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ENSURING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TEACHERS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

The success and advancement or progress (Kreitner, 1998; Saylor, 1996) of today's universities depend on their responsiveness and resiliency (El-Khawas, 2001); their ability to preserve and strengthen quality (of higher education) (Thorens, 1996), and to effect reconstruction efforts (Castillo, 1987) and to pursue quality, equality and equity, institutional diversity, regional development, flexible curricula, stable financing. There is close similarity in the way education and businesses operate (Bonstingl, 1996). The basic theme of TQM is participatory approach to address the question(s) of quality in business as well as in the field of education. Reviewing fresh literature from the internet and other sources, the works of W. Edward Deming's: fourteen principles for quality assurance, Philip Crosby's: fourteen points for quality management & the idea of zero defect, and J. Juran's three areas: quality planning, quality improvement and quality control are being discussed in this paper.

Introduction

People want to do their best and it is the management's job to provide environment through continuous improvement of the system, is the assumption, at which Total Quality Management is based. Total Quality Management (TQM) is an art of organizing the whole to achieve excellence. It is enrichment to the conventional way of managing business. It helps for survival in the global antagonism. This is not only a philosophy but also a set of guide lines and regulations for ongoing improvements for the

services and/or products offered to customers. Human resources and quality methods are utilized to improve all the processes to satisfy all the needs of the clients. It integrates fundamental techniques, prevailing efforts and practical gear, which are being operated under a disciplined approach of management. This organizational management move is paying attention towards quality, which is due to the collaboration of members of organization, and focusing on long range profitability through customers' contentment, including benefits to society. It is the “integration of all functions and processes within an organization in order to achieve continuous improvement of the quality of good services” (Akhtar, 2000; Besterfield, Michna, Besterfield&Sarce, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2004). According to Juran (1988) it is fitness for use and according to Crosby (1979) it is conformance to requirement. The concept of quality according to Sallis (1997) is usually considered in two ways: Procedural concept of quality and Transformational concept of quality. Procedural concept is concerned with measuring up and ensuring conformity to a predetermined specification. The question that is asked is does this good or service do what is asked or expected from it? This is fitness for purpose. This approach is about improving the system. It is about “doing things right, not just doing the right things. This concept of quality aims for excellence and is satisfied with fitness for purpose. Deming (1991) a key person in TQM movement, in this regard, thinks that inspection with the aim of finding the bad ones and throwing them out is ineffective and costly. According to Deming (1991), 85% performance of workers is assessed through the system in which they work and 15 % is determined by short of skills. Workers aren't bad but the system is not perfect. Deming says that people work in the system and management creates the system. As a pioneer of TQM movement Deming has contributed several works: Fourteen points, the system of profound knowledge, PDCA Cycle, Seven Deadly diseases.

ISSUES, CONTROVERSIES, PROBLEMS

UNESCO's "International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century", (often referred to as the Delors-Commission after its chairperson the former EU Commissioner Jacques Delors) published in 1996 its report "Learning: The Treasure Within". In this report they concluded that: "...a greater focus on quality is desirable everywhere, even in countries where all children are enrolled in basic education" It can be noted that quality has since the 80´ become a key concept in the education discussion.

If we look at a number of reports concerning the quality of education in different countries we may get a picture of the present situation.

In the SACMEQ (Southern Africa Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality) project, covering five countries in Southern Africa (Mauritius, Namibia, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe), it was found that the level of reading skills among the students was very low. In only two of the five countries, Zimbabwe and Mauritius, at least half of the students achieved what was referred to as basic readings skills. Only in Zimbabwe, did more than a third of the students reach what was referred to as desired reading level (SACMEQ, 1998).

In Ghana the Ghanaian educational authorities organised, with the support from USAID (US Authority for International Development), an ambitious assessment project in English and mathematics. A very small number of students reached what was defined as mastery level in the two subjects. In 1992, 2 % reached this level in English and in 1996 5.5%. In mathematics the percentage that reached mastery level in 1992 was 1.1% and in 1996 1.8% (Quansah, 1997).

