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A STUDY ON DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY CIRCLE IN AFFILIATED COLLEGES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract:

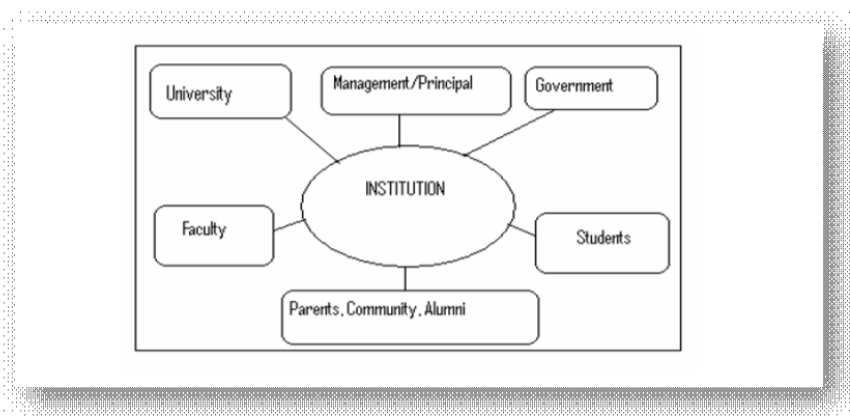
This paper tries to project a method from the parlance of management into the arena of higher education thereby anticipating the relative improvement of quality consciousness among all constituents so as to enhance their effectiveness and competence. The Japanese concept of Quality Circle is made use of here. According to this concept, a body of employees meets from time to time under the guidance of a supervisor to discuss ways and means to improve the quality of products and services of the organization. They meet regularly to solve problems they experience at work. These are generally informal in nature. It is worthwhile to see how this concept of Quality Circle can be utilized in an institution at the higher education level. In a higher education institution, which is affiliated and aided, it has the following dimensional structure incorporating various stakeholders. The main objective of this paper is study on Indian education system and history and study on implementing the concept of Quality Circle in Affiliated Colleges

KEY WORDS:

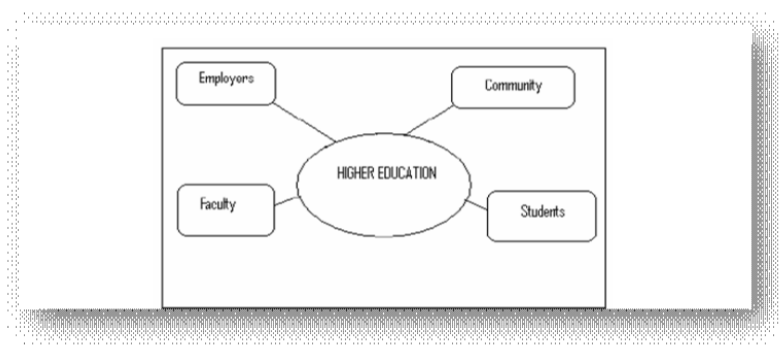
Education, History of Education, Quality circle, Stakeholder.

INTRODUCTION

This paper tries to project a method from the parlance of management into the arena of higher education thereby anticipating the relative improvement of quality consciousness among all constituents so as to enhance their effectiveness and competence. The Japanese concept of Quality Circle is made use of here. According to this concept, a body of employees meets from time to time under the guidance of a supervisor to discuss ways and means to improve the quality of products and services of the organization. They meet regularly to solve problems they experience at work. These are generally informal in nature. It is worthwhile to see how this concept of Quality Circle can be utilized in an institution at the higher education level. In a higher education institution, which is affiliated and aided, it has the following dimensional structure incorporating various stakeholders.



Though a synergistic union of all the parts is vital for the institution's survival, faculty and students do have a decisive, dynamic role to play in the system. They are the core factors in the teaching-learning activity. They also touch upon other segments such as co-curricular work, research work and social-extension work. That does not mean that the management or the principal have no visible role. They provide the right leadership, with the declared vision and mission of the institution and they project the enduring values of the institution which harmonize themselves with the society to which it is rooted in. In our higher education system, as we have in India, the customers are varied and diverse.



