

EDITORIAL HIGH QUALITY SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

A high quality school is noted for promoting social, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, spiritual and physical development of the child. It not only focuses on continuous improvement of its existing facilities, but also takes active part in continuous and sustainable development of the sister schools and the community. In short, a high quality school provides a stimulating, vibrant, effective and broad based learning environment suitable for an integral development of the child.

A FEW IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF A HIGH QUALITY SCHOOL

A few important aspects of a high quality school are: 1. Campus Atmosphere; 2. Democratic Environment; 3. Material Resources; 4. Physical Education and Sports and Health Care; 5. Learning Environment; 6. Learner Centered Strategies; 7. Inclusive Approach; 8. Co-curricular Activities; 9. Value education; 10. Information to all stakeholders about the Current Status of the School and Its Expectations from Them; 11. Linkage with the Community. 12. Teacher Quality; and 13. Teacher Management and Continuous Professional Development of Teachers; 14. Leadership and Collaboration, 15. Learner Performance.

1. Campus Atmosphere

Every child likes to play. Family provides the initial setting for play. The members of the family who play with the child become emotionally closer to the child. Much of the learning at home, before joining a playschool/ kindergarten / Montessori school takes place through imitation and play. High quality schools are expected to provide an uninterrupted extension of these types of

activities to which children are accustomed at home, before coming to a school. Schools in ancient India were located in forests, where the students grew up in the lap of the nature. In 1904, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore started his school at Santiniketan in West Bengal, at the time of foundation, a remote rural area. The school later grew up as Visva Bharati. In Odisha State, similar effort was made by Pandit Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das at Satyavadi Vana Vidyalaya (*Forest School*), near Puri. It was a short lived experiment, as its founder had to be away from the school because of his arrest by the colonial government. Such efforts are also found elsewhere in the world. For instance, in addition to Folk high schools, initiated by the vision of N.V.S. Grundtvig, to-day there are many forest schools in Denmark which give stress on giving the opportunity to the children to enjoy the life in the lap of the forest than learning to read and write. Many high quality schools are also located in urban areas, away from forests. Although high quality school is not a new concept, since three decades, a movement is being organised by the UNICEF to make nations focus on the concept. UNICEF manual for child friendly school published in 2006. This manual mentions about varieties of projects and programmes on this theme being practised in different parts of the world. A document of the UNICEF states that a child friendly school (a) reflects and realises the rights of every child; (b) sees and understands the whole child, in a broad context; (c) is child-centered; (d) is gender-sensitive and girl-friendly; (e) promotes quality learning outcomes; (f) provides education based on the reality of children's lives; (g) is flexible and responds to diversity; (h) acts to ensure inclusion, respect, and equality of opportunity for all children; (i) promotes mental and physical health; (j) provides education that is affordable and accessible; (k) enhances teacher capacity, morale, commitment, and status; (l) is family focused; and (m) is community-based. A high quality school is identified by a welcoming atmosphere that is friendly, warm and secure. Its classroom settings are attractive and rendered aesthetic by use of

plants, bulletin boards, banners, warm colours, etc. It has a homely and welcoming campus in a natural and spacious ambience. It has well maintained grass lawns on which children can squat and roam about. Lawns are also used for various activities including teaching - learning. It is generally located in natural surrounding with a beautiful garden, away from the noise of the vehicular traffic and from cell phone towers, which are health hazards. It has herbarium, aquarium, small pond with plants and animals, mini zoo, etc. which besides providing opportunity for direct observation as part of curricular transaction, enhance the beauty of the campus. Walls of its building are made educative and interesting with charts, posters, graphs, photos, newspaper cuttings, etc. Its building may not be costly, but is kept neat and clean and is well maintained to give a sense of aesthetic perfection. The campus of a high quality school makes the children feel safe and secure. A high quality school reduces the load of the school bag for a student. It makes provision in the school for keeping books and notebooks of the students in the classroom, so that students carry fewer loads to home. In these types of schools, teacher bag is generally heavier than student bag, as the teacher bag may contain lap top/ iPod/CD/ cassettes, pen drives in addition to pictures, worksheets specially prepared for a class, etc. Certain high quality schools do not provide any home work.