In Nigeria a study examined reading skills, mathematics knowledge and general life skills among students in grade 4 as a part of the MLA-Project (Monitoring Learning Achievement Project). On average the students could respond correctly to 32% of the tasks related to mathematics knowledge, to 25% of the task related to reading skills and to 33% of the tasks related to general life skills.

The World Bank has in a report on primary education in India (World Bank, 1997) examined a number of recent research reports. The conclusion from these reports was that the quality of education in Indian schools was poor. Students in grade 5 had often only learned half of what they were supposed to have learned in grade 4. In the state of Madhya Pradesh 70% of the students in grade 4 and 60% of the students in grade 5, in what was referred to as "privileged urban areas", had not achieved the level prescribed in the curriculum for grade 2 in Hindi and mathematics. There are also problems regarding the quality of education in industrialized countries. An alarming factor is the number of pupils leaving education without a certificate, usually referred to as drop-outs. 10 - 12 % of pupils in the EU countries in the age group of 15 - 16 did not obtain any certificate at the end of compulsory schooling or did not complete their education in a normal way (European Commission/Eurydice, 1994).

There are good reasons to believe that the situation is not much different concerning the quality of education in many countries other than those referred to above. It can be assumed that many children leave school without having developed sufficient basic literacy skills. According to the World Bank is lack of quality a major problem in many education systems: “The quality of Education is poor at all levels in low- and middle-income countries. That there is a huge need to improve quality in education in many countries.

Despite significant progress over the last ten years, Indian higher education is faced with four broad challenges:

- The supply-demand gap: India has a low rate of enrolment in higher education, at only 18%, compared with 26% in China and 36% in Brazil. There is enormous unmet demand for higher education
- Constraints on research capacity and innovation: With a very low level of PhD enrolment, India does not have enough high quality researchers; there are few opportunities for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary working, lack of early stage research experience; a weak ecosystem for innovation, and low levels of industry engagement.

- Uneven growth and access to opportunity: Socially, India remains highly divided; access to higher education is uneven with multidimensional inequalities in enrolment across population groups and geographies.
- Lack of teaching skills in faculty and limited understanding of the learning process
- The use of outdated pedagogies (input oriented, lecture-based approaches, rather than student-centred, enquiry driven and outcomes-based)
- Outdated and inflexible curricula
- A rigid assessment system, which encourages rote-learning and does not test students' broader skills or deeper learning
- Lack of an effective quality assurance system for teaching and learning

BACKGROUND

This paper presents summary of the Deming's fourteen points in the next pages:

1. Generate Reliability of Function for Perfection of Merchandise and Service

Develop a system for the up gradation and betterment of the teaching learning processes. The focus should be on the intention that product of the system would be valuable and be capable to participate and fulfil the societal needs and desires in a purposeful manner.

2. Implement Innovative Ideas

Adopt new philosophy of finding facts through data. Clinch new management ideas; awaken the leadership for their responsibilities and challenges for change. 3. Stop Dependence on Mass Inspection

According to Deming (1991), without improving the system the dream of quality can't turn up into reality. Inspection services cannot result into improvement of the service or product..

3. End Grading Practice

TQM, philosophy focuses on the fact that the grading practices in organizations should be stopped because ratings of people create harmful results. Attention should be paid to learning processes rather than the rating processes.

4. Develop Persistent and Everlasting System of Production and Service

In education the focus should be on the improvement of teaching learning processes Deming (1999). This can be done by using the findings and results of the latest researches in these areas.

5. Institute Training

Establish a mechanism of continuous training on the job for members of the faculty, allied staff and administration of educational institutions.

6. Develop Leadership

School leadership's role should be shifted from inspection to supervision. These supervisory practices should be to help and guide the members of the staff for adopting new paradigms of quality assurance.

