



TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Quality assurance in teacher education reflects on the high profile of the institution and the competency of student-teachers. In recent years total quality management (TQM) has emerged as a viable solution to achieve the goal of quality. Although business organizations have applied TQM principles with considerable success, its use in teacher training institutes is largely limited and has received little attention. The indomitable spirit of higher education paves the way for the growth of a nation in the several dimensions. Teacher education is one of the areas in higher education which trains student-teachers in pedagogy, which in turn helps them to train the young minds of educational institutions. The national policy on education and the Programme of Action (PoA-1992) emphasizes revamping of education programme for bringing qualitative improvement in teacher education. The 'Fate of the nation is decided in the classroom,' is a remark made by the Education Commission of India. The present article focuses on the concept and thrust areas of TQM in teacher education in India. It has exposed the perception of teachers on quality indicators, such as teacher quality, linkage and interface, students, co-curricular activities, innovative strategies in teaching learning practices, pedagogy, curriculum development, value inculcation, Teacher Education Institutions and Schools linkages, use of information and communicative technology and governance.

Key words: Total Quality Management, TQM, Teacher Education



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Introduction

Educational reforms depend largely on the quality of teachers, which in turn, depends on the quality of teacher education. 'Quality', conveys difference in worth, in relation to what is common. *Quality* is most often defined '*fitness for purpose*' related to the needs of the user/customer, which indicates that quality depends upon a subject's view of what is the purpose of that phenomenon. In education the customer is not easily identified. Quality, thus, is a value judgment interpreted by different administrators, teachers, students, employers etc. The current concern for quality has its immediate origins in the idea of globalization,

particularly in the uncertainties associated with it. There is no consensus on what globalization constitutes, what it implies for education, and what its future might be.

Some other important concepts are '*quality control*', '*quality assurance*', '*quality management*' and '*quality assessment*'. Quality control is defined in technical environments as: 'the operational techniques and activities that are used to fulfil the requirements for quality'. Quality assurance is 'all those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide adequate confidence...'. Quality management is defined as 'that aspect of the overall management function that determines and implements the quality policy'. The ISO document defines '*quality audit*', while Van Vucht and Westerheijden (1993) recommend the term '*quality assessment*' as a better term in the field of higher education and is taken to mean 'a systematic examination to determine whether quality activities comply with planned arrangements and whether the product (the educational process) is implemented effectively and is suitable for achieving objectives'.

Concept of Total Quality Management

An American, Dr. W. Edwards Deming, developed the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) after World War II for improving the production quality of goods and services. Total Quality Management is a management approach that originated in the 1950's and has steadily become more popular since the early 1980's. Total Quality is a description of the culture, attitude and organization of a company that strives to provide customers with products and services that satisfy their needs. The culture requires quality in all aspects of the company's operations, with processes being done right the first time and defects and waste eradicated from operations.

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a method by which management and employees can become involved in the continuous improvement of the production of goods and services. It is a combination of quality and management tools aimed at increasing business and reducing losses due to wasteful practices. According to Bill Gates, The chairman of Microsoft Corporation, USA, "*You need to have specialized knowledge a skill while maintaining a broad perspective...No one should assume that the expertise he has today will suffice tomorrow, so a willingness to lean is critical*". This statement is also resulting in a need of quality improvement with the change. So a strong relationship exists between the principles of Total Quality Management & the best practices of Teacher Education. The concept of TQM is applicable to academics. Many teacher educators believe that the Deming's concept of TQM provides guiding principles for needed educational reform.

TQM in Teacher Education

The report of Education commission (1964-66) and NCTE on National curriculum frame work for Teacher Education (1978, 2009) have lighted the shortcomings of teacher education, suggesting means to change and innovate. TQM seeks to integrate all organizational functions to focus on meeting customer (student) needs and organizational objectives. The simple objective of TQM is "Do the right things, right the first time, every time". TQM is infinitely variable and adaptable. TQM is the foundation for activities, which include:

- Commitment by senior authorities and all employees
- Employee involvement and empowerment
- Focus on processes / improvement plans
- Recognition and celebration
- Reducing product and service costs
- Systems to facilitate improvement

Improving teacher performance through more effective teacher preparation is an essential ingredient in solving most educational problems. Educationists all over the world have started realizing that only securing enough teachers will not do; most important need is to secure the right type of knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies. During this increased stress on the qualitative aspect of teacher education, a lot of fresh thinking of progressive nature has been going on in this field resulting in emergence of certain new horizons in the firmament of teacher education, representing new ideology, new concepts and new trends in this field. The responsibility for secondary teacher education would continue to rest with colleges of teacher education affiliated to universities. The universities in co-operation with NCTE exercise responsibility for academic aspects such as conduction of examinations, award of degrees and ensuring quality of secondary teacher education institutions. Secondary teacher education is offered by colleges of education, which are affiliated to different universities. There is a growing feeling that the teacher training courses are not effective in turning out efficient teachers.

During the last few decades after independence, there was a big increase in the number of schools and eventually, there was a great demand for a very large number of teachers. To meet this demand, a large number of new teacher education institutions were established, without the requisite physical and educational infrastructure and the required number of qualified teacher educators. Many teacher education institutions are being

conducted like a shop. They are not concerned to cater the quality teacher education. The managements of these institutions are earning money from teacher education at a large scale. They do not feel any pressure from the side of NCTE/ University or state government. Inspections of teachers' training institutions have not been done regularly in Rajasthan since 2000. Due to lack of inspections and regular monitoring, there is quality retardation and degradation of teacher education. To write only the norms and standards of teacher education is not sufficient till they are not implemented. This shows that the TQM must be practiced in all Teacher Education Institutions for preparing future of nation. So there is a great need of Total Quality Management (TQM) in various thrust areas of Teacher Education.