2. Democratic Environment

A high quality school provides a democratic environment wherein the members of the management, teachers, students and parents have love and respect for one another and work in collaboration to achieve common goals. It has rules and regulations which are framed in the best interest of the students and are fair and transparent. It takes special care not to hurt the feelings of any student. If a student commits any error, it helps him / her to understand the psychology that gave rise to such errors. It develops appropriate skills in the student concerned so that s/he

does not repeat such errors. Its teachers and the head teachers do not act as authorities, but as collaborators, genuinely concerned in the continuous development of the learners. Its students are not afraid of presenting to the teachers or head teachers of the schools the difficulties being faced by them in the school or in their learning. Such an atmosphere at times results in making students complain to teachers against their family members or their home environments, with the feeling that the teachers love them more than their parents. In order to reduce the gap between the teacher and the taught, certain high quality schools make their teachers addressed by students as brothers / sisters or uncle/ aunt instead of formal sir/ madam / miss. Democratic environment also makes community members share their problems with the teachers and head teachers of the schools. Certain good schools allow community members to utilise school facilities such as school playgrounds, school halls, school mike systems, etc. with or without any payment.

3. Material Resources

A high quality school has appropriate and adequate material resources. It has play ground of appropriate size. It has well lighted and well ventilated classrooms, free from noise. The classrooms have seating arrangements that avoid chaos and can be modified quickly at the time of group activities. These are attractive with appropriate bulletin boards, walls, cup boards, teacher desks, etc. They have chalk boards of appropriate quality to be used with chinks of appropriate colour. There are also magnetic boards and marker boards. There is a portion of the wall that can act as a screen at the time of use of PowerPoint, films, slides, film strips, opaque projectors and overhead projectors. Each classroom has arrangements for use of various types of projectors, video recorders, television, internet, telephone, computers, laptops, video recorders, audio recording, etc. High quality school has facilities for physically handicapped children. It has halls for carrying out indoor assemblies at the time of rain. It

has also stage on the ground to carry out morning assembly programmes as well as various functions. It has a well maintained library with open access system which maintains topic index, author index and title index of books and journals and their contents. It has reading room. It also has Xeroxing facilities. Certain high quality schools, besides having classrooms, have computer lab, art room, music room, dancing hall, multi-purpose hall, rooms of silence, where a student can sit silently for meditation, concentration or study independently without any disturbance. They also provide rooms for collaboration, where a small number of students can have group discussion. Depending on the level of education imparted, the high quality school has equipment necessary for teaching each subject. The equipment for general use include computers, lap top, projectors-16mm film, 35 mm film strip projector, slide projector, overhead projector, opaque projector, video recorder, audio recording equipment and public broadcasting system.

4. Physical Education and Sports and Health Care

A high quality school provides quality and inclusive physical education classes every day. It does not have a holiday for physical education. All persons in the school participate in these programmes. The school believes in the principle that a healthy mind requires a healthy body. During weekly holidays and long summer or other holidays, the school continues to have physical education programmes. In the absence of the sports teacher, another teacher remains in charge of these activities. The school ensures that all teachers have the capacity to handle such activities. It makes its teachers and students jointly take part in physical education programmes. If required, it takes appropriate help from the community in organising physical education programmes. A high quality school provides physical education and sports activities which include games, gymnastics, aquatics, athletics, and combatives. Games include base ball, basket ball, beat ball, circle ball, circle pillar ball, cricket, dodge ball, fisher

man, foot ball, hockey, Indian *kho kho*, kabadi, king and fortress, lungadi, soft ball, square dodge ball, throw ball, triple chase, volley ball, etc. Gymnastics include items such as agility, asans, asymmetrical parallel bars, balance beam, callisthenics, floor exercises, hand stand, marching, mass exercises, movements with music, parallel bars, rings, rope climbing, skipping, skating, trampoline, tumbling, and vaulting. Aquatics include swimming, diving, water polo. Athletics include jumps, races, walks, hurdles, throwing of cricket ball, discus, javelin, and shot put, pole vault, etc. Combative include boxing, jiu-jit-su, judo, lathi, wrestling, The physical education infrastructure include swimming pool, sports track, horse riding track, football cum cricket ground, volley ball ground, table tennis room, badminton court, tennis court, gymnasium having parallel bars, uneven bars, pommel horse, rings, ropes, etc. In case of pre-school section, they have merry go rounds, slopes, swings, etc. All high quality schools organise annual athletic and sports meet or physical education programme demonstration. They train their students in playing bands. They allow members of the community to utilise their games and sports facilities with or without payment, when these facilities are not utilised by students.

