

Affecting Factor TQM in Higher Educational

Abstract

The role of higher education in the development of any nation cannot be underestimated. The progress and development of any nation is dependent on it. Imparting quality education is a challenge for many nations. The total quality management in higher education is affected by a number of factors. These can be broadly classified as micro and macro factors. Micro factors are those forces that are closer to the higher educational system and have a direct bearing on it. These factors affect the ability of the higher educational system to serve its customers. Macro factors are forces outside the higher educational system and which cannot be controlled. They are the larger societal forces that affect the micro factors. The paper attempts to find the impact of these factors on the higher education scenario in the country.

Keywords:TQM, Macro Factors, Higher Education, Quality, Manufacturing Sector

Introduction

The purpose of education is to introduce to modes of behaviour which includes modes of thinking and feeling relevant to our common life. It is considered as a tool for economic development, an engine for social progress and a medium of cultural reproduction. Higher education has always been considered as being essential for human development. The social and economic development of any nation is directly proportional to the higher education of that nation. Higher educational institutions are meant for broadening of perspective and the development of personality of students and are vehicles for economic and social progression. Making higher education accessible to a large proportion of its population has always been a challenge for any nation. In spite of liberalization and privatization of higher education, the quality of education offered is yet to reach the desired levels. In India as against the nearly 25- 30% annual growth in enrollment in the mid-1950s and 1960s, the demand for higher education fell to about 5% per annum since the early 1970s and has stabilized at the present level for nearly two decades. The term "quality" has been defined from various perspectives. Quality is defined as "the ability of a product or service to meet customer needs". According to the American Society for Quality is "the totality of features and characteristics of a product that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs". It is meeting or exceeding customer requirements now and in future. Quality here implies that the product or service is fit for customer's use. Quality has many benefits. It is responsible for giving a positive image of the organization. It improves the competitive ability. It reduces costs and thereby translates into improved profits. It creates an atmosphere for high employee morale, which improves productivity. Quality also reduces or eliminates liability problems, avoiding unnecessary costs.

Aim of TQM and Higher Education

Total Quality Management (TQM) is the application of quality pull in all the functional areas of management and all levels. TQM involves: doing things right the first time, striving for continuous improvement, and fulfilling customer needs. According to Wicher j (1990) TQM is composed of three terms : Total: meaning that every person is involved including customer and suppliers, Quality :implying that customer requirements are met exactly, and Management: indicating that senior executives are committed. Other practices include making quality the responsibility of every employee working with suppliers to improve the quality of raw materials and having established methods to measure the quality of goods or services outputs. Much of the work in quality and the theory of total quality management can be traced to the work of TQM gurus like W. Edwards Deming and Joseph Juran's teachings of quality and statistics in



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Japan during the 1950s, and the revolution that followed in the USA in the 1980s, to meet or preferably exceed customer expectations. Tools and techniques to measure TQM include measurement metrics, brainstorming, diagramming problems and issues, and statistical process control.

Though TQM had proved its worth as a solution for competitive problems in the manufacturing sector, the application of TQM principles in higher education was a late entrant than the manufacturing industry. According to Williams TQM's entry into higher education has followed four main routes

1. Through the membership of university-governing bodies by business people who have themselves experienced the benefits of TOM;
2. Via business and engineering departments which have been teaching TQM;
3. Following pressure from the government which has encouraged higher education institutions to serve more students without the corresponding increases in resources; and
4. The rapid diversification of functions of many universities including competitive contract teaching and research. The application of TQM in higher education institution differ from institutions to institution. While some tried to implement it as a whole and on a campus-wide basis, others focused on specific areas or on particular aspects of the total quality philosophy.

Review of Literature

India's role in higher education can be traced to ancient Indian universities at Vikramshila, Takshashila and Nalanda, amongst others. The roots of modern Indian universities can be traced to the European institutions and models during the colonial era. Earlier modern universities of Europe, at Bologna, Paris and Oxford, were founded as centres for travelling scholars and teachers and their main objective was to propagate the intellectual currents of the time (Ben-David, 1971). However later in the thirteenth century, the European universities developed into educational centres of the states, oriented to meet the demand for civil servants, especially priests and lawyers (Bertilsson, 1992). The universities of the Middle Age were essentially teaching and training centres. Modern political and economic events, especially the development of free-market economy, emphasized the need for 'globalization of universities'. The changing environmental factors have forced universities to rethink their conventional role and reshape themselves to meet the needs of the current stakeholders.

Many eminent proponents of TQM have discussed the role of TQM principles in higher education environments. These include Bailey and Bennett (1996), Coate (1999), Costin (1999), Evans (1996), Marchese (1999) and Vazzana et al. (1997). TQM encourages employees at all levels of an organization to make suggestions on how work should be done and actively improve processes, but Barnard feels that university faculty view the quality philosophy with suspicion since educational services are different from business organizations.

The measurement of quality in services is not an easy task. The measurement of quality in the service sector is based on customer's perceptions of the service and is highly multidimensional (Lovell, 1983). It differs from other manufacturing system because the customer is usually involved in the delivery of service and his/her perceptions of quality is dependent on contentment, and satisfaction of the customer. The result of the service and service process are directly linked to it.

