A STUDY ON TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

After independence there is a remarkable growth in the higher education system of India. There is a continuous growth in the higher education instead of various challenges like globalization, financing, infrastructure facilities, quality management etc. In order to develop the higher education, the role of Total Quality Management (TQM) cannot be under estimated. There is a great literature about the TQM in the manufacturing sector; health sector etc. but still there is a lack of useful literature regarding application of TQM in the education sector. If institutions really want to improve quality in their higher education system then it is necessary for them to focus on the concept of Total Quality Management. Various innovations in this field are a proof that the educational institutions are now realizing the importance of higher education. In this paper the need of continuous quality improvement, components of TQM, and challenges in TQM in higher education, means and strategies adopted by different educational institutions are discussed. The study has been conducted by consulting existing literature through historical, analytical and empirical approaches. TQM in the educational institutions is the need of hour.

Due to this the authorities involved in the management of higher education system in India like UGC, AICTE, QCI, DEC, BCI have made serious efforts to improve the quality education in India and also to match Indian education standards with the international norms

Keywords: Total Quality Management, Higher Education, Continuous Improvement, Higher Educational Institutions.
INTRODUCTION

Total Quality Management

However, defining the concept of quality is considered as an initial objective for HEIs, but it seems that concentrations are mostly in achieving this objective, rather than to focus for finding specific definition. Therefore, this question will come to mind, how can we gain the quality of higher education?

Over the past few decades, the quality gurus Crosby (1979), Deming (1986), Feigenbaum (1983), Juran (1986) and others have developed and advocated certain instruction in the area of quality management. Their approaches into quality management provide a good understanding of quality management principles. However, quality issues are considered as a basic part of the activities of an increasing number of private as well as public companies, organizations and institutions. Based on this thought, one philosophy has emerged in the concepts of quality and management called Total Quality Management, (TQM). There are different opinions about TQM, some people see it as an absolute mean to reach competitiveness and some others see it as a management vogue, however there are some reasons for these differences in perspectives, Becker (1993, pp. 32-3), Ghobadian and Gallear (1996, pp. 83-106). Hellsten and Klefsjö (2000, pp. 238-44) believe that these different ideas have formed because the gurus who are seen as fathers of TQM, do not like the concept. Beside there are different names for almost the same idea, and finally there are many vague descriptions and few definitions of what TQM really is, this reason is the most severe one. In the other word, they definitely believe that there are many descriptions of the total quality management notion in literature, but few definitions. Therefore, defining of what TQM really is does seem to be a tough job by itself. For instance, Okland (1989) says TQM is “an approach to improving the effectiveness and flexibility of business as a whole”, and some other definitions in this context are:

• A set with improvement tools useful in an organization
• TQM is a management philosophy
• TQM is a program for changes based on a company’s culture
• TQM is a management system

Recently, one definition has been introduced in this context from Hellsten and Klefsjö (2000, pp. 238-44). They see TQM as a management system, which is consisting of three interdependent components: values, methodologies, and tools and the aim is to increase internal and external customers’ satisfaction with a reduce amount of resources. Since, in this work, we have management system view and this work will be based on this approach, this view of TQM will be discussed in the next section in more detail.

Nevertheless, the origins of TQM in business and industry, and its successful implementation in most cases as a universal remedy have jointed to bind its acceptability to HEIs, and many articles have been written on the subject. In fact, there are many advantages that product-oriented businesses and service oriented organizations like HEIs both can rely on to pursue Total Quality Management program, Ramona and Sower (1997, pp. 104-120). However, for introducing a TQM approach in an organization or institution we prefer to classify it in two phases. The first phase can be defining of what TQM really is, and the second phase is about the implementation of this approach. In fact, without having a comprehensive understanding of the whole concept its implementation is not recommended, and it will cause failures. Therefore, in the following sections, the researchers will try to define the concept of TQM thoroughly from a specific perspective, and then a model for its implementation will be described.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

These are the following objectives of my study:
1) To study the need of continuous quality improvement, components of TQM, and challenges of TQM in higher education.
2) To study the means and strategies adopted by different educational institutions for ensuring TQM.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted by consulting existing literature through historical, analytical and empirical approaches. Historical-analytical method has been taken into consideration while observing the reports related with the study and while examining the other literature relevant to the study. Case study method, an empirical technique, is applied to study the various dimensions and impact of TQM on education sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students, their families, education and government administrator, all are requesting for good quality education for students. However, the question is that “what does high quality education mean?” Education and the results and consequences obtained from it, lack industrial attraction, due to a relatively long period needed to observe the achievements which makes practice of quality management approach in education even less favorable (Seymour, 1994). Considering that there is no single thought about the quality of education centres in different societies; therefore, it is first important to achieve an appropriate understanding of the concept of academic education. Such a definition could be a guide to regulate the educational systems in society and it can help to organize educational centres (Zuckerman, 2000).

In selection of patterns and methods of quality management, which has notably developed in commercial and industrial units, paying attention to special differences of education and industry is of significant importance. It is really important that we know university is not a factory and students are not a product. However, educating students is a product. In successful completion of training product, students need to have active cooperation, same as a worker and believe in managing the E-learning process. The point is that, teaching and learning are two different processes (Noonan, 2006). Teaching is more similar to management rather than observing detailed activities. Learning, on the other hand, is similar to research and development processes rather than a set of processes. In industry, every manager needs quality management to have an appropriate governance system to determine the customer needs in a rational process (Senge, 2007).