A high quality school takes proper care of health of the students. It carries out appropriate health check-up not only at the time of entry but also continuously, at appropriate intervals throughout the career of the student. It gives timely feedback to parents and guardians about any health related issue observed in the school. For instance, a teacher, after observing that a student is failing to listen, even when seated in the front bench, reports to the parents about necessity for check-up by an ENT specialist. Health check-up is also related to the student taking part in different physical exercises in the school. A high quality school provides hygienic and clean toilets having adequate running water supply and wash basins with liquid soaps. It has separate toilet for girls and also special toilets for physically handicapped boys and physically

handicapped girls. It has a hygienic and well maintained dining hall for students to take food during lunch break. In case of mid-day meal supplied by the school, the food is tasty and hygienic. Its teachers and students take the same meal. It collaborates with government health care agencies for health related drives.

5. Learning Environments

A high quality school has a joyful learning environment. The school does not use fear as an instrument for controlling the vital beings of the students, which have both bad and good impulses. There is no corporal punishment. If there is any case of indiscipline, the school explores the reason behind such an act and makes efforts to address the causal and contributory factors. It channelises the tumultuous energy of children into harmless, cathartic activities in a climate of unconditional acceptance and love. It modifies the rough vital energies in the students in an atmosphere of love. Its teachers never get angry. It confers with the parents in taking various steps to control any act of indiscipline in a student.

A high quality school stresses on teaching through strategies which make learning a joyful experience for the students. Before beginning schooling, the child has been at home spending his/her time in playing. Game-based teaching approaches narrow the gap between the school and the home. Game-based teaching maybe carried outside the classroom, in the playground of the school or in areas outside the school. A good school educates the parents and other members of the community about the benefits of the game based teaching approaches. It encourages parental involvement in such approaches as more than one adult person, in many occasions, become necessary for execution of such approaches. Game based approaches make the teachers take the students outside the classroom, may be to the playground of the school or to areas outside the school. In case of environmental studies at the lower classes, teaching outside the class is an

essential strategy. As almost all initial teacher training programmes do not cover “Education outside the Classroom”, the high quality schools train their teachers on this instructional strategy. High quality school takes its students on study tours as part of the efforts to supplement learning of geography, science and social studies. The places covered include agricultural farm, art gallery, botanical garden, dam, factory, fall, harbour, heritage site, market place, planetarium, railway station, river, sea, zoo, etc. Good quality schools also organise excursions to different places of cultural, geographical and historical interest. A high quality school arranges open air classes. It does not impose learning goals on their students. While setting learning goals, it takes into account the interest, aptitude, abilities, past experiences, and the preferred learning styles of the individual students. It sets these goals in consultation with students. It develops in students a belief that they can reach the learning goals set. It uses student evaluation as a tool for improving student learning. It makes efforts to grow as a learning community, in which every member has the opportunity to grow at one’s own pace. In case a high quality school finds a student becoming regularly irregular in attending the classes, it explores the causes of irregularity and gives appropriate counseling to the guardians of the student.

A high quality school conducts varieties of programmes: debates, one act plays, drama, quizzes, elocution contests, exhibitions, fairs, annual physical education demonstrations, inter house games tournaments, athletic competitions, etc. to develop various types of abilities in the students. In order to provide better opportunity for advanced level skills in talented students in certain areas like dance, music, games, etc., it provides extra classes, which are not compulsory for all. Such classes in certain school function before the starting and after closing of the school. For instance, a school functions from morning 7. 45 to 11. 30 and again from afternoon 1.45 to 4.00. Its optional extra classes for music are held from morning 6.00 to 7.00, flute class from afternoon 1 to 1.30

