

BOOK REVIEW (2)

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**Title of the book - TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN
EDUCAION**

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INTRODUCTION

Although quality is perplexing to define and difficult to measure, the pursuit of quality is not new in the industrial field. Starting from inspection and quality control with the advent of mass production, it has passed through various stages such as statistical quality control, quality assurance etc. to the present day Japanese quality movement of 'Total Quality Management (TQM)', in which the emphasis is on seeking the customer's requirements and to strive to meet and exceed them. The movement for total quality in education is of more recent origin. However it has been recognised that quality improvement in educational institutions becomes increasingly important with privatisation, more and more autonomous institutions and reduced Government grants to higher education. Institutions will have to demonstrate, in the face of greater competition, that they are able to offer

quality education to their learners. Focussing on the needs and satisfaction of the learners and others concerned with education will be the quality parameters hereafter. Therefore, TQM which embodies this principle, is the way to face competition and survival in the coming decades.

The author introduces the key concepts of TQM and demonstrates how it can be put to effective use in the educational context.

Contents

The theme is presented in twelve chapters with one appendix, bibliography and index.

TQM has its own philosophy and also set of tools for improving quality. Accordingly the book is apparently divided broadly in two parts. Part I may be considered to be consisting of chapters 1 to 6 which present the TQM philosophy while as chapters 7 to 11 discuss the tools or methodology of

TQM, Chapter 12 discusses implementation of TQM.

Chapter one briefly traces the industrial origin of the quality movement, the influence of contribution of Deming, Shewhart and Juran, ignored in USA, but used in practice by Japanese, in developing "Total Quality Control" which revolutionised manufacturing, service industries, banking and finance and captured world markets. Faced with Japanese competition after 1980 only, the message of Deming and Juran, together with contributions of Philips, B Crasby and Armand Feigenbanm and others caught imagination of business in USA and Western Europe. In 1982, Peters and Waterman, based on their research, showed that excellence goes hand in hand with simple but crucial notions of being "Close to the customers"

TQM concept in education is of recent origin and carried out by few community colleges in USA and U.K. by some further education colleges after 1980. In UK, the upsurge in TQM started after the Education Reform Act in 1988.

Chapter two is devoted to understanding the concept of quality. As "Quality" implies different meanings to different people, the author employs quality as a relative concept, as regards TQM, as against absolute concept, which means that quality is not an inherent property of a product or service but which is ascribable to it. A product must do what it claims to do and do what customers expect of it. This concept involves two aspects; one, measuring upto a predefined specification, and second, satisfaction of customers needs and wants. The first one -

the producer definition of quality-is called quality in fact, while the second - the consumer's definition - is called as quality in perception.

The author further discusses the difference between the various quality paradigms viz. quality control, quality assurance and total quality.

Chapter 3 delas with TQM as extended to education. The meaning of the term "Product" and "Customer as applied to education are explained by the author. Though the term "Product" is used in education, it can not be considered to connote the same meaning as is used in industry or business where there is a perfect control on the quality of raw materials, process etc. which is not the case in education. Hence, the author prefers the term "Service" instead of "Product". The characteristics of quality in "Service" can be much different from those of a "Product". For quality parameters of "Service" there could be many intagibles which cannot be measured up in physical terms.

"Learner" only cannot be considered as the entire range of "Customers", so far education is considered. The others eg. parents, society in general, Industry & business, teachers, other supporting staff etc. are also beneficiaries or "Stake holders" and their needs and requirements which many times may be conflicting, have to be considered although the needs and requirements of the "Learners" will have the top priority.

In TQM, often a way has to be found from the conflicting requirements of each group.

The TQM in education envisages the following :

- i) Step by step improvement
- ii) A change of culture
- iii) The upside down organization
- iv) Keeping close to the customers
- v) colleagues as customers
- vi) Internal marketing
- vii) Blending professionalism and the customer focus.
- viii) Strategies for individualization and differentiation in learning styles best suited to the learners needs and inclination.

