

Total Quality Management: Academic Libraries.

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Introduction:

Total quality management is one of such concept which was originally associated with the industrial products and later on accepted in library science. Basically this concept was not considered as applicable to service intuitions, but later on it was accepted that service also requires quality. Library offers service to its clients. This service must be having promptness, effectiveness and comprehensiveness. To achieve all these qualities, it is essential to find out requirements of the users, Assess the quality of the service offered, and find out the measures to improve the quality of the service.

TQM : Definition :

- 1) "Management philosophy and company practices that aim to harness the human and physical resources of an organization in the most effective way to achieve the objective of the organization." (British Standard)
- 2) "A basic business strategy that provides good and services that completely satisfy both internal and external customers by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations. This strategy utilizes the employees to the benefit of the organization in particular and society in general and provides positive financial return to the shareholders." (Turner and De Toro)

Key elements in TQM process :**1. Focusing on Users expectations :**

There are three basic functions of modern library. These are acquisition of information, organization of information and dissemination of information. The first two are behind the screen activities are called housekeeping operations whereas the third one represents the one the screen activities called oriented operations. However, the user directly or indirectly involved / affected / concerned with the able activities. So identification of users expectations regarding any service is very important for rendering efficient and effective library and information services to user's community. While knowing the user's expectation library authorities should know the accountability, affordability, availability and appearance of service offered by the library from user's point of view.

2. Developing a quality measurement system :

This task is associated with finding measurement that will help to understand user's dissatisfaction and productivity of library service. While developing quality measurement system it is necessary to specify some quality standards so can the quality of service should be measured. There should be some parameters to decide the quality. Every library service should be properly analyzed and then establish some standards for quality measurement.

3. Identification of Root Causes :

User's dissatisfaction, negative feedback, conflicts in rendering library service, problems in interaction with the users etc. are some symptoms of poor quality. However, the real cause of these problems is usually hidden and

difficult to identify. The root causes, quality management consultants have developed several tools to identify the root cause. These tools help to organize and analyze information so that it is easy to trace the problem. Statistical process control, sheets, brainstorming, flow charts etc. are some of the tools and techniques to identify the root causes.

4. Developing a communication system :

Quality management is an information related management system. An efficient communication system is an important requirement for the functioning of quality management systems. A good communication system must be developed that can give us up-to-date information about user's needs and expectations from various library services. There should be proper communication among users and library staff. It is also important to communicate with employees about the progress of quality management and the corrective actions that are being taken. Suggestion and feedback system is very important not only in ascertaining users needs and expectations but also useful to make necessary correction and modifications in library systems and services.

5. Employee motivation :

One of the most challenging questions facing every manager is how to motivate the employees. The role of employees is very much important in quality management. Even though quality can be defined by the library users and quality objectives by library authorities, it is the library staff how will finally make quality improvement possible. Quality objective can only be fulfilled when employees are motivated to implement them. Allowing employees to be involved in the decision making process is one of the important ways to motivate

them to work towards the quality improvements. There are some other management skills to motivate employees towards the quality management of libraries.

6. Training for quality :

Quality management is a new culture and a new way thinking, so without education and training such changes of culture cannot be achieved. So necessary training and education are very important in the quality improvement process. So the library managers and other professionals have to be educated to understand the importance of quality, users satisfaction etc. Quality management is an information based management system and only education and training can provide employees with the necessary information.

7. Implementing quality improvement :

Collecting information, making measurement, identifying root causes, arranging training programmes are all important but nothing changes unless someone does something. The implementation of such strategies will encounter more than a few challenges. Changing the culture is not an easy objective to achieve. People are often resistant to change. When planning for long-term objectives, the short-term problems, that may or not be related to the main problem, cannot be ignored. Balancing all these and doing something for the smooth implementation of TQM in libraries but the implementation process will be not smooth and trouble-free if everything else is done perfectly.

Conclusion :

Total quality management (TQM) is a new management concept of quality improvement. The philosophy of TQM is equally applicable in the service institution like libraries. While implementing TQM process in libraries, above all key concepts, elements should be considered.

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