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Research Papers

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## Emerging TQM Culture in Business Education

**Dr Mehraj -Ud -Din Shah,**  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of Commerce and Management Studies,  
Islamia College of Science and Commerce,  
Hawal, Srinagar, kashmir-190002,

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### Abstract

*Undoubtly, higher education holds a merit to work as a catalyst for securing inclusive growth both within and without state. Accordingly, today, higher education is being given added significance in the world over to bring a phenomenal change in the quality of human resources. Unfortunately, over the last two decades or so, Higher Education is in deep crises from low quality input to poor process, curriculum, infrastructure etc.*

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The panorama throws daunting challenge both to educational think tanks and institutions to work out a methodology that could ensure inclusive improvement in all aspects of economy including higher education. It is in this context, at global level many changes in higher education were infused to bring a desired improvement in the status of higher education. In tune to this context, the present paper is an attempt to gauge the global changes in higher education and opines that such changes are heading towards the TQM cultural dynamics to ensures sustainable quality in all pursuits of higher education.

#### **Introduction**

Higher Education is visualized as a source of standardization. The government of India accorded serious attention to the cause of education . This led to the expansion and promotion of higher education particularly scientific, technical and professional education (Sharma,1998 ). Despite of the fact, Shah (1993)

opines that education has continued to enjoy the status of residual sector even after the down twenty five years, due to decline in financial allocation , gap between educational expenditure and requirements, fall in total expenditure per student. Linking the debate, Sanyal ( 1992) state India has only 48 percent of literate population as against 73 percent of China in 1989 when in early 1950's india's literate population was more than that of China. Although, the number of educational institutions has manifolded yet not more than six to seven of eligible pouulation seek higher education. Commenting on the fact, Ghanasyan (1991) views that Indian literate is yet to enter into the fold of higher education even after it spends 60 percent of its education budget on higher education.Unfolding the sad story, Nandi (1987) , hints that higher education produces defective products which are no longer fit for contemporary corporate needs therefore, higher education needs to be revamped with quality practices and

principles ( Mehraj and Bhat, 2011).

### **Organization of the Study**

In order to study the emerging dynamics in higher education, the study has been organized into the three parts: In the first part global emerging trends in higher education has been discussed in detail while, in the second part of the study attempt has been made to study how higher education is being drifted towards the dynamics of total quality management. Accordingly The third of part of the study is delineated to cover what tpe of culture is needed to enable higher education to reach at the absolute TQM.

### **Part I**

#### **Global Changes in Higher Education**

Higher education is witnessing continuous changes mainly after the deregulation of the world economy in general and Indian economy in particular (Mehraj, 2005). Many countries in the world over undertook swift measures to raise quality and relevance of higher education. However, their nature and intensity may vary from country to country depending upon their individual government policy needs. Some countries deregulated higher education altogether while other made partial changes. Higher education is no longer seen as an exclusively baby of the state only ( Mehraj and Bhat, 2011) . The General Agreement on Trade and Services ( GATS) has opened a gate to mass private and non state controlled education. Accordingly, large number of higher educational institutions are coming up with national and international brand. In fact there is a total paradigm shift in higher education. This shift is moving towards TQM culture. In Russia, higher education has been thrown open altogether. Universities have full freedom to frame their courses, curriculum and have complete control over their budgets. report the enterprise bears fees and other incidental expenses of students and cost of research. Universities after 1992 have attained full control over their infrastructure, land, building, equipment etc. and are free to choose the source of financing. The trend towards decentralization, diversification and partial student/employer supported education is being strengthened in other countries also. The situation is no way different in Balgaria, where university can employ its staff and have full choice to arrange its resources. While in Italy, the universities are free to engage staff and set examination and evaluation process. In Eastern Europe and in Central America, higher educational institutions face tuff situations. On one hand,

governments are withdrawing financial support and on the other hand are directed to improve their performance and quality. The educational institutions are fraught in crises management due to the freezing government funding, low industry financial support, decline in quality, rise in social demand, stiff government bureaucracy. And as a result, in these countries, trend is growing towards more cost benefit analysis. In most parts of the Europe including France, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Germany and Greece higher education is seriously viewed as a public good. It is now no more in the control of the government. The institutions manage themselves the budget, employ staff, design curricula and set benchmarks for them. In Chile, higher education after 1991 experienced many changes. The Dutch Model for Education was put to practice for evaluating higher education institutions and performance of institutions was linked with budgets. Staff is being put to regular assessment. France allowed partnership or participation of industries and municipalities in the university decision making process. In Italy, Universities were given control over appointment, teaching methods and autonomous national evaluation. Similar changes in education sector have taken place in other countries. The situation is somewhat similar in South Africa, where quality assurance is being practiced in many prominent institutions with a new focus on learning programmes, teachers and students, making an overwhelming use of information technology (Borman, 2005 Fourie, 2000). In America, many changes were introduced in higher education. After 1986 education quality assessment bodies and agencies were established to assess quality of education (Mergain et. al, 2000) quote Lind et. al, (2002). The American Assembly of Collegiate School of Business created new standards for accreditation that are mission based. In UK, the government in 1987 issued a White Paper representing a fundamental shift of emphasis in government thinking with respect to higher education. The White Paper disclosed that universities must accept a leadership role in providing highly skilled workforce to meet the needs of the economy besides the regular follow up of Robins Report suggestions (Robins Report, 1993). In Asian Countries (like Indian Asia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan Republic, Philippines, Panama, Nigeria, China) education sector is caught in a vicious circle of problems. There is low general qualification of teachers, low mastery level of teachers and low status of teaching. In

