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ISO 9001:2000 In INDIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES

ARPITA GHOSH*

Abstract

Quality has been the goal of an eternal quest through the corridors of human history. It has been the driving force for all human endeavours. It is a dynamic attribute with endless possibilities of evolution and unfolding. It is not a destination but an endless journey characterised by customer focussed approach to continual improvement of processes, products and services through an interdependent system of planning, implementing, evaluating and decision making. Educational institutions around the world are being forced to compete globally, by engaging in entrepreneurial activities to sustain themselves in this digitized world. As such it is vital that education system embrace and implement Quality Management System into their institutions and subject them to technical scrutiny for educational objectives, purposes and improvements. This paper aims at ascertaining the applicability of ISO 9001 : 2000 in Indian educational institutions and to explore as to how the various clauses of ISO 9001 : 2000 standard can be applied in Indian educational institutions.

Key words: Quality, QMS, ISO 9001 : 2000

Introduction

Education today is becoming a lifelong learning and training process developing transferable skills and knowledge. It is going through a paradigm shift. Old norms and beliefs are being challenged. New trends are setting in which is affecting the shape, mode and purpose of education system. Print literacy is gradually giving way to a new form of electronic literacy. Blackboards are now being replaced by video projection screens. CD Roms are replacing books and on-line digital libraries are fast emerging. Notebooks are starting to give way to laptops. Students are examined through computer managed learning system. These developments in education portray the need, importance and value of quality in education.

Quality in education implies a philosophy that aligns the activities of all the key personnel in the education system, with the common focus on customer satisfaction. The elemental aim being to help students and academicians alter the way they think about their work and the way they execute it. World today is foreseeing educational institutions producing citizens capable of leading a meaningful life in the 21st century where quality is encroaching into everyday life. As such it is vital that education system embrace and implement Quality Management System into their institutions and subject them to technical scrutiny for educational objectives, purposes and improvements.

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Objectives Of the study

1. To ascertain the applicability of ISO 9001 : 2000 in Indian educational institutions.
2. To explore as to how the various clauses of ISO 9001 : 2000 standard can be applied in Indian educational institutions.

Research Purpose

The research purpose of this paper is mainly exploratory and descriptive. Limited knowledge about area in the field of research implies exploratory research to gain a better understanding of the subject of research area. For the exploratory purpose, survey of concerning literature method has been undertaken. Descriptive research has been undertaken to portray the characteristics of a particular situation and group. The present study thus can be grouped under the heads of exploratory and descriptive research.

Research Methodology

The Research Methods followed; • Interviews, • Questionnaire.

The questionnaire formulated accordingly was administered and the interviews were conducted.

Thus for data collection a study was conducted on; • ISO 9001 certified educational institutions, • Non ISO 9001 certified educational institutions in the same category and geographical area comparable with ISO certified institutions

The data so collected was utilised to yield the conceptual framework using analysis method.

The population was the entire gamut of educational institutes of India. Sampling consisted of wide range of educational institutions of India including those from institutions of national eminence, engineering institutions, medical institutions, management institutions, schools as well as under graduate colleges. The method of sampling under taken was Mixed or Stratified Random Sampling. Under this process, the entire universe or population is divided or subdivided into homogenous groups or types or classes called strata and a sample is drawn from each stratum at random. These samples are then combined to form a single sample of the universe

The sampling frame or final source list of data consisted of all the ISO 9001 certified educational institutions in India and their counterpart selected at random that is non ISO certified educational institutions in the same category and geographical area comparable with ISO certified institutions.

The questionnaire was prepared on the basis of the requirements of ISO 9001 standard. The perceived benefits were such benefits which are considered essential of all such educational institutions which claimed to be the one offering quality service to all its stake holders. The questionnaire framed was a closed form questionnaire of facts.

The Quality Parameters in the questionnaire were taken up in five broad areas which were :

1. Management and Governance
2. Resource Management
3. Educational Service Realisation
4. Measurement, Analysis and Improvement.
5. Management Reviews.