TQM is a management policy, which becomes a tool for utilization and exploitation of all human, finance and technology resources in educational institutions. The most important goal of the educational organization management is to utilize staff capabilities, which can be easily achieved through TQM system. The meaning of the concept of TQM is to use physical and intellectual capabilities of staff in different levels of an organization.

Instead of one person or unit being in charge of teaching and learning, TQM best optimizes participants within the organization at all levels. TQM uses employee capabilities in all activities and processes and makes cooperation practical and tangible (Schargel, 1994). In spite of great efforts in industry, education and health to improve quality of life, our educational organizations and centres still suffers from low quality in many aspects, including education. TQM improves educational
organizations in many ways such as improving education process, making educational environment become motivating, improving educational curriculum, boosting the speed of training services and reducing costs (Peak, 1995). The process toward total quality in universities and educational centres is a slow and steady process. Change in TQM needs time; this change can be achieved with patience, cooperation and assistance. Universities and educational institutes could be successful in implementing the TQM method, if they have cooperation of the managers, which means having knowledge, belief, confidence and skills towards TQM. However, support of senior and mid-level managers of educational centres is very effective. Lack of support from managers does not mean the failure of TQM; it only slows down the process of success. Participation, interest, knowledge and commitment of university employees, especially lecturers and faculty members in TQM could greatly decrease the effect of lack of support. Their participation means that they are dedicated and committed in implementation of TQM (Frong, 2007).

Management style must be firm and visible based on participation to judge practically and fairly about values and strategies, not to be solely based on personal power of the manager. Managers and all staff must have a deep understanding and belief towards TQM in educational organizations and they know benefits of continuous improvement. To achieve this, first, all individuals must acquire sufficient instruction; second, practically experience the effect of TQM in universities and educational organizations. The second step in the development of TQM is the development of knowledge, attitude and skills of employees. The effectiveness of TQM is more on the knowledge of people. Knowledge is directly related to attitude and skills. The more knowledge people acquire, the more they change their attitude and they become more successful. The attitude and approach towards TQM facilitate university resources, or the opposite, block the path of its success (Boothe, 1990).

There are so many articles about this key factor. Rewards and recognition were very vital to the implementation of TQM in higher education process (Kohlbacher & Markus, 2010). There should be commitment to quality with the executive levels in the departments and also organizations. This applied to all organizations either higher education institutions and business, Attendance at information sessions and specially training provided for the top level management showed commitment. The process of TQM in higher education institutions is not a simple process that could be put in on day because this process can take long time and when an organization define it, It takes so many years to see the beginning of benefits, if organizations want to reduce this time so they have to improve the commitment factor because it’s a key item for success of total quality management (Ahire, S. L, 1997).

Total quality management relied heavily on teamwork. Every organization needs teamwork and it can achieve goals because every organization without teamwork will fail .There is so many benefits for working in a team. In implementation of TQM in higher education teamwork is one the most important factor so responsibilities and also roles of team members should be well defined (Xyrichis A, Ream E, 2008). The most important factor that can improve the working atmosphere in all levels of an organization is teamwork (Xyrichis A, Ream E, 2008).

ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN 21ST CENTURY

In a increasingly comprehension society, to a greater extent people inquire regarding education as the optimism for a improved expectations, the solution to superior jobs and careers and to momentous and satisfying lives. It clears the fact that higher education will thrive in the coming years. So the commitment to provide advance education will become a more strategic issue for the colleges and universities (Duderstadt J., 1999). At the time of attainment of independence there were
only 20 universities and 500 colleges with 0.1 million students in India. But according to the latest research there are 611 universities and university level institutions and 31324 colleges as on 31 August 2011. The vision is to promote the higher education by forming new universities and increasing the intake capacity of present universities and colleges. For enhancing quality the various measures are:

- Persistence of the reforms in higher education will have to be followed in the field of pedagogy, administration, programme offerings, research, curriculum, academic, etc.
- Well structured and complete reforms on a large scale with strong policies and practical programmes to smooth the progress of improving quality and to encourage excellence in higher education.
- A walking incentives through funding for academic reforms like introduction of semester system, grading, choice-based credit system, examination reforms, accreditation, etc. can go a long way towards enhancing quality.
- Focus should be on generation of a new knowledge society from the learners’ perspective, satisfying the national and international demands of the society.
- Development of new models of accreditation and systems for implementation with the dual objectives of national level coverage and compulsory accreditation of all higher education institutions shall be undertaken in a time bound manner.
- In order to internalize quality inputs, all universities, government and government-aided colleges are to be supported with full-fledged Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) as a UGC-supported scheme, on regular basis with the required Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and supportive manpower

CONCLUSION

The higher education system of India had passed from various difficult situations in the post Indian independence period. But still the Indian education system has progressed well. There are several improvements in the Indian education system from various perspectives. The authorities involved in the management of higher education system in India like UGC, AICTE, QCI, DEC, BCI have made serious efforts to improve the quality education in India and also to match Indian education standards with the international norms. TQM in the educational institutions is the need of hour. TQM will help attain excellence, which only can guarantee the survival of institutions in a highly competitive world. The future of our economic system, and thus our nation, is directly coupled to our ability as a nation to establish and keep a high quality higher education system. If suitable and necessary recognition and support will be extended to Indian educational institutes and universities then India has the potential for extending frontiers of knowledge in all disciplines.

REFERENCES


