



A STUDY ON ADVANCED AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with secondary school teachers' conceptions on understanding and improving the quality of secondary school education in India. The main focus has been to identify variations in conceptions about quality among teachers. Based on research study, an analysis of interviews yields the teachers' conceptions about understanding and improving the quality of secondary school education. The schools and society, as individuals' achievements and capabilities, as possessing competencies and as meeting the challenges of education. The conceptions identified were based on teachers' personal knowledge, the context of their work or the different circumstances found in their schools. Conceptions about the improvement of quality of secondary schools comprised development of teacher motivation, school contexts, classroom practices, teacher knowledge and skills and instructional materials. Quality means degree of excellence. It means peculiar and essential character that makes something unique and the best of its kind. It means a characteristic or a feature that something has and can be noticed as a part of it. It means how good and useful something is. It is a utilitarian and contributive feature of the product. Quality is the inspiration for transcendence. It is generally defined as conformance to requirements. It is also conformance to standard that is required. Many consider that quality need not be conformance to requirements but should be an assurance of being the best in the world of that type. In addition it should also keep constancy of purpose. Business intelligence framework is translated by using business intelligence process to identify the stakeholders and components relevant to education quality. A framework for education quality is produced, which consists of seven Critical Success Factors (CSF) and measured through Key Performance Indicators (KPI). This framework is generated through expert interview and questionnaire survey.

KEYWORDS: Quality, quality of education, quality of secondary school education, professional development.

INTRODUCTION

Secondary school education in India is considered important sub-sector in the education system as well as for the development of the country's economy. For example, inputs into higher education and in the labor force in India depend on qualified outputs from secondary schools. The importance of secondary school education as a sub-sector is also evident in the Secondary Education report. In the report, interests in raising demand for secondary school education

to accommodate the children completing primary education are highlighted. According to Vavrus (2009), improving the quality of secondary school education is considered important for educating the needed work force for different sectors in member countries including India.

From this importance, secondary school education has recently risen in the awareness among people in India and the demand to

access this education has grown. The growth in demand has created the need to build more schools and classrooms in order to expand access opportunities among the children of the country. According to Basic Education Statistics in India (BESI), schools have increased in number from 1745 in the year 2005 to 4367 in 2011. Mostly at the community level, a commendable development has been achieved in taking in an increasing number of disadvantaged groups.

While acknowledging the development in access, there still is little agreement on the fundamental characteristics of quality in secondary school education worldwide. The differences in understanding have become an interesting area of research in India. Studies have been conducted mainly in higher education for the aims of establishing quality systems. However studies in secondary education for a country like India are highly needed due to the importance discussed above and the challenges facing the education system. In this study, I explore conceptions from teachers' on understanding and improving the quality of secondary school education in India. In conducting this study, I have been interested in a reciprocal quality development, where the number of schools and enrollments are increasing while students' achievement and teacher motivation are deteriorating. This reciprocal relationship is creating a quality gap between the governmental intentions stipulated in the Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP) and the realities existing in schools. The gap has led to the emerging criticism that secondary schools are not effective, as a number of students are claimed to finish secondary education with low competence.

From these realities, attempts to improve the quality in secondary school education in India have seemed to slow down, as some of these challenges were not prioritized in the SEDP

2004 – 2009 and research to expose them is still needed in India. If the country aims at producing a competitive economy to meet global market demands, improving the quality of secondary school education should be a priority. In this study strategy for improvement are suggested as an attempt to bridge the growing quality gap in secondary school education in India. In reaching the strategies suggested, quality has been described based on how teachers conceive it in terms of secondary school education. In the description, the adoption of these perspectives is because of their clarity in describing the notion. In the descriptions different terms such as meeting aims and requirements, exceptional, meeting standards, enhancement, empowerment, capability, competence, efficiency and effectiveness have been used to qualify the definition of quality. The use of this range of terms is due to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the notion quality and because various meanings of the notion exist in education, and in secondary school education in particular. For this study the terms effectiveness and capabilities are considered appropriate in defining quality of secondary school education in India.

INSTRUCTIONAL TASKS AND QUALITY EXPECTATIONS

The teachers are expected to have sound knowledge of their subject areas to be able to select appropriate and adequate facts for planning of lesson notes, effective delivery of lessons, proper monitoring and evaluation of students' performance, providing regular feedback on students' performance, improvisation of instructional materials, adequate keeping of records and appropriate discipline of students. They must also have access to information which is up-to-date, reliable and relevant to the educational needs of students. In an information age, the principals are expected to provide quality orientation and capacity building for teachers towards keeping with the

current thinking in curriculum planning by ensuring good organisation of the lessons with sequence, continuity and integration of concepts to facilitate systematic implementation and assessment of the curriculum to achieve the set goals.

