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Applying Total Quality Management in Pedagogy

ABSTRACT

The developmental needs in education should be interpreted in the context of the overall developmental needs of the country and should take into consideration the developmental plans in other sectors. Education itself aims at development of human resources. Therefore when one talks of TQM in education it means development of those human resources which are involved in organizing, imparting and receiving education. Quality education denotes developing individuals comprehensively to their full potential, unfolding the perfection already existing in them. The challenge of management of quality in education is realizing optimally the perfection already prevailing in individuals, not only among students but also among teachers and all those who are some way or the other connected with imparting and organizing education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality in education can not be defined in terms of product specification like any other industrial product. Human beings are complex body-mind-spirit organisms, not just knowledge and skill configurations. Human configurations combine values, attitude, knowledge, skills, competencies and host of other attributes. Thus, quality education denotes developing individuals comprehensively to their full potential, unfolding the perfection already existing in them. The challenge of management of quality in education is realizing optimally the perfection already prevailing in individuals, not only among students but also among teachers and all those who are some way or the other connected with imparting and organizing education. The focus is on the quality of life in institutions where a student is groomed and shaped and teachers who spend major portion of their lives in these temples of learning. Continuous quest for quality, both in education and in life has thus become a vital goal to work on in the new global competitive environment. TQM has emerged as a major technique in improving and sustaining quality in education.

The concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) was developed by W. Edwards Deming, after World War II for improving the production quality of goods and services. The concept was not taken seriously by Americans until the Japanese, who adopted it in 1950 to revive their postwar business and industry and used it to dominate world markets by 1980.

The concept of TQM is equally applicable to academics. It is convincingly believed that the Deming's concept of TQM provides guiding principles for needed educational reform. In his article, "The Quality Revolution in Education," John Jay Bonstingl outlines the TQM principles he believes are most salient to education reform. He calls them the "Four Pillars of Total Quality Management."

2. PILLARS OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

2.1 Synergistic Relationships

According to this principle, an organization must focus, first and foremost, on its suppliers and customers. In a TQM organization, everyone is both a customer and supplier; this confusing concept

emphasizes "the systematic nature of the work in which all are involved". In other words, teamwork and collaboration are essential. Traditionally, education has been prone to individual and departmental isolation. However, according to Bonstingl, this outdated practice no longer serves us: "When I close the classroom door, those kids are mine!" is a notion too narrow to survive in a world in which teamwork and collaboration result in high-quality benefits for the greatest number of people. The very application of the first pillar of TQM to education emphasizes the synergistic relationship between the "suppliers" and "customers". The concept of synergy suggests that performance and production is enhanced by pooling the talent and experience of individuals.

In a classroom, teacher-student teams are the equivalent of industry's front-line workers. The product of their successful work together is the development of the student's capabilities, interests, and character. In one sense, the student is the teacher's customer, as the recipient of educational services provided for the student's growth and improvement. Viewed in this way, the teacher and the school are suppliers of effective learning tools, environments, and systems to the student, who is the school's primary customer. The school is responsible for providing for the long-term educational welfare of students by teaching them how to learn and communicate in high-quality ways, how to access quality in their own work and in that of others, and how to invest in their own lifelong and life-wide learning processes by maximizing opportunities for growth in every aspect of daily life. In another sense, the student is also a worker, whose product is essentially his or her own continuous improvement and personal growth.

2.2 Continuous Improvement and Self Evaluation

The second pillar of TQM applied to education is the total dedication to continuous improvement, personally and collectively. Within a Total Quality school setting, administrators work collaboratively with their customers who are teachers and students. Today it is in our best interest to encourage everyone's potential by dedicating ourselves to the continual improvement of our own abilities and those of the people with whom we work and live. Total Quality is, essentially, a win-win approach which works to everyone's ultimate advantage.

According to Deming, no human being should ever evaluate another human being. Therefore, TQM emphasizes self-evaluation as part of a continuous improvement process. In addition, this principle also laminates to the focusing on students' strengths, individual learning styles, and different types of intelligences.

2.3 A System of Ongoing Process

The third pillar of TQM as applied in academics is the recognition of the organization as a system and the work done within the organization must be seen as an ongoing process. The primary implication of this principle is that individual students and teachers are less to blame for failure than the system in which they work. Quality speaks to working on the system, which must be examined to identify and eliminate the flawed processes that allow its participants to fail. Since systems are made up of processes, the improvements made in the quality of those processes largely determine the quality of the resulting product. In the new paradigm of learning, continual improvement of learning processes based on learning outcomes replaces the outdated "teach and test" mode.

