

ROLE, RATIONALE & RELEVANCE OF TQM IN ACADEMICS

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Globalization is threatening the feudal system of management in our country. Changes in the general environment leave no sector or institution untouched. Liberalization of the economy might seem to be a happening that is apparently related to trade, business, and industry alone. But the ripple effects of such changes transgress the boundaries and soon the repercussions are felt in other areas. The academia including all types of educational institutions, be they related to schools, colleges, or universities are feeling the impact of the changes too. Terms such as competition, customer, market, product/service might be unusual for educational sector and academic institutions but these terms are very relevant in today's environment. The young upcoming students have to be given formal training to understand the gravity of the impact globalization has had and how TQM plays an important role in meeting the new challenges. We need to urgently introduce a change in our education system. But how? The new, young manager, fresh Engineers, MBA's, Science graduates, Young people from all walks of life are picking up new ideas about TQM and are confident of implementing them. However they lack formal knowledge of the significance of the new philosophy of TQM in the context of their curriculum. What is TQM? Is it the Japanese management stuff? Does it mean Quality circles and suggestion schemes? How is it really applicable in areas like marketing, engineering,

computers, finance and personnel? All these questions need to be answered, but not only by theory, but also by involving the young people in evolving through shared experiences. Create a new learning environment at the institutes to fully reveal human capabilities and eventually draw out infinite possibilities.

Quality is the most strategic issue facing the top management's presently, and will be so in the next millenium. Achieving Quality in the organization means not only meeting but also clearly exceeding the customer's expectations on all the issues related with the performance, cost and responsiveness to the customer.

The new generation has to be made aware of the fact that in the changing times instead of being totally occupied with doing statistical process control, focus has to be on actually how to build prevention into the organizations working, how to create a culture of prevention that is what has to be emphasized in all the teachings.

Including TQM as a part of the curriculum will also clear up the minds of the young students. Without a formal approach they carry vague ideas about the subject. Many believe that it is one of those management fads. They have to be made aware of the fact that TQM is fundamentally an essential tool of running a succesful enterprise. It is determining exactly what a customer wants (both internally and externally)

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describing what has to be accomplished in order to give that to the customer, and then meeting those requirements every time. Quality is a matter of philosophy, not only techniques. Many young people believe that quality is something for the industry and not for them. The real world does not permit this. Quality has to become the fabric of every individual's life. Every student has to understand it and strive to achieve it in his/her daily life. It has to become a part of the individual.

To start with teaching and training the young minds in the principles of 5S is very essential. Let us first understand what is 5S.

1. SEIRI: Separate out all that is unnecessary and eliminate it.
2. SEITON: Those things found to be necessary are put in order so that they lie ready for use when needed.
3. SEISO: Clean workplace, equipment and prevent defects.
4. SEIKETSU: Standardize; make cleaning and checking routine.
5. SHITSUKE : Discipline about training, personal cleanliness and applying KAISAN (Continuous improvement) to the previous 4 steps.

Self-discipline is also very essential to the success of the young people. People who soon would emerge on to new horizons to take on the world by the horns need to know and practice self-discipline, which is so essential to their success.

Exposing the learning youth to TQM as part of their education system would not only clear their vague ideas about the subject, but also make them realize that it is possible to manage a corporate body successfully without isolating an individual. Quality is for each and every task, person and procedure not only in an

organization, but also in every walk of life. It would also bring to light to these upcoming managers of tomorrow that high quality does not mean higher costs and lower productivity. Knowledge of TQM will make them realize that it is possible to produce excellent quality and simultaneously reduce costs and increase productivity multifold and also have everybody feeling great. Learning about TQM will bring better comradeship among the students. They will learn to work in teams. The element of individual involvement in the central theme running across the entire TQM philosophy will essentially make them realize the importance of working together, the need of interdependence and the spirit of partnership among colleagues. Formal training will make students realize that the Secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one. This is TQM in its simplest form.

The need is to change the mindsets of all the people towards TQM. It is important for all to understand and always to remember for their future success that it is essential for the top management to assume leadership role in initiating and installing TQM and navigating the ship of quality as Captains and not board it as mere passengers. TQM teaches to concentrate on the processes or methods of doing work not only in academics and industry, but also in one's daily life. Take care of the processes and the results will take care of themselves. It is normal in everyday life to blame someone else for all the problems. But this only wrecks the quality standards and brings a lot of unhappiness. The best way to solve this is to treat the next

process as a customer. This is a wonderful and a practical way of putting an end to all inter rivalries. It is also very essential to dig for facts, real facts, to get to know the real problems, to get to the root causes of the problems; otherwise, one ends up in attacking the superficial ones. If one stops for a while and relates this even to personal life, one realizes that a lot of heartburn could be avoided if this TQM method is applied. Instead of flaring up at every issue if only one could stop a while, get the details, the facts behind the issue, 90% of the issues would not remain as issues but would get resolved with clarity and facts. Thus TQM broadens the horizons of people and makes them look at things with an all-together different perspective.

In United States, at least 25

Universities including the Oregon State University of Wisconsin are implementing TQM and QC (Quality Circles) programs in academics. In India, IIM Calcutta, Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad, Anna University Chennai, University of Nagpur College of Engineering, have introduced TQM and QC in academics. 1992 saw Millcreek's School Board, Erie, at Pennsylvania U.S.A. using TQM concepts to formulate and implement a Quality Policy for itself.

In conclusion, it is the right time for all Institutes to treat TQM as an integral part of the curriculum, and introduce learning of all aspects of TQM philosophy together with the essential tools and techniques such as **JIT, KANBAN, QUALITY CIRCLES, ZERO INVENTORY AND OF COURSE THE 5S.** ★