The quality process requires that the classroom instruction meets the set standards. The teaching approach that a teacher adopts is one factor that may affect students' achievement and facilitates high standards of learners' outcomes. The success or failure of students rests on the quality of instruction and not lack of students' abilities to learn. In order to ensure quality assurance – oriented teaching and learning processes, the teachers are expected to have in-depth knowledge of the pedagogy in their subject areas to be able to understand the effective ways of organising and presenting subject matter (objective statements, providing the right methods, learning experiences and learning resources), and evaluating teaching and learning activities in consonance with the set objectives. Effective teaching - learning process is no doubt the hob of students' academic performance and leads to quality education in secondary schools.

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional teacher training simply means teacher education and continued learning. Teacher education as the teaching and training experiences provided not only within teacher institutions but also outside them with the basic aim of preparing and grooming potential teachers for teaching activities. Teacher training programme is generally seen as having context and composed of goals and objectives, input, process, evaluation and output. Also, viewed teacher education as “any planned programme of teach opportunities afforded staff members the purposes of improving the performance of an individual in

already assigned position”. A common underpinning assertion of the above definitions is continuing learning process, by which serving teachers acquire the knowledge, skills and values to sustain the desired spark of intellectual vitality, which will improve the quality of teaching and students' learning outcomes. Teachers are known to be responsible for the translation and implementation of educational policies. These depend professional practice. Teachers who are deficient in professional practice are not likely to help the students meet the challenges of learning. For instance, reporting found that 57% of teachers in secondary schools were not given adequate training opportunities by their principals while facilities to improve their professional competence through in-service training were not adequately provided. This constituted encumbrance to education quality assurance. The importance of training and re-training to career enhancement and capacity of teachers for improvement in teaching and learning processes cannot be over-emphasized. A study Urban and environs: revealed that both teaching experience and formal training in educational administration are necessary for the appointment of principals and vice-principals into administrative posts in education. Also, a related study by Olagboye (1999) in his study revealed that 68.9% of the respondents were in favour of appointing only experienced teachers with formal training on educational administration to the posts of principals and vice principals while 32.1% of the subjects were not in favour. Considering the challenges posed by education quality assurance, principals are expected to be well-qualified professionally to be able to design, implement, aid and sustain relevant and effective in-service continuing professional development programmes that are participatory, school-based, focus on student's learning and adequately address the specific training needs of teachers. Teachers' professional development is particularly

important because of the need for teachers to do better and raise academic performance standards of students. In order to meet the challenging demands of their jobs occasioned by technological innovations, teachers must be capable and willing to continually upgrade their content knowledge, skills and practices. For instance, the results of the teacher survey by the National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) indicated that 90% of teachers participated in professional development in 1993-94, and 99% took part in 1998, in such areas as new methods of teaching, students' assessment, cooperative learning, use of education technology for instruction, classroom management and in-depth study in their subject fields to improve their professional competencies in instructional task performance. Although, there are various approaches to teachers professional development such as the cluster-type workshops, mentoring and full-time in-service training; whichever approach one adopts for teachers training, the important thing is for the teachers to be professionally equipped. It is incontrovertible that every approach has its own merits and demerits. For instance, the traditional approaches to professional development such as seminars, workshops and conferences have been criticized by researchers for being relatively ineffective because they are usually short-term, typically lasting from one to eight hours; they lack continuity due to inadequate follow-up and on-going feedback from experts; they take a passive approach to training teachers, allowing little opportunity to learn by doing and reflecting with colleagues. Realizing this shortcoming, stressed that the centre-periphery model of professional development in which participants were made to be passive listeners be replaced with the cluster-type in which the practitioners and policy makers are brought together into new forms of discourse communities, where teachers can share their own knowledge of classrooms, children,

subjects and pedagogy with policy makers who bring their own critical and substantive expertise to the knowledge-building table of the profession; this process is more likely to ensure a successful professional development enterprise. The much talked about cluster-training is also much criticized; but the important thing is that any approach that is adopted must be carefully and strategically designed and implemented to provide continuity between what teachers learn and what goes on in their classrooms and schools to produce long-lasting effects on teachers' competencies and students' learning outcomes. However, the inadequacies in teacher professional development constitute gap that can possibly lower the standard of teachers' instructional task performance and the rate at which students understand the subject matter in schools.