Indonesia, there is high student-teacher ratio, shortage of funds, and poor infrastructure. In Pakistan and in Philippines, the situation is somewhat similar. There is out dated curricula, low financial support and non-professionalism. (Mehraj and Bhat (2011) . Drawing the clues from the debate, Understandably, all across the globe higher education today seldom to stand to satisfy the expectations of all the above referred to stakeholders (Mehraj and Bhat, 2007). The panorama has led higher education towards the total quality management orientation.

### Part II

#### Quality Concept

Quality is emerging as the significant critical factor for business to survive in ever expanding competitive global market place. World class educational institutions gain competitive advantage and greater market share through extra ordinary level of performance and commitment in providing the kind of quality services demanded by customers cutting across national borders. Today educational institutions are being required to conform the international standards such as ISO 9000 and have to apply their resources to achieve high quality standards in their products and services. Gaining competitive advantage through quality standards has become pass ward in Indian education too given fact, that the market has been opened to the foreign players and the country is competing on the international scene (Mehraj, 2011) . Therefore, according top priority to quality is a genuine requirement.

Quality is a multifaceted concept. It encompasses excellence, economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity and enterprise ( Zairi and Feeny;1994). Similarly, Ishikawa (1985) views that a product or service is qualitative if it is most economical and most useful and always satisfactory to the customer. While Juran (1989) opine the key ingredient of quality is defined as fitness for use by the buyer. Quality is viewed an exclusive feature present in the product or service that conforms to the requirements of customer and not goodness. The concept of quality attains broder meaning vis-a-vis pure services like education. Here is quality is one that meets both technical and functional constructs. The former deals with product specifications while latter relates with the mode and style of service delivery. Therefore, the quality of intangible service is for more difficult to judge than the the quality of tangibles. In case of education Tribus (1998) states that :

1. The college is not a factory
2. The student are not the product
3. The education is the product
4. The customers to the product are many :
  - a. The Student
  - b. The parent
  - c. The government
  - d. The employer
  - e. The society

#### Total Quality Management (TQM)

Total Quality Management (TQM) is an ultimate philosophy to attain customer satisfaction at all levels (Mehraj and Bhat 2011).The US department of Defence (Eshennawy and Mc Carthy), 1992) view that TQM as a blend of philosophy, a set of principles,a qualitative method that set edifice for continuous improvement, efficient process management to satisfy present and future needs of an organization. Mital (1997) states that total quality management is a philosophy that brings total transformation . While Statmatis (1997) refers to that total quality management is an organization wide programme that stresses on the customer satisfaction and continuous improvement for ensuring quality of products and services.

The concept of total quality management has evolved continuously from its application to the manufacturing sector through the service sector and the software sector to the education sector (Natarajan, 2003). The need for quality improvement such as innovation and change is important for education. Today, education is becoming more and more competitive and commercial enterprises being influenced by economic forces (Seymour, 1992). Educational leaders in the present millennium face dramatic state of uncertainly. There is a great deal of pressure to achieve the range of performance expectations in climate of students' performance and financial accountability. Pressure is also mounting from those seeking to create alternatives to public education (Javqueline et. al, 2002) and reputable institutions getting bigger financial support from government and industry (Freeman, 1993; Brinbaum, 1988; Brinbaum, 1992; Bryan, 1996; Carey, 1988; Cornesky, 1993; Cornesky and MCcook, 1992; Entincirant and Idrick, 2000; Rinehart, 1993; Seymour, 1994 Seymour and Collett, 1991; Sheer and Lazier, 1991). Nandau (1992) notes that the call for quality and excellence has origins within the institution whether coming from students, faculty, administrators of service personnel. They are also come from alumni,



interest groups and the community.