Thrust Areas in Teacher Education for Quality improvement

The following major thrust areas of Total Quality Management in Teacher Education are given ahead-

1. Faculty Development

Changing concepts of education have led many institutions to adopt student-centred approaches to teaching, requiring different teaching competencies than more traditional approaches. Faculty members being the most crucial factor in the Teacher education process, it is a colossal task to meet the faculty needs of the rapidly expending teacher education system. There is an acute shortage of high quality teacher educators. Faculty selection should be made on merit only & compromises should not be the part of selection. Faculty should also be involved in the research activities. This is an urgent need to plan a crash program to train teachers at selected Teacher Education Institutions (IASE/CTE), & also to limit the expansion of the system, to what is sustainable without sacrificing the faculty quality. The quality of faculty is going down as more and more in proportionate of mushrooming teacher education institutions with the aim of making money, rather than enhancing the quality of education.

2. Pedagogy

Pedagogy is the study of the methods and application of educational theory to create learning contexts and environments. The central concern in all the pedagogy is interaction between students & content which is basically dynamic and triadic in nature. The 21st century has opened new hopes for re-engineering our approach to pedagogical producers at all levels of education in the new domain of modern technology. Needless to observe that main focus of pedagogy still remains the art of disseminating and relating knowledge to the needs and mental equipment's of the learners. Now it is the need that pedagogy should be more learner

centered than trainer centered, more case input than lecture method; more remainder workshops to envelope deep thinking on the subject.

3. Curriculum Development

The impact of digital technologies on teacher education is more pervasive than any curricular or instructional innovation in the past. During the last few decades teacher education curricula have come under severe criticism and their weaknesses have been highlighted. Some educationists feel that they do not fully address the needs of contemporary Indian schools and society and they do not prepare teachers who can impart quality education in schools. There is need of the hour to improvise our B.Ed. curriculum in the way to make it applied & realistic. But it is difficult to make it possible due to long & tedious procedure for introducing any change in the curriculum & syllabus. In short it can be said that research orientation in curriculum is required. The content of the curriculum should be such that there is similarity between the rationality that is taught in the classroom and the ground reality, which a student has to actually face.

4. Value Inculcation

The role of a teacher today is that of a friend, philosopher and guide, while his prime responsibility rests in the restoration of the higher values of life among the present generation. Apart from parents, a teacher, whom a student regards his 'torch-bearer' can teach him the way of life. The goal of an educator is to inspire students toward excellence while promoting learning as a lifelong process. The Educator has the responsibility of teaching this nation's greatest natural resource. The ideal of 'simple living and high thinking' sadly missing from our lives today, needs to be inculcated at all costs if we wish to save our present and coming generations from value erosion. The Educator needs to be of good moral character and model the appropriate social skills and values for quality development.

5. Use of Information and Communicative Technology

Improving the quality of education through the diversification of contents and methods and promoting experimentation, innovation, the diffusion and sharing of information and best practices as well as policy dialogue are UNESCO's strategic objectives in education. The role of Information and Communicative Technology (ICT) is unavoidable aspect in enhancing the quality of teacher education. The utilisation and impact of computers and the features of ICT, the application of internet and e-learning in teacher education is important with a dimension in improving the quality in teacher education programmes in particular and human activities in general. It is quite useful for the teacher educators, educational planners, curriculum designers, scholars and the person who strive for quality in teacher education.

6. Innovative Strategies in Teaching Learning Practices

In teacher education the effective use of teaching materials is crucial to accomplish its objectives as a professional stream. Universities/Colleges have to develop innovative teacher education programs, grounded in research and effective practice. The Development of teaching material component focuses on developing indigenous and contextually specific teaching material, in order to provide relevant and high quality training. Developing teaching material and teaching aids is very important to success of scientific and educational activities. But very few institutions in the Rajasthan have been able to develop adequate teaching materials including case in terms of educational quality in teacher education. So, there is a need to venture wide-spread research including research & publications indigenously.

7. Teacher Education Institutions and Schools linkages

A teacher education curriculum framework needs to be in consonance with the curriculum framework for school education, and a teacher needs to be prepared in relation to the needs and demands arising in the school context. It is now essential to make the changes according to changing environment to meet the challenges of globalization and liberalization. Therefore, it is necessary for the teacher education institutions to have linkages with schools to understand their requirement and reorient teaching, training and research activities. Teacher education Institutions should involve senior educators as faculty for exposing the students to real problems of the schools. Strong relationships across campus benefit faculty, colleges, and teacher education candidates. It is necessary to have longer summer trainings, perhaps even extended up to one full term and Assessment should also be based on internship.

Conclusion

Quality has become the defining element of education in the 21st Century in the context of new social realities. Acquisition of quality and excellence is the great challenge faced by all teacher education institutions. It is not surprising, that teacher education institutions have very often failed to provide quality teacher education. In terms of the professional preparation that is offered, a teacher education institution could be wholly out of phase with the needs and aspirations of the schools. It can be concluded that the existence of an institution shall depend upon the quality of education and training offered. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is advocating the best practices benchmarking approach for quality enhancement in higher education. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) had signed an MOU on 16th August 2002 for raising quality of teacher education programmes and for

enabling institutions in using their physical and instructional infrastructure optimally and professionally. To ensure quality in teacher education, inclusion of ISO 9000 can be utilized. ISO 9000 is concerned with quality management. The institutions should adhere to the quality standards set by national and international assessment and accreditation bodies. So, it is an immediate requirement to shape the teacher education in accordance with the global changes to improve competitiveness with the total quality management. It is hoped that the decision makers will soon realize the futility of present education system as a means of quality assurance.

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