and dance class from evening 6 to 7 and from evening 8 to 9. Such a school has various types of musical instruments - drum, ektara, esraj, flute, *ghunguru*, guinea, guitar, harmonium, *jhanj*, *khartal*, *manjeera*, piano, *sarod*, *shankha*, sitar, *tabala*, *tanpura*, *veena*, violins, etc. It has multiple sets of musical instruments of any type depending on its use for special training. It organises recitals of various instruments. It organises an annual drama. Throughout the year, at intervals, it organises variety programmes which give opportunity for public appraisal of the talents of students in music, dance and drama and opportunity for getting feedback for improving talent. High quality school arranges coaching classes, free of charge, to improve the level of preparation of their students for public examinations - school final examinations, scholarship examinations, etc. In case, the school has a large number of under achievers, it provides extra class during sun days and long holidays with the help of the teachers not going out of station for personal work. It provides supervised study periods, when the students get additional opportunity to do their home assignments or to study with personal guidance and feedback from the teacher. Certain students feel shy to express their difficulties in a common classroom. Supervised study periods provide opportunity to such students to clear their difficulties individually.

High quality schools employ innovative strategies to improve quality of teaching and learning. For instance, one school introduced the practice of daily assessment of a few students randomly selected on the lesson taught on the previous day as a strategy to ensure not only regular reading but also for boosting regularity in school attendance among students. The school notified that the final attainment of a student will be a composite measure consisting of 50% from daily assessments, 25% from the quarterly examinations and 25% from the final, annual examinations. Every classroom had a chart mentioning names of the students. Every teacher in the beginning of a class session

asked a few questions related to the lesson taught on the previous day awarded marks for the answers. This practice made students, who had missed the class during a day, study at home the lesson they had missed and come well prepared to face questions in the next class, lest they are asked to answer questions related to the lesson covered in the previous class. High quality school does not limit its students' learning to the number of subjects prescribed by the Board to which it is affiliated. Certain schools provide, free of charge, instruction in foreign languages, dance, music, art, photography, Indian languages etc. It also provides opportunities for their students to get work experiences in the open air involving farming, gardening, etc. This develops in the students dignity for manual labour, respect for individuals engaged in manual labour and skills necessary for use in certain work situations. In addition to developing awareness about various techniques involved in certain work situations, it also develops deeper skills in certain crafts such as wood work, needle work, tailoring, weaving, etc. High quality school adopts varieties of strategies to ensure punctuality among students. If a student remains absent continuously, it contacts the concerned parents. If the child fails to come to the school due to parental reluctance, it sends its teachers to concerned parents to motivate them to send their children to schools.

6. Learner Centered Strategies

A high quality school is learner sensitive. It makes its students take active part in formulating their own learning plan. The teachers assist them in the process. In Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Puducherry, such activities are provided under their scheme of 'Free Progress System'. As this institution is neither affiliated to any Board of School Education nor prepares students for any specific course, such a strategy does not have any problem. In this institution, as the progress of a student in individual subject continues unhindered by restriction of annual plan of study specified by the institution, there are situations

where a student studies one subject in one class level and another subject in a higher or a lower class level. Because of non-detention policy, in all types of schools, it is possible that a class V might have a student of class II level. In such circumstances, administration of a common test over all students may be useless. High quality school uses tests which are flexible enough to measure each student's academic growth. It gives opportunity to students to carry out independently and collaboratively various projects which may cut across conventional subject or arts/science/commerce stream boundaries. In case of learners with special needs, a good school, in consultation with each student, develops individualised learning packages. It maintains appropriate class size so that there is proper communication between the teacher and the taught.

7. Inclusive Approaches

A high quality school is inclusive in approach. It does not differentiate on the basis of caste, creed, sex, religion, physical or learning disability or income level of the parents. Because of Compulsory Education Act 2009, each school admits a proportion of its students from disadvantaged population. High quality school trains its teachers in specific pedagogy to equip them with skills to take care of children having cognitive learning disabilities, emotional problems, physical handicaps, etc. In case of slow learners, it makes provision for them to have extra class hours. Sometimes, it also pairs them with their peers who are advanced learners and are willing to help. It provides specialist teachers to take extra care of blind, dumb and deaf children and slow learners. It gives general training to all its teachers to make them aware of various types of learning aids used by dumb and deaf and blind students. It maintains a resource room for the purpose. It makes extra provision for comfortable movement of physically handicapped children in the school campus. It takes help of resource persons available from the community to take care of learning of children with special needs. Although E-

inclusion is an under-theorised area, which has developed piecemeal over the last 30 years, certain high quality schools use it to enhance the learning of the children with special needs. They also appropriately train their teachers for the purpose. With the expectation that parental help in schools can boost learning of students suffering from physical and mental handicaps, many high quality schools involve parents in the school programmes. Of course, they train the parents for the purpose.