7. Drive out Fear

Fear is enemy of creativity, which is a key factor in continuous improvement. Therefore, Deming (1991) suggests driving out fear in all walks of the organizations both industry and education. This is how everyone will perform bettering the system.

8. Maximize the Effort of Team Work

Quality of the educational organization can be optimized by developing a sense of cooperation and collaboration among the members of the institutional groups. 10. Remove Slogans and Catchphrases

Slogans and buzz words have the assumption that the staff members can perform better if they will try harder and harder.

9. Eradicate Numerical Quotas for Staff

Quotas are for the quantity of work done rather than the quality of work. Management should learn and adopt the methods for improvement. When quantity is required according to a fixed amount them the quality will certainly go down.

10. Eliminate Barriers to Satisfaction and Pleasure of Workmanship

Majority of teachers want to perform better. Therefore remove barriers that rob students, principals and other supporting staff of their right of joyful events. This leads towards the end of rating practices. Management's responsibility must be moved from quantity to quality.

11. Encourage Education and Self Improvement for Every One

The school authorities should be retained in new techniques and philosophies of management through collaborative efforts and shared decision makings (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996).

According to Ho (1999), Juran's three aspects are divided into these components.

1. **Quality Planning**

For quality planning the management has to identify the customer.

2. **Quality Improvements**

There should be a process which is able to produce the product. Optimization of this process is very essential for the improvement of quality of goods or service.

3. **Quality Control**

For the purpose of quality control it is needed to develop a process that can produce the product under operating conditions.

According to Willborn& Cheng (1994) and Crosby's (1992) “absolutes of Journal of Quality and Technology Management Volume III, Issue I1, Dec 2007, pg 87-97 6 quality are: **“quality is defined as conformance to requirements, not goodness, the system for achieving quality is prevention, not appraisal, the performance standard is zero defects, not that's close enough and the measurement of quality is the price of non-conformance, not indexes”.**

Crosby's (1992) stresses motivation and planning rather than statistics and has fourteen points about quality management which have a different mode with same message. These fourteen points are comprehensively given as under:

1. **Management Commitment**

Higher authorities should be persuaded from the need of quality and it must be communicated to whole organization in written form.

2. Quality Improvement Team

There should be a team comprising of organizational heads to look after the affairs related to quality issues in the establishment as a whole. Representatives from all the departments should be the members of the quality improvement team. Crosby (1979) suggested that members of team be provided orientation of the content and purpose of the program.

3. Quality Measurement

Every activity should be measured properly for the purpose of required quality. The level of the quality should be determined throughout the organization. Each area for quality must be reviewed. Quality status record will indicate the aspects where the corrective measures for quality are needed and how can be documented in future (Crosby, 1979). Price of Quality Journal of Quality and Technology Management Volume III, Issue I1, Dec 2007, pg 87-97 7

4. Quality Consciousness

Create quality awareness among the staff members of the educational organization. They must understand the importance of product conformance and the costs of non-conformance.

5. Corrective Action

Take corrective action as a result of quality measurement and cost of quality Crosby (1979). People are allowed to talk about their problems, so corrective measures can be made involving not just the defects found by inspection, audit or self-evaluation, but also less obvious problems as seen by the working people themselves that require attention.

6. Zero Defects

Planning Committee must be formed for planning of a program appropriate (zero defects) to the organization (Crosby, 1979). Members of the staff should be selected for investigation of zero defects paradigm and its implementation in the school. It must be understandable for the manager that zero defects is not motivation program. Its purpose is communication of the fact that zero defects means everybody has to do things right. This must be transmitted to every member of the team.

7. Supervisors' Training

Members of the management should be trained for implementing their role for the quality enhancement program Crosby (1979). Conduct an orientation program formally before implementing the quality steps in the organization. All managers must understand each step well enough to explain it to their people.

8. Celebration of Zero Defects Day

Arrange for celebration of a day which signals that organization has a new standard to adopt. Establishment of zero defects, as the working standard for the company should be made in a single day. That way, everyone understands it the same way.