A quality assurance-oriented training programme is predicated on the training needs assessment in which the school activities are monitored to identify performance problems, knowledge gaps, concepts to be covered, categories of teachers to be trained and the evaluation procedures to determine the achievement of the specific training objectives. This is imperative to ensure future review and improvement in the contents and methods of training programme. It is expected that this process will increase the competencies of teachers to successfully cope with instructional tasks in secondary schools. Teachers' professional development is informed by the fact that if teachers are to stay motivated on the job, they must have opportunities for continuing professional development, advancement and improvement in their chosen career. Teachers' professional development is critical to quality assurance in education and to a large extent determines students' academic performance. However, gaps in teachers' professional development will no doubt cause set-back in teaching-learning process.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

TQM is a management philosophy that builds a customer-driven learning organization, dedicated to total customer satisfaction through continuous improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization and its processes. Total Quality Management provides what is required, as judged by the client. It is accomplished through everyone in the organization being committed to achieve results, a passion for quality and decisions based on performance data. TQM emphasize that it is important for all elements to fit together to turn raw materials into the products and deliverables that satisfy clients. Customer satisfaction is the result most addressed by TQM (describe the basic tenets of TQM which are as follows: “long-term perspective, customer focus, and top management commitment, system’s thinking, training and tools in quality, increased employee participation, development of a measurement and reporting system, improved communication between management and labor, and continuous improvement”). It can be seen that TQM describes two main notions: 1. Continuous improvement and 2. The tools and techniques/methods used. In general, TQM encompasses many management and business philosophies and its focus gets shifted, based on the scenario where TQM is applied. Whether it is in industry or higher education, TQM philosophy revolves around the customer. It is an integrated organizational approach in delighting both external and internal customers by meeting their expectations on continuous bases through getting everyone involved with the organizational working on continuous improvement of all products, services and procedures along with proper problem solving methodology. It is an approach to improve the effectiveness and flexibility of the organization as a whole, through total

employee involvement in holistic term in all aspects, process and activities. TQM helps us to recognize the facts i.e., we ourselves, who are responsible for quality work not someone else, who will check it after it is done. TQM is not traditional approach, it is innovative one. TQM is a management philosophy that seeks to prevent poor quality in products and services, rather than simply to detect and sort out defects. The definition of the term “quality” is subject to change over the years. This change has been from meeting learners’ specification to satisfying the learners to meeting and exceeding future expectations.

Total Quality Management used together is usually meant to recognize that real quality requires all elements of the institution to work together towards achieving the end. The concept of TQM is applicable to academics. Many educators believe that it provides guiding principles for needed educational reform. Students take classes, consume meals, sleep in residence halls, buy books and use many services for which they pay tuition other fees. The student certainly fits the definition of the word customer. Quality is an achievable measurable, profitable unit that can be achieved when one has the commitment and understanding and is prepared for the hard work. According to Stella and Gynam, (2004) quality enhancement cannot be achieved as an administrative process. It is a participative process involving various units of the institution, at all levels is likely to bring new strains together with unprecedented possibilities. Life in the coming decades in educational institutions at all levels is likely to bring new strains together with unprecedented possibilities. To enable the people to benefit in the new environment will require new designs of human resource development. Many of the strategies of quality improvement in education are derived from industrial setting. Challenges to the adoption and implementation of management concepts in educational institutions are several. One has to overcome

the challenges to be able to take the best from industrial experiences and combine this in a holistic framework, with the methods more suited to the educational milieu. Issues of TQM should be addressed in educational institutions, particularly as they relate to productivity and financing. Those adopting TQM in education have varying perspectives on the approach. Some see TQM as a management system with customer or student satisfaction as the crucial element. Others see TQM as a philosophy fostering change in an organization or the educational institutions. Academic institutions have used both the approaches in applying TQM in higher education settings. Quality of education takes into account external environment in which institutions operate: internal environment where teaching learning takes place and home environment of learners. The systems approach to education comprises of inputs, processes and outputs, all encompassed in an arbitrary boundary, and the environment. Inputs from its environment cross the boundary into the system: these are acted on within the transformation/production process and finally released from the system back into the environment as outputs. The direction of flow from the inputs, through transformation/production process to the output indicates the flow of energy, information etc. Inputs are human, physical and financial resources, (students, faculty, administrators and organizational culture) Process is a series of actions or operations concluding to an end. A process transforms measurable inputs into measurable outputs under a value adding operation. Educational process is a series of actions or operations leading to learning, training, education and scholarly activity. Transformation process for an educational institution consists of activities performed to disseminate knowledge, to conduct research and to provide community service. Process in the education system includes teaching, learning, research,

