

EDITORIAL

The Quality Scenario & the need for a TQM Foundation

We are happy to present this special issue of the Journal of Engineering Education (JEE) on TQM. We are overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response received from various quarters. Our contributors include teachers, consultants, and serious researchers from all over the country. Due to their support and encouragement, we are coming out with the 9th Special Issue of our Journal on “TQM in Engineering Education”.

Quality is increasingly becoming a source of competitive strength in any economy. The winners of tomorrow are those who are paying attention today to Quality in both production and customer service. It is generally recognized that any industry can survive and excel only on the strength of Total Quality Management (TQM) of its goods and services.

The philosophy of TQM is not new. What is novel is its application to a service sector such as Education, in general, and Engineering Education, in particular. This is motivated by the ruthless forces of Globalization, Liberalization and Privatization in which Quality has become one of the most important phenomena. The recent inception of Private and Foreign Universities has deepened the impact. It is therefore, a wake-up call to all the Government, aided and unaided engineering institutions to brace themselves for their survival. With the internationalization of Engineering Education, there is a growing concern the world over about Quality, Standards and Recognition. As a result of this, the issue of TQM for ascertaining and assuring Quality at different levels of Engineering Education is significant.

The articles in this special issue and responses to a questionnaire by authors & experts on Engineering Education, indicate that the TQM awareness has yet to spread among the Engineering Education. Efforts for Quality enhancement are being made, thanks to:

1. Demand for Quality due to internationalization of Education.
2. AICTE Accreditation.
3. TEQIP efforts.
4. Efforts by individual principals / Institutions.

But the overall impact of these efforts, is difficult to guess, nor the system provides any mechanism for ascertaining the quality level of the system.

The reason may be that the concept of quality has not been properly understood across the country (as mentioned in the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission). Besides this, neither the system nor the management does assign the responsibility of such a significant

aspect – Quality of Education – to any single individual in the system. The Principal/Director, being the leader, is supposed to take care of it, along with his/her other responsibilities. Anyway, the Quality Scenario being what it is, we think, that the time has come to make it clear that:—

- i. The responsibility of quality is mainly that of the Management/ Principal/Director & the Administration
- ii. All efforts for quality for NBA / ISO / NAAC accreditation should be based on adequate understanding of the philosophy of TQM. Sensitization programs for this purpose need to be organized.
- iii. That the management must come out with a clear Policy support, including, financial support, by allocating a minimum of 2% of the College income and make it visible in the annual budget;
- iv. Each college must have a separate department / centre/cell for Quality and Excellence, just like other departments like, Civil, Mechanical, Electrical etc.
- v. There should be a separate section in the college library on “Quality and Excellence”, consisting of Important books dealing with quality of higher/ and engineering education (including TQM), Journals of Quality and Excellence (Indian & Foreign), and proceedings of workshops, seminars and conferences on Engineering Education.
- vi. There should be an annual review of Quality Efforts and the results thereof must be shared across the community.

The guidelines given above should be adequate for any college, even if it is located in rural area, to take off on its Quality Journey. The Institution should not hesitate nor avoid to seek assistance from experts, particularly in its pursuit of quality.

It is heartening to note 13 Indian Industries have won the much-coveted Deming Award (which is almost equivalent to a Nobel Prize) but the academia in India is yet to learn a lesson from the Indian Industries. May we draw the attention of MHRD, AICTE and other policy makers to the fact that Engineering Education has failed to learn from our industry and let us hope they will take steps to rectify the situation.

A look at the Quality Scenario today indicates the need for quality consciousness, understanding of quality concept and its implementation. Hence the Engineering Education Foundation proposes to establish a “**TQM Foundation**”* in Engineering Education. The objectives of this foundation will be to:

- 1) explore the meaning & the concept of quality in the context of engineering education
 - 2) monitor and support quality related efforts.
 - 3) spell out and help share best practices for quality enhancement
-

- 4) work out a model for quality implementation which should take care of all concerns of ISO, NBA , NAAC etc.

We sincerely believe that papers in this special issue will help in initiation, sustenance, dissemination and adaptation of best practices leading to Quality and Excellence. We shall be very happy to receive your feedback!

Dr. S.G. Deshmukh
IIT, Delhi
Guest Editor for this Special Issue

Prof. N.V. Ratnalikar
The Editor, JEE

Date : 15th July 2007

Note * :

All those who are interested in Quality and Excellence and like to be associated with TQM Foundation, may write to the Editors, Prof. N.V. Ratnalikar & Dr. S.G. Deshmukh.