8. Co-curricular Activities

A high quality school provides rich co-curricular activities. Generally, a school starts its daily activities with morning assemblies which may include silence / concentration for a few minutes with or without recorded music, vocal prayers by all teachers and students, singing of a prayer by a group and others listening in silence or repeating it, reading of texts from scriptures in case of schools managed by religious organisations, having activities such as playing musical instruments, reading important news items, enacting short plays, reciting, and listening to guest talks, etc. In case of one high quality school, there is no general assembly. A recorded music is played over loudspeaker and during that period, all teachers and students maintain silence and concentrate, wherever they are, whether inside the classroom or in the common room. High quality school has varieties of clubs. The club activities are conducted with or without active participation of suitable parents and guardians. The clubs may be directly related to the regular subjects of instruction or co-curricular activities. These include acting club, arts club, astronomy club, choir, cooking club, dancing club, geography club, handicrafts club, history club, knitting club, mathematics club, music club, philately club, photography club, *rangoli* club, reading club, science club, sculpture club, stamp collection club, storytelling club, toy making club, weaving club, wood work club, etc. High quality school organizes several competitions on painting, drawing, playing musical instruments, singing, etc. and trains

students for taking part in individual as well as group events for entertaining not only the school family but also guests invited for the purpose. The school is guided by the principle that every child needs to get opportunity in participation in co-curricular activities appropriate for his / her emotional development. It organises cultural activities throughout the year. The activities are planned keeping in mind local functions and festivals. Certain schools become the venue for community celebration of festivals. The cultural activities provide opportunity for expression of the talents of the students in various fields of activity. It organises picnics that provide opportunity to students to enjoy and learn how to manage themselves in a group. High quality school also invites outside guests to perform for the benefit of the students and teachers.

A high quality school provides varieties of co-curricular activities for appropriate growth and development. For instance, one school utilises senior students in maintaining discipline in the classrooms in the absence of the teachers. The school lunch break is half an hour for students and one hour for teachers. During the half an hour of teacher absence, senior students take control of the school. Students in a class are allowed either to sleep or read silently. The senior student taking care of them sits on the teacher's chair and keeps an eye on the class. Certain schools divide the whole school into several 'Houses'. Each House is assigned the responsibility of taking care of school programmes and activities for a day in the week. There is a House Monitor who manages the activities, under the guidance of a teacher. On the days assigned, the House helps the school by organising morning assembly, mentioning the time of arrival in the diaries of the late comers and keeping the campus neat and clean. Each classroom has names of students on a chart indicating the House to which s/he belongs. If a teacher finds a student doing certain activity that is worthy of praise, s/he mentions appropriate marks against the student's name. In case of undesirable activities, negative marks are given. Each House

motivates its members to perform better so that it can become the 'Best House'. High quality school gives appropriate awards to its students on the basis of their performance. It arranges special teachers to facilitate growth of any special talent. However, if the school is not rich to pay such extra teachers, it collects funds necessary for the purpose from the parents concerned. It organises talks and other activities as part of observation of national and international days to make students aware of various issues connected to such days.

9. Value Education and Skill Development

In addition to High quality schools carry out varieties of activities to develop various values in their students. Besides developing learning skills, high quality schools arrange activities to make the students develop various behavioural and social skills such as being patient, being polite, being co-operative, being tolerant, displaying team spirit, helping others in distress, listening to others, sharing of facilities, etc. Moral, social and spiritual values and interpersonal and conflict-resolution skills are developed are developed through activities like group discussions, lectures, debates, visits and discussion on the outcomes of the visits. Taking part in drama, one act play and doing painting, singing, dancing, etc. develop behavioural, social and cultural skills in the students. Participation in physical education programmes including *pranayama* and *yogasan* exercises and cultural activities facilitate taming of vital forces in students including channelisation of excess energy, control of anger, reduction of restlessness, respecting other cultures, race and religion, Teachers of high quality schools use eye-contact, facial expressions, posture, gestures, proximity, tone of voice, mannerisms, to facilitate their training of students. They use a range of problem solving and conflict resolution strategies, if required after appropriate consultation made with parents and guardians. They make effort to take care of behavioural disorders, if any, noticed in students keeping in mind the self-concept of students. They help the

students to develop self-regulating skills and managing their own behaviour. They ensure a warm and supportive classroom environment that makes students learn effectively and get joy in learning. High quality schools ensure an environment, where the students are not afraid of teachers and treat them as their consultants. They have a written code of behaviour and communicate this to each stakeholder.

