

Implementing the Total Quality Management in School Education: A Formidable Challenge

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Quality is one of the major concerns of school education in India. The various State Boards of Secondary Education, ICSE and CBSE have failed so far to bring forth quality in schools affiliated to such Boards. The quality in India has become synonymous to money invested by parents in few renowned schools with good infrastructure and human resources. The rest of the schools both private and government portray an awkward situation so far as quality is concerned. Various committees were formed and their recommendations were worked out in vain without marked improvement in quality of school education in India. In the era of globalization, quality has become all the more important. Despite massive plans and implementations of recommendations, the quality of school education in India is still confined to very few schools that embody as quality schools in our country.

Joseph Juran, one of the most respected leaders of quality in the 1900s, suggested that the twentieth century would be defined by historians as the century of productivity. He also stated that the 21st century should be designated the century of quality. This statement, although, was made in respect of quality in business, it seems relevant on the part of some prominent schools which function as quality schools in India at par with international standards.

Quality in Education comes under purview of quality in services as promulgated in the field of quality management. Service can be defined as "any primary or complementary activity that does not directly produce a physical product that is non-goods part of the transaction between buyer and seller." Education as a whole has developed into a fast growing service sector in India and abroad. Hence the quality as referred in business is quite relevant and appropriate to education in present scenario.

Quality of service needs proper time, timeliness (performing within a time limit), completeness (accomplishment of what is desired), courtesy (good relationships among the people involved), consistency, accessibility, convenience (easy to obtain), accuracy (exactness) and responsiveness (react quickly to resolve problems) etc. All these are somehow the basic requirements of a good school education. Hence, quality system is a must to be implemented in school education.

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Definition of Quality in Respect of School Education:

Joseph M. Juran defined quality as, "Quality is fitness for use or purpose". Philip M. Crosby defined it as "Quality is conformance to requirements. According to W. Edwards Deming, "A predictable degree of uniformity and dependability at low cost and suited to market is known as quality. ISO 8402 quality vocabulary defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs of customers". These definitions perfectly suit to the school education as quality is one of the prime concerns of global education which is no less than the competitive focus of business to prove its superiority in the market on the basis of quality.

Relevance of Total Quality Control (TQC) in School Education :

TQC can be defined as an effort of continuous quality improvement of all processes, products and services through universal participation that results in increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty and improved business results.

TQC includes efficiency, productivity, customer satisfaction and good management of key areas such as planning and human resources.

Feigenbaum defined TQC as, "An effective system for integrating the quality development and improvement efforts of various groups in an organization so as to enable marketing, engineering, production and service at the most economical levels which allow for full customer satisfaction. TQC is absolutely relevant to School Education as the same is the prime need of School Education today. In both government and private schools, the funds invested on school education need to be controlled on the line of TQC to minimize the profuse wastages made in course of School Education by great success in an atmosphere supported by total quality management systems. In the recent decade, many private schools have acquired accreditations of ISO 9000.

ISO 9000 in School Education :

The creation of the ISO 9000 series of international standards began in 1979 with the formation of a technical committee with participants from 20 countries. This Geneva based association developed and continues to revise and update the standards. The name ISO 9000 has its origin in the Greek word ISOS, meaning equal.

The purpose of the ISO standards is to facilitate the multi-dimensional exchange of products and services by providing a clear set of quality system requirements. Competitive organizations find it necessary to adopt and adhere to these standards. The standards provide a baseline against which an organization's quality systems can be judged. The ISO 9000 standards were raised in the year 2000. ISO 9000:

2000 takes a process oriented approach. This standard focuses on quality management systems and requires the identification of quality management processes as well as their sequence and their interactions with key business processes. The ISO 9000 requirements describe what an organization must accomplish in order to meet the expectations of its service receivers. In case of a school, ISO 9000 can be implemented to accomplish the expectations of parents and students so as to cherish their academic dreams. Various Private Schools and Colleges are stepping up on the same line with ISO 9000 accreditation which is a good sign for school & college education in India as education is slowly and steadily growing to be the largest service sector in India. Further this growth will lead to a competitive growth in quality of School Education in India.

Significance of Eight Key Principles of ISO 9000: 2000 in School Education:

1. Customer focused organization (same on the line of Child Centered Education)
2. Leadership (The role of principals as leaders in Schools).
3. Involvement of people (Involvement of parents, Teachers & non-teaching staff in the whole process of education).
4. Process Approach (All academic and non-academic processes of education in a school).
5. Systems Approach to management (Reception, administration, Fee counter, various sections including computer, examination, printing etc.).
6. Continual Improvement (Scope of improvement in School).
7. Factual approach to decision making (Action Research based approach in schools).
8. Mutually beneficial supplier relationships (The school functions as an organization with mutual supports and benefits to outsiders involved in school services).

TQ system in School Education is quite relevant to the reason that prominent schools strive for excellence with a scope for continual improvement in its approaches and systems. This is a land mark for other government and non-government schools to follow it as a quality model. If School Education emphasizes on its-quality concerns, there will be certain upliftment in the status of both government and non-government schools in India. With its ever growing strengths, ISO 9000 & 9001, is supported by ISO 9004 : 2000 which provides guidelines for those organizations wishing to go beyond ISO 9001 : 2000 and establish a quality management system that does not only meet present requirements but also focuses on improving performance. ISO 9004: 2000 is not a requirement and does not lead to certification.

David F. Treagust & Leonie J. Rennie (1993) in their studies stressed on the need of technology in school education by including technology education in school based curriculum. They focused on the time as success requires time, time for the faculty to accept ownership of the program, time to plan modifications to their curricula and teaching strategies, time to implement changes and time for them to be reflected in student outcomes.

Hansen and Jackson (1996), in their studies based on application of TQM in classroom found that the TQM is focused on managing the time of students to manage the quality of teaching-learning in schools.

Finally, it can be concluded that many efforts have been made to improve the quality of school education and its efficiency and use of resource planning, yet, the status of school education in Indian context, needs massive efforts including the quality set up of ISO 9000 to be implemented in our systems of school education. There are several indicators to determine the quality concerns of schools in India including cost of education, examination results, quality of input and other non-school factors.

The School Education will undergo a reshuffle if quality standards of ISO 9000 are implemented in School Education. It requires a clear mandate from Government and Boards of School Education to initiate this mammoth effort to give a new life of quality to School Education in India.

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