Total Quality Management To Library And Information Services In Indian Open Universities

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ABSTRACT
Today, all kinds of organizations are becoming customer oriented organizations to survive in this world. So, they need to provide quality products and services to their customers. Total Quality Management (TQM), provides the tools and the direction to improve quality. Libraries have always been committed to provide a high quality of services to its users. In this paper I am discussing Objectives in libraries, Quality Control, Quality Assurance systems in distance education, Quality component of Library services, TQM in LIS sector, TQM in distance education libraries, Policies, Resources, Processes, User satisfaction, Suggestions for services distance education.

Introduction
Total Quality Management (TQM) is a comprehensive and structured approach to organizational management that seeks to improve the quality of products and services through ongoing refinements in response to continuous feedback. TQM requirements may be defined separately for a particular organization or may be in adherence to established standards, such as the International Organization for Standardization's ISO 9000 series.

The National Accreditation and Assessment Council. NAAC conducts audits and inspections on the quality of service provided by educational institutions, including library service. Grants are linked to the outcomes of these assessments. In light of this, academic libraries must develop systems, philosophies, and strategies for managing quality. The primary purpose of an academic library is to support the teaching, research, and other academic programs of its parent organization. An academic library is part of a service organization which delivers products personally to the customer.

Objectives
The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. Understand the concepts of Quality; Quality Control; Quality Assurance: Total Quality Management;
ii. Review the Quality Assurance System in Distance Education;
iii. Examine the application of TQM to Library & Information Science (LIS) Sector, with particular reference to Distance Education Libraries;
iv. Discuss the criterion for Quality assurance in providing Quality Information Services.

Tools Techniques of TQM
According to Goetsch and Davis (1994) management tools are means of collecting and displacing information in ways to help the human brain grasp thoughts and ideas that when applied to physical processes, cause the processes to yield better results.

TQM Technique, Tools and Systems:
1. Statistical Process control
2. ISO 9000 series
3. Pareto Analysis
4. Matrix Diagram
5. Histograms
6. Tree Decision Diagram
7. Critical Path Analysis
8. Fishbone or Ishakawa Diagram

Quality Control
Although the demarcating line between the terms ‘Quality Control’ and ‘Quality Assessment’ is very narrow, some scientists attempted to draw a line of distinction between these terms. Tannock (1992) states that quality control “Consists merely of the operational techniques and activities that are used to fulfill requirements for quality, usually interpreted to mean conformance to the required specifications.”

Quality Assurance
Carley and Waldron (1984) defines quality assurance as “planned, deliberate actions or activities instigated and carried out with the intent and purpose of maintaining and improving the quality of learning for participants.” While the above definition provided a general understanding of the concept, it does not explain the unique nature of quality assurance. According to Frazer (1992), “a university which takes quality assurance seriously emerges as
a self-critical community of students, teachers, support staff and senior managers each contributing to and striving for continued improvement.”

The observation of various definitions of quality assurance as expressed in the literature of Higher education reveals that Quality Assurance is a continuing, active and integrative process for maintaining and improving quality rather than simply a system of evaluation and checking for errors.

**Quality Component of Library Services:**

The library committee consisting of the Vice Chancellor as the Chairman, Rector as the Vice-Chairman and all Directors / Deans of faculties as members, with Librarian as Convener, meet once in four months to review the progress and problems in the library. Based on the recommendations of the Committee the library conducted surveys on the use of books, journals and documentation reports by the counselors, learners at the Study Centre Libraries.

Study revealed certain important points for consideration these include:

i. Lack of sufficient infrastructure for maintaining libraries at the Study Centers;

ii. Irregularities in the receipt of journals at the 12 PG Study Centers;

iii. Good use of books / journals and documentation reports by the counselors and the learners.

iv. Considering the difficulties, library committee has recommended for improvement of Infrastructure for libraries at Study Centers and withholding subscription of books.