The author also mentions the barriers to be overcome, while introducing TQM. Important of them are; senior manager's unwillingness to give whole hearted support, sheer volume of external pressures, role played by middle management, fear of the unknown, of doing things differently, of trusting others and of making mistakes.

The author advocates strategic planning as a solution to some of these blockages.

Chapter four presents models of quality as advocated by Deming, Juran and Crosby. Their quality ideas primarily are for manufacturing industries however, these are equally applicable to service industries; Though none of them has given much consideration to quality issues in education, their ideas are illuminating and can provide direction in education also, although these ideas have certain limitations and drawbacks.

Chapter five and six discuss some of the present quality standards or quality marks in which lot of interest is generated recently in UK viz. BS 7850, ISO 9000. The philosophy behind these standards is that, quality should be built into the systems and procedures of the organization with

emphasis on prevention than cure.

The advantage of application of these standards and quality marks to educational institutions is of developing the discipline of having specified and documented their quality system and having a third party accreditation for it. The problems of applying these standards to education like the service industry is, that, the interaction between the customer and the supplier enhances the quality of service being provided.

The author discusses the relationship between TQM and the other quality standards viz. BS 5780/ISO 9000. He is of the opinion that TQM and these standards can co-exist and each extend the other. However, one does not require the other. TQM is a larger enterprise than establishing a quality system and does not necessarily require the application of an external standard.

BS 5750/ISO 9000 can be seen in a variety of ways in relation to TQM. The author gives four different views.

- i) BS 5750/ISO 9000 as a first stage to TQM
- ii) BS 5750/ISO 9000 as solid foundation for continuous improvement.
- iii) BS5750/ISO9000 as only one element in a range of enterprise of TQM.
- iv) BS5750/ISO9000 as a bureaucratic intrusion into the world of education

Individual institution will need to clarify the relationship between TQM & BS5750/ISO9000 for themselves depending on the kind of system the institutions' customer want.

After discussing BS 5750/ISO 9000 and other quality standards or "Kite Marks" as the author puts it in details,

he is of the view that these standards provide discipline, external assessment and a clear process through which to pursue quality and potential publicity value internally and externally. But at the same time, he cautions that gaining a quality mark does not guarantee a quality.

From chapter seven, the author starts discussing the practice of TQM. Organizational considerations are discussed in chapter 7. The traditional organization, characterized by departmental barriers, the lack of common mission, overbearing hierarchies, over reliance on rigid procedures etc. can not cope up with the pressure of changes associated with each stage of developmental cycle of the institution viz. formation, growth, maturity and lastly, a stage which can either lead to decline and decay or to renewal and revitalization. The maturity stage is potentially the most dangerous stage. The institution ceases to be proactive. It can also be a renewal stage if the message of total quality is adopted and appropriate organizational changes are made. As TQM develops, hierarchy is eliminated, and a flatter structure with strong cross-institutional links, take their place. The organization forms are simple, lean and built around strong teamwork. The necessary features of the TQM organization are; Unit optimization, vertical alignment, horizontal alignment and single command for each process. However, it should be remembered that structural reorganization is not a requirement of TQM. Many times it may divert attention from quality improvement and lead to institutional fatigue.

Chapter 8 is about leadership for quality. For TQM to succeed in educa-

tion, it requires strong and purposeful leadership with a passion and pride for quality which will be able to communicate the vision, the values of the institution and inspiration, to others. TQM institution require less management and more leadership. The author describes the characteristics and role of leadership in TQM. A key aspect of leadership is to empower teachers to give them maximum opportunity to improve the learning of their students. The author gives in words of Spanbaner what the leadership should do for empowerment of teachers.

Chapter 9 stresses the importance of teamwork for quality in education in TQM, as it builds up trust, improves communication and develops independence. To build an effective TQM culture, teamwork must penetrate and permeate throughout the institution, at all levels, and be used in a wide range of decision making and problem solving situations and for all functions.

