

EDITORIAL

Time and again thro' our editorials we have been advocating for excellence in technical education. In tune with our concern for this topic, in this issue a review of the book "Total Quality Management in Education" is seperately published.

One of the most important contemporary challanges facing higher education in general and technical education, in particular, is how to manage for quality. Also with the introduction of ISO 9000, a new awakening has come regarding quality in industry and this has reached education also. However, the concept of quality can be attributed various meanings and unless we have clear understanding of the quality concept, the word 'quality' may remain as a word with high moral tone but little practical value, as has been happening, so far. Even now, we have quality mechanism in action in the form of some criteria fixed by Govt., University, AICTE, for allowing the technical institutions to function. However, these have failed to deliver goods; firstly because they, at the most, can specify certain norms for physical facilities, number and qualifications of teachers etc. but many intangibles which are most important cannot be specified. Secondly, the physical norms are often cirumvented, probably, with the connivance of the regulating authorities and thirdly, these are external to the institution, framed without taking into consideration, particular circumstances of each institution.

On this background, Total Quality Management (TQM) provides a philosophy and a set of tools to an institution to define its own standards and to set up arrangements for achieving these standards by giving top priority to its customers, their needs and interests. The 'total in' TQM includes everything and everybody concerned. TQM is practical but requires strategic approach to run an organization which focuses on the needs of its customers. TQM brings about a change in the culture of the institution, and in attitudes of all concerned.

TQM philosophy originated in industry is on parallel lines with the "student centred approach" in education though rarely put into practice and hence it can be adapted to educational institution. Every educational institution has some good practices. TQM is to build on existing quality and develop it into continuous quality improvement process.

TQM is not a miracle cure for all problems nor it can be forced from outside. But it has to be remembered that in the current climate of quality consciousness and competition, no institution can automatically survive, however well established it might be.

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