10. Information to All Stakeholders about Outcomes of School's Self-Evaluation and External Evaluation, if any.

Many private fee charging schools advertise about the achievement of their students in public examinations so that they can increase their funds by having more donations for admission. A high quality school does not go for such tricks. However, it informs the stake holders about its achievements and limitations based on its self-evaluation or evaluation by recognised external assessment agencies. It indicates its plan of action to overcome the limitations. Periodically, it makes explicit the rights and responsibilities of various stake holders and the roles they are expected to play in the learning community of the school. If possible, it maintains a web site and gives all the data regarding the school in it and periodically updates it. A good school brings out newsletters that carry also messages for parents and articles of relevance to parents' role in proper upbringing of their children.

11. Linkage with the Community

The nature and quality of the linkage of a school with the community is crucial in bringing the school closer to the children. When the parents participate in school activities, the students accept the school as an extension of home. A high quality school maintains close relationship with the community. It utilises this relationship in developing its material resources and in maintaining and beautifying its campus. For instance, a school gets its class rooms built in memory of father/ mother of a member of the community. In this process, a good school may get library

books, library book shelves, science equipment, computer, projector etc. While utilising appropriate community physical and human resources to enrich school activities, the school ungrudgingly spares its physical and human resources for community welfare. It also undertakes community development work such as cleaning roads and ponds, carrying out volunteer work at the time of fairs / festivals being organised by the community, etc. It educates the community about the importance of taking care of the child even from the time of its conception in a womb. It also makes the community aware of lifelong learning skills and their use in updating knowledge and skills. Every good school has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA). It works as a support to the school. However, its quality of functioning depends on the quality of the parents-their level of education and interest in education. High quality school has alumni association, which keeps the contact of the ex-students alive with the school. Such associations meet at least once a month to plan and carry out institutional development. There are 'Community Schools' in certain countries. The duty chart of teachers of such schools include visit to homes of students for helping students in their study and for interacting with their parents and guardians. Certain high quality schools give community liaison responsibility to specific teachers. In certain systems, such a teacher is called as "Homeroom Teacher". The teachers of high quality schools are spontaneous leaders of not only the school community, but also of the neighbourhood. They are loved by the community for their contribution to community welfare. The management of a good school encourages its teachers to interact with the members of the community and utilise their expertise in classroom situations. A high quality school maintains a list of persons, with their qualifications, experience in teaching and expertise in various activities related to school programmes and time and day on which they can be made available to help the school. This strategy facilitates running the school in the absence of the teachers or as support to teachers.

12. Teacher Quality

A high quality school takes appropriate steps for selecting its teachers. It looks for attributes such as integrity, eagerness to learn, concern for others, leadership, emotional stability, enthusiasm / energy, sense of humour, etc. in the candidates. Besides taking note of the professional qualifications, the school also tests teaching aptitude, content knowledge and teaching skills of the applicants. It interviews the candidates to assess their level of commitment to the teaching profession and interest to try out innovations. High quality school has faith in the capability of its teachers. It treats them as pedagogical experts and gives them autonomy related to transaction of curriculum. It involves them in formulation of school policy and in planning for the year and for the future. It gives freedom to teachers in choice of textbooks and also in preparing instructional materials. It shares with them the financial management policy including details of income and expenditure pattern of the school.