Lawrence and McCollough (2001) proposes a system of guarantees designed to accommodate multiple stakeholders and the various and changing roles of students in the educational process. Their system of guarantees focuses on three customer groups: students, instructors of advanced courses that build on prerequisite courses and thirdly organizations that employ graduates of the college. A system of guarantees provide an institution with a competitive advantage by allowing it to tangibilize intangible educational quality to perspective students and their parents. In his model of distributed leadership for managing change in higher educational institutions, Gregory (1996) suggests four dimensions of institutional leadership- symbolic, political, managerial and academic

Study Objectives and Methodology

A survey study was done to find the various micro and macro factors affecting the quality of higher education in India. The study was conducted in 10 districts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh including Allahabad, Mirzapur, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Ballia, Gorakhpur, Sant Kabir Nagar, Azamgarh, Basti and Varanasi. A sample of 500, 50 from each district, was chosen. Simple random sampling method was applied in each district. Students passing out the intermediate and undergraduate students constituted sample. A questionnaire was prepared to elicit response for the sample. A total of 451 individuals responded.

Findings of the Study

There are different social groups who vary in their values, beliefs and perception. However the study focused on micro and macro factors that affect the total quality in higher education. Relevant factors affecting the quality of higher education are given here.

Micro Factors

Micro factors are those which are internal to any organization and over which the organization has control to a great extent.. They can be managed to get desired results in terms of quality.

Faculty

For any higher educational institutions, It will be difficult to achieve quality standards, if it is bereft of sufficient number of qualified faculty. In the study most of public funded institutions possessed the requisite number of qualified faculty. However the same was not so in the case of private funded institutions. A vast majority of 94% of the respondents felt that good faculty members were primary to qualitative education.

Curriculum Design and Revision

Proper design of curriculum and its revision is integral for quality inputs. It becomes imperative

that the curriculum should be compatible with the education goals. About 86% of the respondents felt that proper curriculum design and its regular revision was important.

Pedagogy

Different disciplines of study require differing pedagogies. While lecture method may be most suitable, for a theoretical science session, case study would be the ideal pedagogy discuss and bring the issues related in a business management class. It was found that 4ecture (76%) was the most popular mode of instruction across all the courses followed by lab Other popular modes of teaching were case study method for management education and demonstration method for medical and engineering courses.

Examination and Evaluation

The performance of any activities can be judged properly only if there exist a system of check and feedback. Examination and evaluation serves this purpose. They measure the efficiency of the candidates in terms of acquiring the knowledge base. About 72 % of the sample felt that good examination and evaluation practices were vital for better education.

Research, Consultancy and Extension Activities

In view of changing demands of nature of courses, it has become imperative that proper attention is focused on research and extension activities. This is particularly so when industrial houses are collaborating with universities for basic research as in the case of pharmacy and biotechnology. Respondents however felt that this factor was not that important for imparting quality education (31%).

Besides other microfactors included physical infrastructure and facilities including Classroom, Seminar/Conferencing facilities, audio-visual aids, library and computer laboratory facilities, hostel, canteen, and recreation facilities including playground, gymnasium, stadium etc. which were considered important for proper higher education.

Macro Factors

Macro factors are those which are present in the environment and over which the organization has little control. Various macro factors affect the implementation of Total Quality Management in institutions of higher learning.

Economic Factors

The economy of a region greatly influence the quality of higher education. It has been observed that regions with better economic prosperity have more and better higher educational institutions. One of the reasons for this that these institutions provide the inputs in terms of manpower to the surrounding industry. The perceived cost of higher education appears to- be a major deterrent for students of lower socio-economic background to pursue higher education. It was found that around 85% of students from well off family, in terms of economic and monetary resources, had better access to higher education than their economically backwards counterparts (23%).

Political Factors

Political willingness is one of the main constituent for the development of any nation. Across the world economies with strong political will have prospered. In implementing Total Quality Management in higher education, political will plays an important role. This is not only in terms of granting financial support to the institution but also with regards to framing policies and guidelines in implementing quality in higher education. More than 82% of the respondents felt that political factors were the main reason for not having any world class institutions of higher learning in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Social Factors

Social factors also have their role in ensuring quality of higher education. A literate and educated population will see that their wards get maximum inputs from institutions. Social institutions like early marriages or marriages during the course of study, either resulted in poor enrolment for the females, or absenteeism in class room in the case of both the sexes. Many of the students do not contribute their full potential to academic or extracurricular activities. For them passing the examination was merely enough to be degree holder. This attitude of being a mere degree holder stemmed from peer and societal pressure. It was also due to perceived lack of employment opportunity even after obtaining a degree. Also a number students had acquired their primary and secondary education in Hindi or Urdu medium. Once they are into higher education, especially in professional courses, the medium changes to English. This linguistic barrier resulted in poor academic performance and also in other activities including placements. About 64% of the sample population felt that a better social setup would result in better quality of higher education. Geographical dislocation, traditions, community difference, psychological difference were among other factors influencing the enrolment rate and quality of higher education.

Technological Factors

The rapid changes in technological front has made it necessary to imbibe them in educational system. Use of modern equipment and tools, e-learning, sophisticated software etc has contributed towards improving the quality of inputs. It was felt by 38% percent of the population that better technological advances will lead to better education. This is primarily due to the fact that a major chunk of the sample were from rural or semi-urban areas.

Conclusion

Many micro and macro factors are responsible for imparting qualitative higher education. Many good students, especially female and marginalized sections of society are deprived higher education because of social factors. Political factors are responsible for educational laggardness of a region due to absence of quality higher educational institutions. Providing economic assistance to the needy students, recruiting qualified teachers, regularly updating curriculum and strengthening the examination system will go a long way towards

improving the quality of higher education in the country.

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