administrative activities and knowledge transformation. Outputs are tangible outcomes, value addition (through examination results, employment, earnings and satisfaction), intangible outcomes (educated people, research findings and service to community). Then there is feedback i.e. the outputs of information about the system which, when fed back into the system as inputs, it ably modifies the system while the process is in progress, thus making the system more responsive to the needs of the components in the environment and thus making the system flexible. The output so released should satisfy the components in the environment in the form of customers/stakeholders: else the inputs would cease and further transformation /production ceases too. Each TQM initiative is unique, there are some common features. On the large canvas, TQM provides a direction and framework for morality in education. It considers and reward the effort of those directly involved, both inside and outside the organization. Successful TQM models tend to embody concepts of integrity, honesty, commitment, participation and ownership. By applying the various principles of TQM, the present school education can be improved and goal of quality education in schools can be achieved. There are a number of studies conducted in education which show the positive response of TQM in education in achieving the quality education. For quality school education, total quality must be the highest priority in the school. Everything should be quality focused. In educational institutions, highest priority should be given to quality education so that qualified learners can be produced. Quality definition should be clear. Any definition of quality must include satisfying the agreed learners needs and expectations.

SUCCESSFUL IMPLIMENTATION IN EDUCATION

For the successful implementation of TQM in education quality circles are to be formed. A quality circle consists of small groups of people that meet on a regular basis to discuss problems to seek solutions and to cooperate with management in the implementation of those solutions. Quality circles utilize organized approaches to problem solving, operate on the principle that employee participation in decision making and problem solving improves the quality of work. In education quality deals with monitoring and identifying the areas that affect the levels of teachings. The past few decades were considered pioneering work on educational leadership, the leadership component deal with examining senior management personal of leadership and involvement in creating and sustaining a customer focus, clear goals, high expectations and a leadership system that would perform excellently. It also examines leadership system and policies internally that would impact staff and students and public responsibilities establishing partnerships with industry parents and general community externally. Improvements in leadership effectiveness could be achieved through a participative management style that includes inputs from a comprehensive 360 degree feedback system from these internal and external stakeholders. The strategic planning of this element would examine how the institution sets strategic directions and how it determines key plan requirements with a primary focus on student's satisfaction. This element examines the key aspects of process management including learner focused education design, education delivery services and business operations. It examines how key processes are innovatively and continuously improved. The performance results of this element would examine student performance and improvement using key measures and indicators. This element examines how staff development and training is aligned along the objectives of the institution.

TQM would also examine the efforts to build and maintain a climate conducive to achieve performance excellence full participation and organizational growth. Some of the strategic thrusts of this element would be a manpower development such as staff recruitment training and career development, staff performance and recognition and quality work environment. The information management element should examine the management and effectiveness of the use of data information to support overall mission related to performance excellence. It should ensure reliability and accessibility of the necessary key information required for day to day operational management. It would also focus on making analysis of facts and information and respond to situations in a fast and effective manner. This element examines how the institute determines the needs and expectations of students and stake holders. It would include determining different performance measures and how the targets could be achieved. Some of the performance measures could be based on student satisfaction, surveys and evaluation of teaching and learning effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

In the discussion educational aims have been viewed as requirements from society and therefore quality of education cannot be separated from them. In this study it has been learnt that the expansion of access in secondary schools in India are opposing issues that are growing simultaneously. While the number of schools and students are increasing, the growing challenges, on the other hand, led to the need for transforming secondary school education. Thus, transformation as a means for social change aiming at adding value in terms of new knowledge and skills is needed to attain excellence. In this study also proposed different areas that need to be transformed in order to improve quality. It has further been discussed that standards differ from country to country, depending on the

aims and targets of each country. But in most countries examinations are treated as standards for measuring students' achievements and as indicators of quality. Nevertheless, examinations cannot stand alone in measuring the quality of education; an integrated mode of assessment is needed. The study, therefore, has discussed other different methods used in measuring the quality of education. In the discussions, both local and global examples have been employed to compare similarities and variation in relation to the context of the study. However, secondary school education will remain challenged unless different key actors collaborate and increase their commitment.

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