A high quality school has highly motivated teachers. Its teachers are punctual. They come to the school daily a few minutes before the actual school time starts. High quality school expects its teachers to reach school daily at least fifteen minutes before school starts. In case of schools having students coming by buses, teachers receive them. The teachers having classes in the first period come earlier to ensure that the classroom is neat and clean and is in a position to welcome the students. In case, there is a necessity for rearranging the classroom for a certain activity in the first period, the teacher's early arrival becomes indispensable. Effective teachers are self-motivated to work efficiently. They have the zeal to upgrade their knowledge and skills and to innovate. If there is no Internet facility in the school or at home or in the locality, during the weekly holidays, they go to other places to browse Internet to get ideas and information to update their own

knowledge and skill. On their own initiative, they try to observe teaching of other teachers in their own school or in other schools and try to utilise new ideas/ innovations, if any, that they can incorporate in their own classrooms. They subscribe to free mailing list of organisations / institutions giving information of use to school teachers. They carry out action researches with or without any collaboration from the peers and disseminate the outcomes and seek feedback for possible improvement. They also post their writings / experiences in appropriate web sites to get feedback. They possess insight, epiphany and empathy.

A high quality school has well skilled teachers. Its teachers are aware of the fact that the best teacher develops in students skills of learning. The teachers are adepts in varieties of teaching techniques. They enjoy their job. This sense of enjoyment in teachers gets transferred to students during their teaching. They make their classrooms interesting and educative with appropriate audio-visual aids so that the students can go through them during the lunch break or when they come to the class before the arrival of the teacher at the stipulated time.

13. Teacher Management and Continuous Professional Development of Teachers

A high quality school, in addition to regular class/subject teachers, also has part/full time teachers for subjects like Art, Craft, Dance, Music, and Physical Education. It provides extrinsic incentives to its teachers for their punctuality and regularity of attendance and for better performance of their students in public examinations or in various competitions. The quality of an initial teacher training programme very much depends on adequate amount of experience in teaching varieties of lessons in actual classroom situations over an acceptable duration. At present in UK, number of weeks a teacher trainee is required to spend in schools are:

24 weeks: Secondary and key stage 2/3 postgraduate courses;

- 18 weeks: Primary postgraduate programmes;
- 32 weeks: Four-year undergraduate programmes;
- 24weeks: Two-and three-year undergraduate programmes.

In India, most of the initial teacher training courses have the old teacher training system of UK as model and do not provide adequate school teaching experiences as being provided today such programmes in UK. For instance, one year B. Ed. course in India generally requires 30 lessons to be delivered in schools, which a student teacher may cover in 3 weeks; whereas in UK for a similar programme, the student teacher has to spend 24 weeks. It is also a fact that the initial teacher training programmes cannot take all possible steps in preparing a person to teach. Such type of realisation makes a high quality school provide appropriate induction programmes for new teachers being recruited by it. It gives reduced teaching load to the beginning teachers and makes them free for certain hours to update them and observe teaching of senior teachers. It attaches new teachers to senior teachers for guidance and for giving feedback on classroom management skills, etc. It also provides varieties of teacher support materials in print and online form. It develops a repertoire of diverse classroom management practices by encouraging teachers to observe other teachers. It makes its teachers aware of the goals set by the school and accountability standards expected from them. Its teachers are consulted in setting these standards, and are rewarded not only for high performance of their students in public examinations but also for their innovations and action researches that help students overcome their social and emotional problems.

14. Teacher Evaluation for Teacher Development

A high quality school periodically undertakes teacher evaluation. It gives stress on formative evaluation and utilise evaluation outcomes as support for continuous professional development of its teachers. The evaluation bases on classroom teaching observation, study of student and teacher portfolios, student engagement, student performance, students' learning process,

opinions of students and parents, etc. A high quality school provides individualised feedback to teachers, taking into account the characteristics and competencies of individual teachers and the subjects and classes being taught by them. This helps in improving skills for handling classroom disciplinary climate and improving teacher self-efficacy. Teacher evaluation is associated with a number of cognitive as well as non-cognitive factors. Evaluation by the head teacher of the institution may be affected by bias. Such an evaluation not only takes into consideration teacher knowledge, skill in teaching and attitude and handling other activities and intelligence, but also interpersonal relationships of the teacher with parents, other teachers and the head of the institution.