2.4 Leadership

The fourth TQM principle applied to education is that the success of TQM is the responsibility of top management. The school teachers must establish the context in which

students can best achieve their potential through the continuous improvement that results from teachers and students working together. Teachers are responsible to provide the leadership, framework, and tools necessary for continuous improvement in the learning process.

According to researched evidence TQM principles help the schools in following way:- (a)Redefine the role, purpose and responsibilities of schools; (b).Improve schools as a "way of life"; (c)Plan comprehensive leadership training for educators at all levels ; (d)Create staff development that addresses the attitudes and beliefs of school staff; (e) Use research and practice-based information to guide both policy and practice ; (f) Design comprehensive student-development initiatives that cut across a variety of agencies and institutions.

In order to achieve the above as opportunities to the academic scenario, in addition to patience, participatory management among well-trained and educated partners is crucial to the success of TQM in education; everyone involved must understand and believe in principles. 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.

Education itself aims at development of human resources. Therefore when one talks of TQM in education it means development of those human resources which are involved in organizing, imparting and receiving education. These include teachers, headmasters, principals, and support staff working in educational institutions, head of university departments, vice-chancellors, educational administrators at the local, state and central levels, planners and policy-makers and the students. Developing all these categories of people becomes extremely important as the effectiveness of education depends upon how well they perform their roles.

People at different levels and performing different roles require different competencies to be effective in their roles. These competencies are also changing from time to time as the environment is changing. Knowledge base is continuously improving and the needs are changing. Such a dynamic and changing environment requires equally or even faster developing management techniques to cope with it. Hence there is a need to develop continuously the capabilities of the people involved in education.

The competencies required for teachers are normally considered subject matter competencies and pedagogic skills. As we go up the education stream the competency requirements become complex like the Headmasters of schools require more sophisticated competencies than what a teacher requires. Besides knowledge of the subject and pedagogic skills, he is required to be a leader, initiative taker, innovator, institution-builder, manager etc. As we go still higher up to the level of Director of Education, the competency requirements get still more complex as he is required to deal with a large number of institutions and guide them. He is required to be familiar with the region and its educational problems and should have the competency to guide the heads of large number of institutions, should be able to establish management systems to keep information, monitor performance, suggest innovative schemes and involve the community for improving educational facilities under his/her jurisdiction etc. Thus, the complexity of the capability requirements changes for different roles. All these roles are equally important for the effectiveness of the education systems and it becomes

essential to ensure continuous development of human resources occupying these roles.

Training has been used most often as the only mechanism for developing human resources in education sector and other mechanisms of human resource development have been neglected. The limitations of training in developing complex capabilities have not been adequately recognized in the past. It is easier to develop subject matter competencies in teachers through classroom instruction, but teaching skills cannot be developed through classroom instructions only. These have to be supplemented by actual practice. Higher level competencies required by the headmasters, principals and others involved with the education can not be developed in the classrooms alone, alternate mechanisms need to be identified. Experience from other sectors indicates that development of human resources can be affected through performance appraisal systems that are designed to promote employee development in their present roles. Potential development systems can also be planned to prepare for future roles likely to be performed by the employees. OD exercises could be undertaken to create self-renewal capabilities in educational institutions.

Career opportunities and rewards are very important factors in providing a development climate in educational institutions and agencies. If there is no developmental climate and no pressure or incentives for development, people are not likely to develop.

3.   DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS IN EDUCATION

The developmental needs in education should be interpreted in the context of the overall developmental needs of the country and should take into consideration the developmental plans in other sectors. Any HRD program for those in the field of
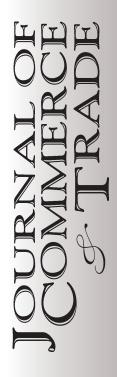
education should enable those in education systems to initiate, design, develop, and implement education systems that facilitate the accomplishment of developmental plans in other sectors at the local, regional and national levels. This becomes all the more important in a developing country like ours which cannot afford to waste its resources by having an education system that is a luxury.

In identifying the developmental needs of education we need to take this perspective into consideration. We need to address the question of linking of education with productivity and employment both of which depend on the developmental activities in other sectors. To meet the developmental needs of other sectors both educational planners and administrators need to understand and design or re-orient education accordingly. A basic requirement for this purpose is openness, risk-taking and innovativeness on the part of various functionaries involved in education.

The greatest need in the education sector today is to change attitudes and systematic rigidities. This change should begin from the top. This change cannot come merely through training programs. The performance of the higher level officers should be assessed and feedback should be given to them on their innovativeness, initiative and activities geared to develop local level talent in the education systems.