The needs are as follows:

(a) Students: Knowledge, skill and abilities to pursue personal and professional goals, joy in learning

(b) Faculty: Continuous personal growth, security, joy in work, information and input

(c) Employers: Competent employees, productive performance

(d) Community: Competent work force, leaders and followers, volunteer in community service, politically active citizens In the present century, there is a clear cut shift in demands from the conventional ways of thinking in higher education. Stella. A and Gnanam. A has outlined the new paradigms (2003: 18-19).

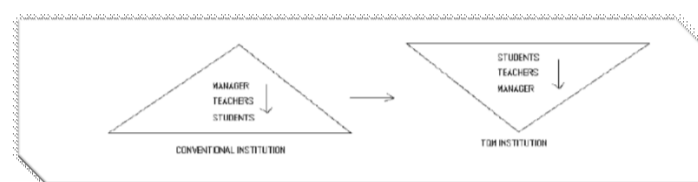
- (1) Shift in the objectives of higher education from transmission of knowledge to skill and capacity building.
- (2) Change in the curricular transaction from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach.
- (3) Moving away from rigid curricula to a flexible curricular structure.
- (4) Growth in the non-traditional modes of educational provisions.
- (5) Replacing the traditional academic skills by computer fortified skills.
- (6) Introduction of new forms of educational delivery.

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- (7) Moving away from career specific qualifications towards more general training.
- (8) Increasing leaning towards private providers and private sources of funding.
- (9) Change in the general perception of education as public good to education as a tradable service.
- (10) Shift from a non-competitive ambience of higher education to a competitive environment.
- (11) Shift from national focus to international focus.

Hence in the present system there is a need to concentrate more at the fundamental level of a higher educational system for improving the conditions prevailing and gearing up the institutions to take up responsibilities at a higher level.

With the advent of TQM approach, the emphasis has been on “quality culture” among all employees. TQM aims at continuous improvement, by anticipating and changing, to meet the needs of the customer. Further, the stress is on team work. If TQM is implemented, then the conventional style of thinking changes. In the TQM culture, it is the presenters' needs and wants that determine the educational programme. As Mukhopadhyay (2005: 66) puts it the shift can be represented as follows:



Ramesh .G. Soni et al (2000) proposes an eleven step model for implementing TQM in larger institutions of education:

- The president adopts quality as the core of institutional value system and communicates this value and works to develop commitment to it throughout the institution.
- The president promotes the value through frequent symbolic and substantive actions.
- Educate administrators and academic deans in TQM and customer orientation, team/participative management.
- Identify customer's needs and set performance objectives.
- Train and designate “internal resource persons” who provide technical assistance to the institution.
- Train faculty, staff, and employees in appropriate statistical techniques, process analysis, decision making, and customer orientation.
- Form quality teams to seek continual improvement in the process and identify champions.
- Define/delegate authority throughout the institution.
- Develop performance measurement systems to continuously monitor the progress of the institution; the measurement should focus on the stakeholders' needs satisfaction.
- Institute incentives and reward systems and relate them to TQM objectives.
- Work continuously to reduce the resistance to change.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

TQM has been used successfully in variety of organizations, including manufacturing and service organizations. TQM was first applied in industries. Colleges and universities have later gradually started applying TQM principles. Some researchers have documented the experience of ISO 9001:2000 certification and TQM implementation in some higher educational institutions. TQM is for achieving excellence (Jabnoun and Sedrani, 2005) and TQM is for continuous quest for excellence (Lakhe and Mohanty, 1994). TQM can be defined as a holistic management philosophy aimed at continuous improvement in all functions of an organization to deliver goods and services in line with customers' needs or requirements (Demirbag et al., 2006). Management Leadership is a key factor in the success of TQM in higher education institutions (Tari, 2006). When top management is committed to quality, adequate resources will be allocated to quality improvement efforts (Karuppusami and Gandhinathan, 2006). The learning environment that includes lecture rooms, laboratories, and social space can become a surrogate indicator of the institution's capacity to offer service in an organized and professional manner (Bitner, 1992). The learning support facilities include libraries and computing facilities. And other facilities include student accommodation and health care (Harvey, 2003). Students will have an idea of “overall” quality of the service provided by an institution. Evaluating students' opinion on the overall service quality can be