9. Goal Setting

"Individuals must establish improvement goals" (Crosby, 1979). These goals may be for the period of 30, 60 or 90 days. Supervisors will guide the educators and the staff for the accomplishment of such goals. These goals should be of measurable natures.

10. Errors Cause Removal

Principals should encourage the team members for informing them about the causes which avert them for accomplishing error free tasks.

11. Appreciation

A move for quality products and services can be launched and sustained by recognizing the outstanding performance of the members of the working group. Awards should be given to those who performed up to the set standards. The prizes or awards should not be financial. Recognition is what is important. Genuine recognition of performance is something people really appreciate. They will continue to support the Journal of Quality and Technology Management Volume III, Issue I1, Dec 2007, pg 87-97 9 program whether or not they, as individuals, participate.

12. Quality Councils

Regular meetings of the heads of the schools and the quality consultants be over there. The members of this council will share ideas and experiences with each others in the meetings.

13. Repetition of Actions

All the above steps (1-13) should be repeated. This will ensure a nonstop quality improvement process. The typical program takes the time for 12-18 months. By that time, turnover and changing situations will have wiped out most of the education effort. Therefore, it is needed to form a new team and repeat this process again and again. Mehrotra (2006) thinks that TQM principles can be helpful for the working at educational institutes by "redefining the role, purpose and responsibilities of schools. Some personnel who are committed to the principles can facilitate success with TQM. Their vision and skills in leadership, management, interpersonal communication, problem solving and creative cooperation are important qualities for successful implementation of TQM (Akhtar, 1998- 99).

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In an environment of global competitiveness it is important that Indian products of the higher education institutions are as competent as graduates of any other country, not only in their scholastic attainments, but also in terms of the value system and richness of their personality. Unless the quality and standard of Indian higher education institutions is enhanced zealously and sustained at a high level through innovation, creativity and regular monitoring, it seems to be difficult for the Indian academics/professionals to compete in the World scene.

This calls for suitable assessment and accreditation mechanisms to be available in the country to ensure the quality and standard of the academic/training programmes at higher educational institutions. The assessment has to be continuous and the process has to be transparent to gain the acceptance of the society at large.

SUSTAINING QUALITY

Quality has both absolute and relative connotations. The concept of absoluteness in quality props up the morale of the higher education system at the delivery end i.e. Institutional, and at the receiving end i.e. Students. Quality dimensions seem to have two implications, i.e., functionality of the output and meeting the basic standards. Hence, the quality of a higher education system may be seen from the point of view of norms and standards, which may evolve depending on the need of the hour. In the 21st century, it is crucial to identify the relative norms for different components of a higher education system. Of late, various developments

have been witnessed relating to quality assurance mainly through the intervention of information and communications technologies (ICT) in education, like networking of the open learning system with traditional Universities, interdisciplinary interactions at intra-institutional and inter-institutional levels, networking of institutions globally, data based management of higher education, changing the orientation of institutions by incorporating self-financing in their financial management, assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions and creation of different statutory and regulatory bodies at the national level. These and related issues were discussed at length at this Seminar, whose main recommendations are given below.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Curriculum Planning and Management should be studied in the perspective of knowledge management.

2. Integrated approach by involving experts from different fields with major focus on sharing of experiences in a holistic framework and having dialogues at different levels such as: at core committee level and at subcommittee level. Multidisciplinary curriculum must be developed with a view to cater to the needs and fulfilment of expectations of learners, teachers, parents, employers and society in general.

3. Decentralization must be encouraged with a broad frame work of University system.

4. Every University must have its own curriculum. There should not be any mechanism for central curriculum framework at higher education level. Context, specificity and inquiry oriented experience must be reflected in the curriculum. Learners' participation in the generation of knowledge must be the focus of constructivist curriculum. Problem solving abilities must be developed through experimentation life-like situations.