Concentrating on these parameters a number of questions were put forward to the respondents for their rating on a scale of 0 to 5 (Zero to five)

- 0 - For Worst
- 1 - For Poor
- 2 - For Average
- 3 - For Satisfactory
- 4 - For Good
- 5 - For Excellent

Total 256 responses were collected out of which 161 related to responses from ISO 9001 certified educational institutions and 95 related to responses from non ISO 9001 certified educational institutions. The data collected in the questionnaire was properly checked and shifted before transferring to the worksheets. Each question was serially numbered and all information contained in the questionnaire was transferred to the worksheets, which contained different columns to show the responses of the respondents. From the worksheets different set of tables and graphs were constructed which provided the basis for analysis.

Quality Management System in Educational Institutes

QMS is a management system to direct and control an organisation to quality. QMS based on ISO 9001 although a well tested strategy for management of quality in manufacturing sector yet its application in the education sector is still looked with doubt.

ISO 9001 is a process based QMS. The model on which it is based identifies clearly the inputs and outputs and incorporates PDCA cycle concepts for continual improvement. The model recognises that customers and other interested parties play significantly important role in defining the inputs.

Once the requirements of the interested parties are known it is the management's responsibility (Clause 5) to manage the resource (Clause 6) to realise the product (Clause 7) in order to provide the output in form of desired product to the interested parties. Monitoring the satisfaction of customers and other interested parties is necessary to evaluate and validate whether requirements of the customers and other interested parties have been meet. For this management carries out measurement analysis and improvement (Clause 8).

The guidelines for application of ISO 9001 in Education is specified in IWA2 : 2003 (E). This International Workshop Agreement (IWA) provides guidelines to assist organisations that provide educational products to implement an effective quality management system that meets the requirements of ISO 9001.

Findings

The average rating by the ISO certified educational institutions and the non certified educational institutions are as follows :

		Average Rating	
		ISO Certified	Non Certified
A.	Management & Governance		
1	The staff members are involved in compliance of mission, vision, quality policy and objective of the institution.	4.40	0.75

2	Responsibilities and authorities are allocated and communicated within the institution for all persons involved in key functional areas.	4.24	1.66
B. Resource Management			
1 Management of Human Resource			
1.1	For effective delivery of curriculum the competency need of staff is identified.	4.00	2.49
1.2	Self appraisal by staff members is done on a regular basis projecting self development.	1.90	1.92
1.3	There is a continuous professional development of managerial, teaching and support staff.	3.80	1.68
2 Management of Infrastructure			
2.1	The statutory and regulatory requirements applicable to infrastructure is complied with.	3.70	2.21
2.2	Infrastructure over and above regulatory requirements are provided and maintained.	1.78	1.59
3 Management of Health and Safety			
3.1	Appropriate hygiene and sanitation conditions are maintained.	3.52	2.00
3.2	Adequate indoor and outdoor measures are taken in case of emergency.	3.26	1.96
3.3	Periodic preventive medical check ups are held for students and staff.	2.30	1.17
4 Management of Work Environment			
4.1	The premises and classrooms are		
4.1.1	well illuminated	3.56	2.87
4.1.2	properly ventilated	3.69	2.82
4.1.3	neat and clean	3.73	2.21
4.2	Attention is paid towards minimisation of noise and distractions.	2.70	2.96
C. Educational Service Realisation			
1 Admissions			
1.1	The documented policy and procedure for admissions are compiled with.	4.30	2.52
1.2	The prospectus or brochure gives all the information required.	4.40	2.99
1.3	The documents submitted by the students are kept properly under safe custody.	4.20	3.37

2	Curriculum		
2.1	The statutory and regulatory requirements applicable are complied with.	4.45	3.96
3	Delivery of Education/Teaching		
3.1	The course is planned, developed and then delivered.	4.34	2.61
3.2	The learning outcomes are monitored.	3.59	2.04
4	Examination and Assessments		
4.1	The examination procedure conform to the curriculum.	4.31	3.39
4.2	The examination results are recorded and analysed.	4.51	3.01
4.3	The confidentiality and quality of examination and assessments are maintained.	4.89	3.15
5	Development		
5.1	There are avenues for social and career development.	3.60	1.56
5.2	There are provisions for recreation activities and physical development.	3.68	2.17
5.3	Programmes are conducted for inculcating moral and ethical value.	2.94	2.41
D	Measurement, Analysis and Improvement.		
1	The complaint handling procedure is effective.	3.65	1.56
2	Continual improvement projects including corrective and preventive actions are undertaken.	4.40	1.27
3	Tools and techniques including benchmarking are used.	4.40	0.75
E	Management Review		
1	The mission, vision and quality objectives are reviewed.	3.70	1.27
2	The academic results are reviewed.	4.45	1.48
3	The suitability and effectiveness of curriculum is reviewed.	2.57	1.25
4	The statutory and regulatory requirements are complied with.	4.45	2.04