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compared with known benchmarks (Owila and Aspinwall, 1998). Naik (2001) has strongly suggested that bringing quality movement through application of TQM in Indian higher education will result in global recognition. He further suggested that a law should be made to have quality assurance cell in every academic institutions like in UK. Madu and Kuei (1993) discussed the dimensions of quality teaching in higher educational institutions. They discussed the difference between Total Quality Assurance and Total Quality Management, and recommended changes to be made in colleges and universities in order to improve the quality of teaching. M.S. Owlia and E.M. Aspinwall (1996) first developed a new framework, in which quality dimension and its corresponding characteristics were identified. In this framework for measuring quality in engineering institutions, six dimensions comprising of 28 items were used as basis for different questionnaires for students, staff and industry people.

G.S. Sureshchandar et al (2001) discussed 12 dimensions of quality management as critical for the utilization of a TQM environment in service organizations like Banking and non banking financial institutions, insurance, health care system and education. A conceptual model for Total Quality Control has been proposed demonstrating the relationships among its dimensions. Sangeeta Sahney et al (2004) explores that the quality of education is becoming important, particularly so in higher education, where the quality of process is the quality of output in the form of enlightened students who move out of the system. Prabhakar Kaushik and Dinesh Khanduja (2006) and S.S. Sarda et al (2006) have explained the role of six-sigma (DMAIC methodology) in technical institutions for the continual improvement of the student results. P.B. Sakthivel et al., (2005) have concluded from the perceptions of students' that the ISO 9001:2000 certified engineering institutions are moving towards the path of TQM offering better quality of service than the non-ISO certified institutions.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Engineering education is essential to improve the technical manpower quality circle in Affiliated Colleges of a country. In India, especially in Andhra Pradesh many technical institutions have ISO9001:2000 and NBA certificates but it seems the quality of education in those institutions is not satisfactory. Some of the problems like lack of infrastructure, shortage of qualified faculty, students' attitude towards learning, poor students' results and placement inadequacy in the engineering institutions result in the institutions' and stakeholders' disarray. So this is the right time to give more importance to quality education. The implementation of ITQM practices in engineering institutions and in Affiliated Colleges may certainly help the students to get quality education. The objectives of this study are to identify the items in the operating system and critical factors of Integrated TQM in institutions in South Andhra Pradesh,

EDUCATION IN INDIA

History of Education: Brahmin gurus imparted education by means of donations and not through charging fees or funds from the students or their guardians. Later, temples were also centres of education. Religious education was compulsory but secular subjects were also taught. Students were required to be brahmacharis or celibates. The knowledge in these orders was often related to the tasks a section of the society had to perform. The priest class, the Brahmins, was imparted knowledge of religion, philosophy, and other ancillary branches while the warrior class, the Kshatriya, was trained in the various aspects of warfare. The business class, the Vaishya, was taught their trade and the working class of the Shudras was generally deprived of educational advantages. The book of laws, the Manusmriti, and the treatise on statecraft the Arthashastra were among the influential works of this era which reflect the outlook and understanding of the world at the time.

Secular institutions cropped up along with Hindu temples, mutts and Buddhist monasteries. These institutions imparted practical education, e.g. medicine. A number of urban learning centres became increasingly visible from the period between 500 BCE to 400 CE. The important urban centres of learning were Taxila (in modern day Pakistan) and Nalanda in Bihar, among others. These institutions systematically imparted knowledge and attracted a number of foreign students to study topics such as Vedic and Buddhist literature, logic, grammar, etc. Chanakya, a Brahmin teacher, was among the most famous teachers of Takshasila, associated with founding of Mauryan Empire.

Education System in India

Education in India is provided by the public sector as well as the private sector, with control and funding coming from three levels: central, state, and local. Takshasila was the earliest recorded centre of higher learning in India from at least 5th century BCE and it is debatable whether it could be regarded a

university or not. The Nalanda University was the oldest university-system of education in the world in the modern sense of university. Western education became ingrained into Indian society with the establishment of the British Raj.