Education, in past was limited to offer and promote spiritual knowledge. Today, it is perceived that education should make people competent to tackle emerging problems that beset them (Sanyal 1994). In response to these changes and threats more recently educational leaders have begun to recognize the potential for total quality management for the educational organizations (Brisbaum, 1992; Brower, 1992, Coate, 1990; Cornesky and Me Cool, 1992; Entin, 1993 Kanji and Tambi, 1999; Lewis and simth, 1994; Mergen et al, 2000; Seymour1994). While at the same time, there has been some reluctance to apply quality practices to education (Jacqueline et. al, 2002). Many institutions and individual hold that assessing quality of education is a violation of academic freedom (quoted by Fedler, 1999). The belief that prevailed for a quite long time that total quality management is an industrial model does not transfer perfectly into education i.e. how Deming's fourteen (14) principles of quality would be extended and practically applied to education? Karapetrovic et al, (1991) indicated that without methodical approach to improving quality and profitability and a focus on the university system, total quality management efforts may be doomed for failure. Montano and Utter (1999) observed "while implementing total quality management and quality improvement endeavors at educational institutions can be difficult at best the results can be extremely beneficial for all involved".

This thinking got diluted when Edward Deming himself suggested a link between quality management Principles and education claiming, that "improvement of education and management of education requires application of some principles that must be used for improvement of any process manufacturing or services (Deming 1994). The other belief that lasted for some time was that TQM in education can only be successful with certain students. This approach too proved bias when Deming (1986) wrote "under use, misuse, and abuse of skill and knowledge---- the United States may be the most under developed nation in the world as improvements with all levels of students must be viewed as not only possible but also essential."

However, there has been some fair welcome to total quality management in education. Sheer and Tetter (1991) asserted that total quality management could serve as a paradigm for improving every aspect of collegiate functioning from fiscal management to class room

instructions. Bresler (1993) explains total quality management practical process based approach is attractive to many higher education administrators who find themselves challenged to offer a high quality product at a more affordable price. Vazzana et al, (1997) observed that total quality management is widely practiced in higher education. Even the Malcolm Balgrade National Quality Award, an internationally recognized guide of modern quality management now has criteria for educational institutions. Arcearo (1995) while debating on quality and education opines that quality is creating an environment where educators, Parents, government officials, community representatives and business leaders work together to provide students with resources they need to meet current and future academic, business and social needs. Tribus (1993) views that when quality management comes to education some long held ideas specifically, how to manage the teaching process have to change. Therefore, to infuse TQM philosophy within the higher educational institution there is a strong need to develop a relevant culture that in tone to TQM specification, principles and practice.

### Part III

#### Development of TQM Culture

Culture is manmade part of environment. It reflects the way life of people, their tradition, heritage, style of living etc. Culture is totality of beliefs, norms and values which are related to the patterned regularity in peoples behavior. Culture is the sum of all such forces which operate instantly and leave their influence on the work, style, behavior and functions of individuals, organizations etc. Zari and Feeny (1994) say that "Culture is sum total of intellectual and creative values of people/workers and a set of norms and values amongst others". Work culture refers to work related activities and the meaning attached to such activities in the frame work of norms and values regarding work. Suresh et. al (1994) hints that "work culture is the totality of work related activities, affect and cognition, norms and values regarding work in an organizational setting where technology and social cultural forces jointly determine managerial style and practices, work climate etc." In the organizational context, work culture includes the role of norms, values, policies, attitude of people towards their tasks, activities, colleagues, subordinates, superiors, outsiders etc..Giffih Report (1983) says that without quality work culture quality of product or service is an open question. Quality culture and quality service

is virtually well correlated and interdependent upon each other. Quality service is a by product of quality culture (Deming 1994). An organization that aims to attain quality excellence in its products and services need to create a quality culture that drives its quality march towards a logical conclusion. Zari and Feeny (1994) views that cultural change brings organizational change and the degree of success in achieving cultural change depends on tackling soft aspects and ensuring that hard aspects such as system, tools and techniques, structure and reward mechanism and communication systems are all effective and compatible with modern requirements. Suresh et al (1994) view work culture that creates unity, gives recognition to the employees generates involvement and productivity. This is what Thorsrud (1972) says that work must provide: a) opportunity to learn and develop one's skill and competence b) social support and recognition of work place c) variety and challenge to one's ability and competence rather than activities requiring sheer endurance d) opportunity to relate what an individual performs and produces to his social life e) feeling that work would lead to a desirable future. While Suresh et al (1994) indicate that job specification, work norms, job rating etc. become part of work culture. Vipin et. al (2005) observe that cultural change towards business education is an outcome of gradual moment and awareness of people. Zari and Feeny (1994) states that cultural change is an out come of soft aspects. They include strong leadership with commitment to cultural transformation, people's involvement, training and development. Thus to bring TQM in Higher Education , the following cultural facts needs to undertaken

- Ensure that commitment to quality is a core philosophy in the institution. This includes triangular concept of quality like input, process and output quality

- Every next person down the line is customer at all levels and attaining customers delight is sole objective.

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