Interpretation of ISO 9001:2000 standard showing its applicability in Indian Educational Institutes

Clause 1 : Scope

Clause 1 of ISO 9001 :2000 speaks about the scope of the standard specifying the applicability of the standard.

Clause 2 : Normative Reference

The normative document ISO 9000 : 2000 ; QMS – Fundamental and Vocabulary contains provisions which, through reference in this text constitute provisions of this International Standard.

Subsequent amendments do not apply for dated references. Parties are however encouraged to investigate possibilities of applying the most recent edition. For undated references, the latest edition applies.

The registers of currently valid International Standards are maintained by members of ISO & IEC.

Clause 3 : Terms and Definitions

This clause gives us the terms and definitions used in the standard. For the purpose of ISO 9001 :2000, the terms and definitions given in ISO 9000 :2000 shall apply.

Clause 4 : Quality Management System Requirements

A quality management system is a management system to direct and control an organisation with regard to quality. ISO 9001 standards calls the educational institutions to adopt the process approach to establish, document, implement and maintain its quality management system and continually improves its effectiveness in accordance with the requirements of the standard. The educational institutions need to specify in their quality manual their mission, vision and quality aspirations. This expresses their commitment to quality. The process and procedures followed in educational institutions need to be documented. There are control documents, which guide the implementation and compliance and helps in subsequent reviews and modifications. Such quality plan initiatives lead to continual growth of quality systems.

Clause 5 : Management Responsibility

ISO 9001 standards directly addresses the management of the educational institutions and asks them to meet the management requirements related to management commitment towards customer focus, quality policy, quality objectives, allocation of responsibilities, authority and its communication.

The benefits enjoyed by ISO certified educational institutions over the non ISO certified educational institutions by following the specification of management responsibilities as evident from the survey conducted are as follows:

- The educational institutions establish a communication plan corroborating the visibility of the commitment and value of the management.
- The customer requirements are determined which helps the educational institutions to meet them with the aim of enhancing the customer satisfaction.
- The quality policy sets the frameworks of the system providing guidance and directions regarding the operation of the educational institutions.
- The quality objectives set the goal the educational institutions strive to reach.
- Required planning is done for maintaining the quality management system and affecting changes to quality management system.
- Each one in the educational institution knows his authority and responsibility and how they relate to each other.
- Reviews evaluate the adequacy, suitability and effectiveness of quality management system.

The effectiveness of ISO 9001 standards in the educational institutions in this regard is evident from the survey. It is clear that management of ISO 9001 certified educational institutions are more committed and customer focussed than the non certified ones. With efficient quality management system planning, execution and review which is due to better allocation and communication of responsibility and authority, the ISO 9001 certified educational institutions are moving ahead at a pace which the non ISO certified educational institutions are not able to match.

Clause 6: Resource Management

No organisation can function successfully or its employees deliver results satisfactorily unless all the appropriate and necessary resources are provided in required quantities. As mentioned earlier, ISO 9001 standards expects the educational institutions to identify and equip quality resources related to human resources, infrastructures and work environment.

The benefits enjoyed by ISO 9001 certified educational institutions over the non ISO certified educational institutions by following the specifications of resource management as evident from the survey conducted are as follows:

- The resources needed to accomplish conformity to the products requirement are identified.
- Availability of the required resource at proper time is assured.
- Selection of right person for right job and continuous upgradation of professional competence through awareness programmes and training is done
- Conducive work environment optimises the performance of all.