Education in India falls under the control of both the Union Government and the State Governments, with some responsibilities lying with the Union and the states having autonomy for others. The various articles of the Indian Constitution provide for education as a fundamental right. Most universities in India are controlled by the Union or the State Governments.

India has made progress in terms of increasing the primary education attendance rate and expanding literacy to approximately three quarters of the population. India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to the economic rise of India. Much of the progress, especially in higher education and scientific research, has been credited to various public institutions. The private education market in India was 5% [citation needed] and in terms of value was estimated to be worth US\$40 billion in 2008 but had increased to US\$68–70 billion by 2012.

As per the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2012, 96.5% of all rural children between the ages of 6-14 were enrolled in school. This is the fourth annual survey to report enrollment above 96%. 83% of all rural 15-16 year olds were enrolled in school. However, going forward, India will need to focus more on quality. Gross enrollment at the tertiary level has crossed 20% (as per an Ernst & Young Report cited in Jan 2013 in Education News/minglebox.com) As per the latest (2013) report issued by the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), there are more than 3524 diploma and post-diploma offering institutions in the country with an annual intake capacity of over 1.2 million. The AICTE also reported 3495 degree-granting engineering colleges in India with an annual student intake capacity of over 1.76 million with actual enrollment crossing 1.2 million. Capacity for Management Education crossed 385000, and post graduate degree slots in Computer Science crossed 100,000. Pharmacy slots reached over 121,000. Total annual intake capacity for technical diplomas and degrees exceeded 3.4 million in 2012. According to the University Grants Commission (UGC) total enrollment in Science, Medicine, Agriculture and Engineering crossed 6.5 million in 2010. Charu Sudan Kasturi reported in the Hindustan Times (New Delhi, 10 January 2011) that the number of women choosing engineering has more than doubled since 2001. In the India education system, a significant number of seats are reserved under affirmative action policies for the historically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. In universities/Colleges/Institutions affiliated to the federal government there is a minimum 50% of reservations applicable to these disadvantaged groups. At state level it can vary. Andhra Pradesh had 83.33% reservation in 2012, which is the highest percentage of reservations in India.

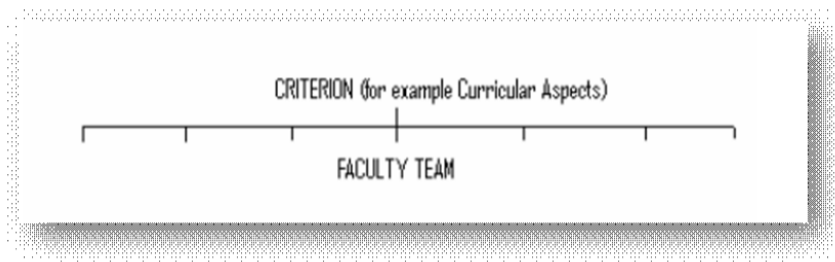
QUALITY CIRCLE: THE CONCEPT, LEVELS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

If sustenance of quality is necessary and if team work is the suggested measure, Quality Circle is one of the useful concepts that can be adopted in an educational institution. Several universities, colleges and junior colleges have used quality circles to bring in effectiveness in areas of residential life (Keller: 1987), student learning support (Wilkinson: 1989), college administration (Montano: 1999), library facilities (Sell and Mortola: 1985)2. Quality Circles can be formed in an institution for the following reasons.

- To strengthen team spirit.
- To set and attain reasonable targets.
- To improve morale and communication.
- To promote initiative.
- To develop the ability of problem solving.
- To improve the quality of the product and services.