5. Augmentation of Cognitive capital through the University curriculum will be the indicator of quality education.

6. Indigenous knowledge system must be kept in mind while adopting scientific and technological developments as core components of University curriculum. Context specificity and global developments must be visualised with a holistic perspective.

7. Curriculum construction should transact in an authentic and real environment.

8. Curriculum transaction should involve social negotiation and mediation. Encourage group activities and make optimum use of peer as resources of higher learning.

9. Knowledge and skills must be developed with a view to provide relevance and meaningfulness.

10. Learners involvement must be encouraged to link previous experience with present learning. The learner should have full opportunity to scrutinize the learning experiences.

11. The principles of self-regulation, self-mediation and self-awareness on the part of learners must be reflected in curriculum transaction.

12. Teachers should plan a mentor's of guiding learners to learn instead of directing them or instructing them all the time.

13. Learners must have ample scope to formulate their own queries and have multiple interpretations of knowledge through self-search and experiential learning.

14. During curriculum transaction learners should be assessed formatively on a continuous basis to create the basis for acquiring new experiences.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Japanese call it Kaizen, which means incremental improvements of the on-going processes. It is a philosophy to improve the quality of goods and services of an organization. The process of continuous improvement is known as Deming's P-D-C-A cycle. The four original major steps of the cycle are:

1. P (plan) – gathering of data to identify and define the issue(s)/problem(s) that need improvements and identify ways to achieve them.

2. D (do) – implementing the plan by using a trial run, a test group, etc.

3. C (check) – analysing the results to see if there is good agreement between the original goals and what was actually achieved; make adjustments if necessary.

4. A (act) – depending on the results from the check step, acting on the plan on a full scale or conducting further work by beginning with the P (plan) (Temponi, 2005). In his later work, Deming replaced 'Check' with 'Study' because he wanted to emphasize the process of learning as more important than the limited action of checking –inspection (Neave, 1990).

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CELL

The continuous improvement process is future directed and believes in a 'transformation' model to a 'revolution' model. The process expects commitment from all involved parties and also recommends empowerment of the participants, which is possible through regular staff development activities. NAAC proposes that every accredited institution should establish the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) to continuously improve quality as 'enhancement' and sustain the good work of the institution.

CONCLUSION

Application of Total Quality Management in education will give better results in all fields of the process of education as a good technique of management used and proved giving excellent results in other industrial and business organizations (Akhtar, 2000). It is the provision of extraordinary customer's satisfaction (Akhtar, 1998- 99). It is based on the participatory management philosophy. It believes on never ending improvement through the collaborative efforts of members of the educational organization. TQM philosophy encourages the students, teachers and the employees for extraordinary performance (Akhtar, 2000). Being a potential paradigm we Journal of Quality and Technology Management Volume III, Issue I1, Dec 2007, pg 87-97 10 can get benefits of TQM in educational institutions (schools, college & universities) in both public and private, as Schmoker and Wilson (1993); Fitzgerald (2004) thinks: TQM can help a school or college providing better services to its primary customers; students and employers. The continuous improvement focus of TQM is a fundamental way of fulfilling the accountability requirements common to educational reform. Operating a no-fear TQM system with a focus on continuous growth and improvement offers more excitement and challenge to students and teachers than a "good-enough" learning environment can provide. Managing quality in higher education institution is not similar to business and industry. Thus, in this section, the emphasis is on 'management for quality' rather than 'management of quality'. Higher education institutions work as a community that takes decision to maintain standards and quality. The educational process is also based on community collaborative learning, where the students have to play an active role be it in teaching or research in HEIs. Thus, the concept of continuous improvement is most suitable to HEIs. The Deming P-D-S-A

cycle for continuous improvement is based on self-evaluation, which can be applied to educational endeavours at individual teacher level as well as institutional level. In this section, we also emphasized the role of a student as stakeholder in the process of quality assurance, and the role of IQAC to develop a 'quality culture' in HEIs. The growing availability of alternate forms of higher education as distance and e-learning also demand that quality is maintained and assured in all forms of education provided by HEIs

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