Quality improvement works by a series of teams working on small incremental projects each of which is designed to solve problem; improve an existing process, or design a new one. A well functioning institution should consist of a large number of overlapping teams consisting of both academic as well as supporting staff. Teamwork, however, does not just happen. Therefore, training in teamwork and "problem solving skills" is often necessary.

The author further describes the mechanism of formation of teams and a 'recipe' for a successful team, and also, difference between quality improvement team and quality circles activities in Japan.

Basic strategies and tools for imple-

menting TQM are presented in chapter 10. These are "Brainstorming", Affinity network, Fishbone or Ishikawa diagrams, Force field analysis, Process charting, Flowcharts, Pareto analysis,, Bench marking, career-path mapping. These tools and techniques are for identifying and creatively solving problems. Most of them are simple but powerful. Right tool should be used for the job and hence staff requires training in their proper use.

Quality does not just happen and needs to be approached systematically using a rigorous strategic planning process which is described in chapter 11. Strategic planning enables, the formulation of long term priorities and institutional changes to be tackled in a rational manner. It is much more than developing a corporate plan. It addresses the key questions and issues related with Mission, Vision, Customer/Learner requirements, Route to success, Quality performance, Investing in people, Evaluating the process and reexamines them. While undertaking strategic planning, it is important to take a systematic approach to planning the corporate future. Strategy is based around the various customer groups and their expectations from which policies and plans which can deliver the mission and progress are developed.

The author suggests a possible planning sequence which consists of : Deciding vision, Mission & Value, Market Analysis, SWOT Analysis and Critical success factors, Operating short-term Plan, Quality Policy and Quality Plan; quality costs Evaluation and feed back.

Chapter 12 is about implementing TQM. It presents a number of simple

and important steps to be followed if it is decided to adopt TQM path. The steps in designing the institutions on quality systems and the elements of such system are mentioned.

The author finally concludes that a total quality approach, call it TQM or any other name, will be necessary for the future corporate health and survival of educational institutions.

The Appendix gives a self assessment checklist with five point rating scale indicating poor performance to excellence against which the institution can measure up itself. It would be useful for any institution, even if it is not using TQM, to know where it stands on the quality path.

COMMENTS

The book successfully presents the philosophy and practice of TQM concept originated in Industry and of Manufacturing as applied to education. "Close to customers" philosophy already exists in education in the form of "Student Centered" approach. And hence application of TQM to education is only an elaboration and practice of this approach and hence feasible.

The need for TQM can not be too stressed. There is a clamour for "excellence" & "Quality" in all fields and education can not be an exception. "The indicators of Quality in education such as well maintained buildings, outstanding and committed teachers, high moral values, excellent examination results, specialization, the support of parents, industry, business and local community, plentiful resources, application of latest technology, etc. etc. The care and concerns for pupils, a well-balanced and

relevant curriculum, are well known. However, all these parameters should be in tune with the customers' requirements, aspirations and their satisfaction; and this is what TQM seeks to do. However, these very factors in Education are difficult to be settled. It involves the issues, such as who are the customers and how to match their conflicting requirements and aspiration. The author has dealt with these aspects but not conclusively.

The author is aware that the language of industrial TQM & the use of words such as product customer may not appeal to many practitioners in education. It is not only the language but the relationship between the various couch in education envisaged itself although in tune with the present market economy, sounds too commercial especially in the Indian context when

educational institute is considered as a temple of goddess Saraswati.

With all these, the practical part dealt by the author is extremely useful to any person directly connected with the running of any educational institution, who has "quality " at his heart.

Unresponsive management, unimaginative Leadership, unsuitable and poorly maintained buildings and equipment, poor working environment, unsuitable systems and procedures, neglected staff development, apathy towards students are some of the problems with many of the new technical institutions & even with established institutions resulting into poor quality alround. The only key person who can set Quality ball rolling is the Principal and hence to all Principals of the Engineering colleges and Polytechnics, this book is specially recommended.

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