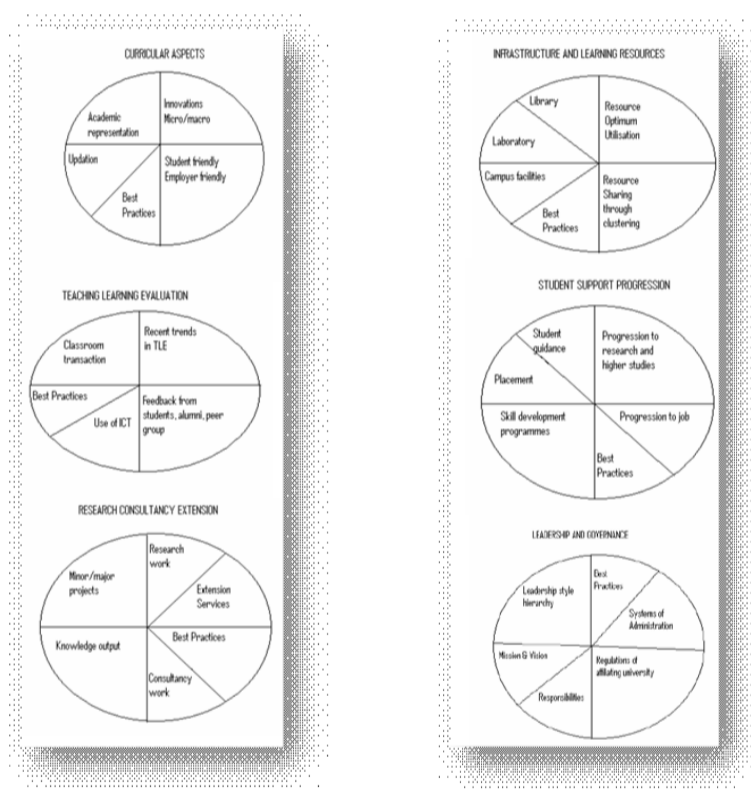
In a Higher Education Institution of affiliated nature, the Quality Circles can be constituted at two levels, viz. (a) faculty level (b) student level

The faculty level quality circle can be formed based on the seven NAAC criteria which can be discussed by individual circle for conducting SWOT analysis on various issues. SWOT is a participative technique for organizational diagnosis whereby members collectively decide, rather identify, their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

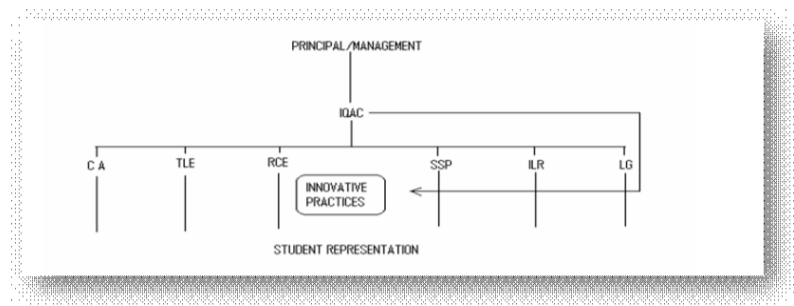


They can meet for at least three to four hours a month. One or two facilitators can be identified for initiating, monitoring and recording the discussion. These can be later reported to the IQAC for detailed discussion.

The following are some of the proposed models for discussion under each criterion:



At the student level, representatives from each class/batch can be invited for discussion. The total strength should not exceed forty. They must be initiated into the quality process by conducting a brief seminar on quality management. Based on the NAAC criteria, they should also be divided into groups of five or six. They can also conduct brief sessions by themselves at various intervals. These should be brought to the IQAC for further discussion. The entire segments can be integrated into one unified whole as given below.



• This process of instilling the virtues of quality consciousness is sure to deliver gains for the institution. The flow of ideas and observations does not have a unidirectional path but it comes from various corners. There is absolute decentralization of autonomy regarding quality awareness and the need to change usually comes from the real 'within'. In this context let a summary be presented regarding the major advantages of Qcs

- Communication flow in organization gets effective
- Participative leadership / decentralization
- Identification of root causes on various campus issues / transparency
- Increase of motivation to perform
- Orientation towards common goals

CONCLUSION

The concept of QC may not be new nor the application of it in higher educational institutions. This paper is a humble attempt to bring together the concept of TQM, the NAAC criteria and the QC concept in an affiliated college which is expected bring out the best from the institution from various stake holders. This model can be modified as per the regional academic priorities. But one fact remains true- the QC of an institution will remain the crucial pathway through which the consciousness of quality will spread and nourish.

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