Whether the head of the institution is skilled in evaluating teacher performance is another question. Experience of the head of the institution may not be an effective tool for development of such skills. Hence, high quality school makes provision for appropriate training for its head teacher. The skill of the student performance as an indicator of teacher performance is also not free from criticism as a large number of school students learn simultaneously in private coaching centers in addition to learning in school. Again, entry level ability of the student is a crucial issue in case of student performance being treated as an indicator of teacher performance. In the era of non-detention policy during compulsory schooling stage, there may be a student without having even literacy skill getting admitted in class VIII. Qualifications and training received by the teachers may not make a teacher always perform efficiently, as performance is also related to various factors such as emotional level, mental and physical health of the teacher, teacher enthusiasm, etc. which change from time to time. Past record or even previous year's record may not hold good. Evaluation based on direct observations of classroom practice supported by video recordings by trained evaluators is considered as an effective measure. A good school

goes for observation of may be four or more number of video recorded lessons. In certain schools opinions of students, peers of teachers and members of the community including parents are also taken into consideration. Teacher evaluation strategies assume importance when the outcomes are related to teacher continuation in a job. Any single mode evaluation of teacher performance is not acceptable. Hence, a high quality school employs varieties of strategies.

15. Leadership and Collaboration

A high quality school is characterised by distributive leadership and collaboration. Its management is democratic in spirit and is based on the principle of collective leadership. It gives stress on collaboration among members of the school community. It has faith on its head teacher and gives him/her appropriate autonomy. The head teacher of a high quality school performs various functions which contribute to continuous improvement in the growth and development of the school. The school governing body / management plays a vital role in a high quality school. The most important task is the task of getting a competent head teacher for the school. The high quality school management provides facilities for the head teacher of the school to contribute to the qualitative growth of the school and in the process also to grow as an individual. It sends its head teachers for study tour of innovative schools in the country as well as outside the country. It periodically undertakes self -evaluation and organises evaluation of the school by external agencies so as to keep pace with developments at home and abroad.

15. Learner Performance

High quality schools have record breaking learner performance in public examinations and in special scholarship examinations conducted by school boards and school departments. Many high fee charging schools draw the attention of the parents and guardians by advertising the position of their school students. Of

course, there is no record to state whether this performance is due to efforts of the school teachers or due to paid private coaching. Interestingly, private coaching institutions in their advertisements also mention the names of their students. These performances are related to intellectual development. High quality schools also cover other aspects of development. Which schools are of high quality varies according to perceptions of parents. Certain parents have a general feeling that English medium schools are better and while seeking jobs, proficiency in spoken English may be preferred by employers. This is the reason that sometimes, one comes across poor parents struggling hard to give English medium schooling for their children. Certain groups of parents prefer the schools set up by religious groups, which according to them have the potential to make their children grow up as honourable individuals. There are also a small group of parents who have faith on the ideology of founders of certain schools and they admit their children in such schools. For instance, Indira Gandhi, late prime minister of India had got her education in Visva Bharati of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. Although formal degrees are not provided, a small group of parents, admit their children in Sri Aurobindo international Centre of Education, Pondicherry founded by The Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Low class size attracts attention of certain parents for which even if a no fee charging government school exists in the locality, one comes across high enrolments in fee charging private schools in rural areas. A few years ago, the author during visit to Tudigadia village in Odisha state came across two government secondary schools having a small number of students in each class. On enquiry, it was initially village had a Senior Basic school run by the state government. Being dissatisfied with Basic school curriculum, a few villagers started a private school. As after a few years, all private schools were converted to government schools and Basic schools were converted to general schools, the village had two government schools. Hence, the nature of learner performance plays a role in accepting a school as a better school or not.

CONCLUSION

Building a high quality school requires collaborative effort of the management and the teachers. In case of government schools and government aided schools, it necessitates appropriate policy decisions. It also requires support of the community. A high quality school can optimise level of learning of the students and develop them into well motivated, disciplined and right thinking individuals. It provides an enriched curriculum that promotes integral / whole development of the children-physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual. Transaction of school curricula is today controlled by State controlled teacher recruitment policy, teacher training policy, and courses of study for various classes and nationalised textbooks. A truly high quality school has a learner centered curriculum. Hence, onus of raising quality of schools lies with the school education policy of the government. However, in spite of restrictions from the rigid education structure, there are schools which are of high quality. Their number is growing mostly in unorganised private sector to attract public for choosing their schools instead of State run schools. Such a curriculum requires appropriate autonomy in developing curriculum including textbooks and other learning materials for its own students.