An effective delivery of educational services requires effective functioning of various personnel involved in these programmes. Management of human resources in this context would mean:

[a] Getting right people for the right jobs,
[b] Developing their capabilities to do their jobs effectively,
[c] Monitoring their performance through appraisals, evaluation and incentives,
[d] Developing their capabilities continuously

so that they are able to adapt themselves to the changing requirements of the fields.

[e] Ensuring their motivation continuously through appropriate reward systems and promotion and

[f] Helping them at every step through guidance, counseling etc. and getting the best out of their capabilities.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING QUALITY IN EDUCATION

Following issues may be considered as main contributing factors affecting quality management in education:

1. Top Management Style and philosophy :

· A development style
· Belief in the capabilities of people
· Participative approach
· Openness and receptivity

2. Personnel Policies:

· High concern for people
· Emphasis on equity and objectivity in performance appraisal
· Sufficient resource allocation for welfare and developmental activities
· Collaborative attitude of personnel staff
· Effective feedback system

3. HRD Mechanism/Systems:

· HRD Department
· System of performance appraisal
· Systematic procedure for counseling and feedback
· Career development programmes
· Training mechanism
· Potential development systems
· Communication system

4. Competencies and commitment of the head of the institution and staff :

To achieve institutional effectiveness, the capacity and competencies of planners and administrators need to be improved which is possible through training and orientation programmes. Director / Principal of an institution generally determine its effectiveness and efficiency. He/She is the one who occupies the most critical position in the institution as a key to its growth. When a teacher becomes director or the principal, apart from teaching, he has to perform various other tasks like administration, financial management, discipline and interaction with higher authorities in the hierarchy for which he has no experience. A teacher is just promoted or appointed to the position of head of the institution without any training or orientation. The leadership provided by the head of institution is very crucial in determining the effectiveness of the people working under him.

Thus, training becomes essential requirement for him. He should be provided training and professional growth opportunities which will help him to grow his potentials and make a difference in his capabilities. These professional development opportunities must be directly linked to his main role of an administrator and the facilitator of teaching and learning. Some of the areas recognized where heads of the institutions need to be given training are as follows:

· General administration
· Academic management
· Personnel management
· Library management
· Time management
· Decision making
· Staff management
· Student services
· Leadership orientation
· General management skills
· Conceptual and technical skills
· Communication skills

The list of training need for the head of institution is endless. With the advent of modern education technology he should know:

· Hardware requirement of education
· Software approach to education

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· Systems approach in education
· Computer aided teaching and learning and use of multi media tools.

According to 'University Education Commission,' 'The right kind of teacher is one who possesses a vivid awareness of his mission. He, not only loves his subject, but he loves also those who he teaches. His success will be measured not in terms of percentage of pass alone, not even by the quantity of original contribution to knowledge- important as they are, but equally through the quality of life and character of men and women whom he taught.'

The National Policy in Education, 1986, stated about the role of a teacher, 'the status of teacher reflects the socio cultural ethos of a society, it is said that no people can rise above the level of its' teachers. The government and the community should endeavour to create condition which will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. Teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs and capabilities and the concerns of the community.'

There are many characteristics that make for a successful teacher. These may be as varied as the teachers themselves; however, there are certain time-tested attributes, characteristics, and practices which contribute immensely to teacher's success. The following list contains items that students have used to describe their best teachers.

1 Enthusiasm
2 Preparation
3 Punctuality
4 Support and concern for students
5 Consistency
6 Politeness
7 Firmness and control
8 Does not play favorites
9 Provides personal help
10 Accepts individual differences
11 Employs an effective delivery
12 Does not make students lose face
13 Has high expectations of class members
14 Is humble
15 Is fair
16 Uses variety
17 Has a sense of humor; is relaxed
18 Use of engaged time
19 Use of text
20 Keeps within 1-2 days of the scheduled course outline
21. Field trips and other activities
22 Does not always teach from a sitting or leaning position
23. Interpersonal relationships with students
24. Does not allow one or two students to monopolize or dominate the class
25. Keeps accurate records

Expectations are too high but the performance is questionable. There is no magic lamp which will change situation. A serious thought has to be given at the national level to ensure that people responsible to develop quality in education are themselves competent and motivated to do so. Question remains how to do it. The answer is development of those who are connected and involved with education in any manner. Faculty development programmes should be a continuous process in all educational institutions whether academics or professional. There should be no place for second grade performers who may be asked leave as quickly as possible. With sound personnel policies to ensure right people for the job and requisite development programmes to increase the competencies and motivation level of the staff, the situation is bound to improve. There is need to launch teachers empowerment program with an objective to help teachers to innovate and meet the challenges of 21st century. This is possible only when they have access to professional development programmes, research facilities, community networks and web based learning support.

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