When analysed on this parameter the results shows that specification related to resource management are applicable and effective in enhancing the quality of educational institutions. Following the specification laid down under ISO 9001, the processes are operating methodically and resources are functioning more satisfactorily in ISO 9001 certified educational institution than in non ISO certified educational institutions. Whether it is management of human resources or infrastructure, health & safety or work environment, the ISO 9001 certified educational institutions are clinching a niche over the non certified educational institutions. The aptitude of learners are identified and nursed, attitudes are built and modified and seeds for pursuit of excellence are sown in ISO 9001 certified educational institutions in an environment where commitments and capacities are energised to make it happen which is where the non ISO certified educational institutions are lagging behind.

Clause 7 : Product Realisation

ISO 9001 standard expects educational institutions to plan and develop the processes needed for the realisation of product. For this the educational institution need to follow its quality objectives, customer specification and the statutory and regulatory requirements related to the product. It then needs to design and develop the product and control the purchasing process and the production and service provisions. Finally steps are undertaken to control the measuring and monitoring devices so that product is realised as per the plan and design.

The benefits enjoyed by ISO 9001 certified educational institution over the non ISO 9001 certified educational institution by following the specifications of product realisation as evident from the survey conducted are as follows :

- All the activities necessary for product realisation are planned.
- The requirements related to products are reviewed in order that they may be incorporated.
- Provides a disciplined approach to the designed process.
- The purchased product confirms to specified purchase requirements.

The ISO 9001 certified educational institutions are following the customer requirements and statutory and regulatory requirement mandatorily. However they also have in their mind that educational

institution is not a manufacturing unit producing prototype products. Hence the avenues for social and career development are more in ISO 9001 certified educational institutions. The curriculum, delivery of education and the assessment programs of ISO 9001 certified educational institution all lead to quality enhancement in a significant way beyond comparison.

Clause 8 : Measurement, Analysis and Improvement

ISO 9001 standard expects educational institutions to carry out continual improvement activities. This calls for planning and implementing the monitoring, measurement, analysis, and improvement processes. The monitoring and measurement activities specifically apply to customer satisfaction, quality management system performance and conformance related to process, products and services. These activities provide the data which when analysed demonstrate the suitability and effectiveness of quality management system and identifies the areas where continual improvement of the effectiveness of quality management system can be made. Once the potential areas of improvement are identified and justified the corrective and preventive action are undertaken.

The benefits enjoyed by ISO 9001 certified educational institutions over the non ISO 9001 certified educational institutions by following the specification of remedial requirement as evident from the survey conducted are as follows :

- Continual improvement of effectiveness of quality management system.
- Conformance of process, products and service delivered as per specified requirements.
- Enhancement of customer satisfaction through monitoring of the customer perceptions.
- Data analysis helps in sorting out product/service problems.
- Corrective and preventive action leads to continual improvement.

Thus we see the effectiveness of ISO 9001. When applied to the educational institution it creates an ambiance where measurement, analysis and improvement is carried out on a continual basis. Since it is carried out in a planned, systematic and committed manner in the ISO 9001 certified educational institutions, therefore it is gaining a competitive advantage over the non ISO certified educational institutions. The ISO 9001 certified educational institutions have a clear understanding of where their institution stand today and with a clear vision for future they are marching forward on their quality journey focussed and committed.

Conclusion

As an important finding it is concluded that Quality Management System based on ISO 9001 is applicable in Indian Educational Institutes. ISO standards improve not only the operational structure of the educational institution in which they work in but also the day to day processes. Educational process is improved, productivity of teachers stand enhanced, teacher and learners find greater joy in their work and leaving students are more likely to make positive contribution to the society when quality management system based on ISO 9001 is applied to educational institutions.

Limitations

- Quality cannot be quantified. As such it is difficult to measure the quality of educational institutions.
- The dynamics of education involve value system, social perception, material objectives, emotional growth and tacit knowledge. Establishing an environment of quality management needs altogether a different perception.
- The questionnaire which was prepared on the basis of quality requirements of ISO 9001 standards may have been more elaborated.

- The questionnaire focused on the perceived benefits of implementation of quality management system based on ISO 9001 standards. Different educational institution might have given different rating according to their own perception as perceptions differ from person to person.

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