacher” analyzed the soft skill training program existing in Andhra Pradesh and also compared the curriculum of different universities in India. The results showed that the existing curriculum of teachers training program in Andhra Pradesh emphasize more on the training of teaching methodology than on developing their soft skills. Perhaps this should not be the mere aim of teachers training.

### *Soft skills*

Soft Skills are the *behavioral* competencies, also known as *Interpersonal Skills*, or *people skills*; it includes proficiencies such as personal effectiveness, communication skills, creative problem solving, team building, negotiation, conflict resolution, strategic thinking, and influencing skills. Soft skills comprises of personal constructs that derives ones potential for affirmed growth and enhances their social interactions, task performance and career prospects and transform him/her into a mature person.

According to Daniel Goleman, soft skills are the core skills that contribute to a person’s ability to manage him or herself and collaborate with others. These are the skills which are equally important as our IQ or technical skills in any task fulfillment. According to the research findings, several soft skills have been identified and some of them were chosen to be implemented for teaching learning. They are:

- i. Communicative skills
- ii. Problem solving and thinking skills.
- iii. Teamwork

iv. Information management and Life-long learning skills

v. Leadership skills

vi. Self-awareness

vii. Emotional stability

viii. Handling peer pressure

ix. Negotiation skills

All the above mentioned soft skills are crucial for a teacher or educator to impart quality education. On the other hand quality education will also introduce these soft skills to the students helping them flourish professionally.

#### *Need for soft skills for quality education.*

As the Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “the Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”. This definition ultimately points towards the soft skill development for quality education as in its initial part it says specifically that “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality”. Here quality education is all about fuller development of personality of the learner and fuller development in turn points out that he is prepared for coping with the challenges of practical life with emotional stability.

The UEE has also emphasized on the growth of life skills among youths and adults. Education plays a significant role in achieving the very first objective of the national youth policy-2014. The policy recognizes that “in order to create a productive youth workforce, it is essential that the youth of the country have access to the right set of tools and opportunities to make a sustainable contribution”. Amongst the precedencies identified by the National Youth Policy 2014 to promote the youth education, it included the promotion of skill development and lifelong learning along with the improvement in the quality of education system, which is supposed to be a major step towards the quality education and soft skill development. Quality education includes outcomes that embrace knowledge, skills and attitudes, which are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. Various programs have been carried out by the central and state/UT governments to promote quality education and altogether make teaching learning outcomes better.



The NCERT has framed the performance indicators for the teachers of elementary school level (PINDICS) of the states in the country. These performance standards predefine the evaluation measures according to their expected tasks and duties. PINDICS may gradually emerge as the criteria for effective measuring standards and benchmarks across the nation.

Farooqi (2013) in his study “Soft Skills: A Tool for Maximizing Productivity in Educational Institutes”, explored that how development of soft skills among teachers and students in educational institutes holds an important place in the maximization of productivity. According to him teachers should be creative, analytical, critical, and innovative in manners that include the scope of applying knowledge to the practical world. In continuation of that the teachers should possess problem solving ability and critical thinking skills that are necessary to determine the difficulty of the situation and make justifiable estimations. The ability to extend and enhance thinking skills is also important for them to evolve with emerging ideas and alternative solutions.

### *Conclusion*

Soft skills refer to the ability to successfully navigate the needs of those individuals with whom you come into contact daily. School education emphasizes on imparting hard skills and mostly lacks in imparting soft skills. According to world health organization “soft skills are nothing but psychological skills, which insists upon accepting the behavior of others along with their culture.” The communication skills in the educational settings refer to the verbal capacity of communicating one’s thoughts, ideas and knowledge to others effectively which we call communication skills. It is one of the major medium of expressing one’s knowledge and in broader sense the entire personality.

For improving the leadership competence amongst the educational administrators and school headmasters, a new center for school leadership “National Centre for School Leadership” (NCSL) was setup in “National University of Educational Planning and Administration” (NUEPA). The NCSL has developed the curriculum and framework for school leadership. The program has been initiated in the states of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal, Kerala, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli. The program will be further expanded to many more states in 2014-15.

The whole discussion points out that quality education calls for enhancement of soft skills on the part of students and teachers both. When the teachers will inculcate necessary soft skills in them then they can also impart it among their students and create a conducive environment for learning for learners. Having an appropriately good level of Communicative skills, Thinking and problem solving ability, Leadership skills,

Teamwork dynamics, Self-awareness, emotional stability, Handling peer pressure and negotiation skills will leave an individual with a much developed personality and make the person able to cope with the different situation of your life and succeed in his career.

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