Temporarily for the Study Center journals for Study Centers are subscribed reference soft material, etc. Only then, it is possible to achieve Total Quality Management of the University, which helps it to achieve its motto of “Quality Education at your doorstep.”

**Total Quality Management in Library & Information Sector**

The practice of Quality Management in Library & Information Science sector existed since the evolution of the subject itself, but the terminology used for these varied widely. Performance Indicators; performance evaluation; evaluation of reference sources using check-list of criteria; Evaluation of Information Retrieval systems using Precision and Recall rations; Cost-Benefit and cost effectiveness studies; user surveys electing opinions on library services - all these studies make part and parcel of Quality Studies using different mechanisms of assessment and methodologies.

In early 1980s, numerous studies were made on automated data validation, error rates and patterns, authority control which belongs to quality control in online databases. However, customer and employee satisfaction are seldom in focus. Quality assurance studies were mostly restricted to special libraries and academic libraries. Although quality assurance studies based on ISO 9000 and other accreditation schemes were conducted in libraries in UK, USA and Canada, such studies are rarely reported in Indian libraries and information systems.

The quality assurance initiative in LIS has primarily come from the parent organization to which it provides services. However, in the later years, the quality assurance system has become as Essential feature of LIS management. Quality studies in LIS sector are mostly isolated and are made on different aspects of library management, services, user-studies, etc. The evidence produced by the few TQM cases in the LIS sector indicates that TQM is a highly relevant management theory for information sector.

**TQM in Distance Education**

Though the basic library functions and services are same for conventional and open university libraries; due to the very nature of distance from learners demands some special kinds of services in libraries of distance education institutes. Distance learners are provided with limited access to books and journals available at the Study Centre Libraries. Lending of books to distance learners is difficult in practice, as the learners are scattered at various places. Therefore, to keep the learners informed about the nascent information, the library has to undertake steps to provide current awareness services like indexes abstracting, bibliographic services. Selection, acquiring and processing of books and sending them to the various study centre libraries not only requires additional library budget but also requires sufficient manpower to handle the various jobs. Evaluation of these various functions and feedback from learners; counselors, study centre personnel are important for continuous improvement in the quality of library and information services. In this study an attempt is made to list out the essential criteria.
Resources
The management must carefully plan for:

1) Financial Resources - For
   i. Central Library
   ii. Regional Library; and
   iii. Study Centre Libraries

2) Document and Information Resources
   i. Availability
   ii. Accessibility
   iii. Preservation

3) Technology
   i. Costs and benefits

4) Infrastructure

5) Building

6) Furniture and fittings

Processes
1. Decide the services required to meet the changing needs of the clientele
2. Evaluate the services in terms of
   i. accuracy of information timeliness
   ii. Relevance to the purpose
3. Cost of providing service

TQM in Libraries
Among the service industries such as Airlines, Banking institutions, Insurance companies and Health care providers, Libraries are the last to adopt TQM practices. For a long time, Librarians saw themselves as keepers of knowledge rather than active agents in information transfer. Though the main aim/objective of libraries is to satisfy the users, the library professionals often forget that. But today’s libraries are pushed to a position where they have to provide quality services to its users, to justify their existence. So, now libraries are also started adopting TQM practices following other kinds of service industries.

User Satisfaction
Although user satisfaction cannot always be equaled to the success or failure of the system, but often it is an important source for pointing out the loopholes in the system and its services. Feedback from learners and faculty is essential for continuous improvement in quality of information services. Assessment of LIS services in the framework suggested above will help the LIS professionals to improve and implement quality information services.

Suggestion
Based on the above discussion and observations, following suggestions are made for the Implementation of quality in distance education libraries.

1. Quality Assurance of Library and Information System should be part of the Quality Assurance of University TQM project.
2. There is a need to develop standards / norms for assessing quality of information services With particular reference to distance Education Libraries.
3. There is a need to evolve methodologies and mechanisms for improvement of quality Information services.
4. More funds to be allocated for studying the quality of information services on project basis.
5. Training of staff members in providing quality information services.

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