CHAPTER – 6
Knowledge about QC\text{s}

- 51\% of the entire population have not heard about QC\text{s}. (Table: 1)
- In terms of level, the worst hit is the class III officers. 89.13\% of the class III officers are ignorant about the existence of QC\text{s}. The majority of the class I and the class II officers, i.e., 66.67\% and 55\% respectively, have heard about QC\text{s}. (Table: 1.1)
- 73.91\% of the officers cannot say whether the purpose of QC\text{s} is to improve financial performance, indicating very poor understanding about QC\text{s}. (Table: 2)
- It is observed that almost 66.67\% of the class I officers and 55\% of the class II officers and 82.61\% of the class III officers cannot say whether QC\text{s} improve financial performance. (Table: 2.1)
- The response to item 22 also indicates that almost 66.67\% of the class I officers, 55\% of the class II offices and 82.61\% of the class III officers cannot say whether QC\text{s} lead to improvement in work. (Table: 3.1)

Understanding of 'quality'

- 100\% of the class I officers, 75\% class II officers and 91.3\% class III officers strongly agree that quality is everyone’s job. 25\% of the class II officers and 8.70\% of the class III officers agree that quality is everyone’s job. It can be said that 100\% do not disagree that quality is everyone’s job. In terms of the responses, it can be said that there is a fair degree of proper understanding of quality among all the classes of officers. (Table: 4.1)
- Moreover, this is substantiated by response to item 15. 100\% of the class I officers disagree that quality is a myth. 83.33\% of the class II officers and 70.45\% of the class II officers disagree that quality is a myth. An insignificant portion, comprising 11.11\% and 18.18\%, of the class II and the class III officers respectively, agree that quality is a myth. (Table: 5.1)
The effects of quality are well understood by all the classes of officers. 100% of the class I, class II and class III officers respectively think that quality enhancement improves the image and gives competitive advantage to the organisation. (Table: 6.1). It can be mentioned that all the officers are quality conscious.

100% of the class I, the class II and the class III officers respectively think that quality is a continuous process and not periodic. (Table: 7.1) It can be said from the response pattern that all the classes of officers have a fair understanding about the quality-implementation process.

Improving quality is a never-ending job. Consumers constantly demand better quality, and, if an organisation wishes to stay in its field, it must try to satisfy consumer demands at all times. A QC is one of the best answers for solving problems and improving the quality image. QC programmes provide an excellent opportunity to solve many problems that people face daily and can do something about those collectively. It gives the people a chance to get together and think about the problem(s) and then to try out their ideas to get it solved.

The job of ensuring quality

100% of the class I, the class II and the class III officers respectively agree that quality should be ensured at all levels. (Table: 8.1)

66.67% of the class I officers do not think that quality is essentially the work of top management. Whereas, only 30% of the class II officers and 13.04% of the class III officers think that quality is essentially not the work of top management. The majority of the class II and the class III officers think that quality is essentially the work of top management. (Table: 9.1). Here there is a difference of opinion found between the class I and the rest of the officers. This is primarily because of the fact that the top management believes that quality is essentially the work of grass-root employees, whereas the class II and class III officers believe quality is essentially the work of top management. It can be mentioned that the officers need to be more educated with regard to quality and its implementation. The responsibility for the
organisation, direction and control of quality must be vested at the highest level and the implementation ought to be the task of everyone.

**Top management interference**

- 66.67% of the class I officers think that top management should interfere in solving work-related problems if it cannot be solved by the grass-root employees. 55% of the class II officers and 90.70% of the class III officers also agree to it. An insignificant portion, i.e., 9.30% of the class III officers remains undecided. However, 45% of the class II and 33.33% of the class I officers respectively are also undecided. (Table: 10.1). This means that there is a need to make the class II officers aware of the fact that it is the task performer who knows better than anyone else what the problems are and how to overcome those.

It is the area where QCs have borne out remarkable achievements. In almost all excellent organisations, the management style is one of participation. The process enhances participation at the grass-root level. Conviction of the top management and the senior executives of the organisation in the feasibility and utility of QC is a prerequisite for initiating QCs in any organisation.

**The task of problem-solving**

One of the unfounded myths is that top management alone is capable of solving problems coming in the way of reaching excellence. This myth overlooks the fact that it is the task performer who knows better than anyone else what the problems are and how to overcome those.

- 100% of the class I officers, 60% of the class II officers and 26.09% of the class III officers respectively strongly agree that people doing a work are the best to understand and solve problems involved therein. 25% of the class II officers and 54.35% of the class III officers agree to it. Only 15% of the class II officers and 4.35% of the class III officers do not agree. 15.22% of the class III officers remain undecided. (Table: 11.1) The overall response pattern
suggests that the majority of the officers believe strongly that the task performer has the capability to identify and resolve the problems coming in the way of achieving excellence. The implementation of QCs largely depends upon this belief.

- 88.41% of the officers strongly agree that employees themselves are capable of solving problems in their work place. (Table: 12)

- An insignificant portion, i.e., 33.33% and 5% of the class I and the class II officers respectively do not agree that employees themselves are capable of solving problems in their work place. (Table: 12.1)

- 66.67% of the class I officers and 45.65% of the class III officers respectively do not agree that problem solving is the work of grass-root employees. 26.09% of the class III officers strongly disagree that problem solving is the work of grass-root employees. Almost 15% of the class II officers strongly agree and 50% of the class II officers agree that problem solving is the work of grass-root employees. (Table: 13.1) This is in conflict with the opinion expressed by the class I and the class III officers. Hence it can be said that the class II officers need to be educated that problem solving is not the work of grass-root employees rather it is the work-related problems which are to be tackled by grass-root employees.

This is an important indication that, if the QCs are formed, it does not mean that management can take it as a means to unload all its problems. That is far from true, though there is no doubt that, wherever QCs are formed, everyday problems are increasingly and more willingly resolved by the employees themselves, thereby, affording the executives more free time to attend their managerial responsibilities.

**Capability to solve problems**

That the employees are capable of solving work-related problems largely depends on whether the job matches with their level of skill and level of educational attainments.

- 100% of the officers at all the levels think that their present job matches with the skills. (Table: 14.1)
100% of officers at all the levels think that their present job matches with their level of educational attainments. (Table: 15.1)

People have to feel happy with, and enthusiastic about, work and take pride in it to do a good job. However, they cannot achieve this sense of pride unless the opportunities are given to them to use there ideas and their brain power. QCs help promote more job satisfaction since people are aware that their ideas will be considered. This helps to satisfy their 'achievement' need.

**Understanding of the problem-solving process**

In the problem-solving process, identification of the problem comes first and is followed by solving it.

- 66.67% of the class I officers agree that *identifying* is the most important aspect with respect to any problem. However, almost 55% of the class II officers and 86.96% of the class III officers believe that *solving* is the most important aspect in relation to any problem. (Table: 16.1)

This brings out the point that there is a need for proper training for the class II and class III officers with respect to the problem-solving approach. This misunderstanding is one of the major hurdles in the effective implementation of QCs. QCs, in general, offer members unlimited opportunity to solve problems and, at the same time, make them feel that they are a part of their organisation.

**Ability to bring Change(s)**

- 100% of the class I officers, 75% of the class II officers and 100% of the class III officers have rated themselves as ‘4’ in a scale of 1 to 5. 2 class I and 3 class III officers have not responded. (Table: 17.1) It appears that the majority of officers rate themselves very high with respect to their ability to bring change(s).
- Although 100% of the class I officers and 95.35% of class III officers think that they can bring qualitative improvement in their work place, only 40% of
the Class II officers think so. Almost 60% of the class II officers cannot say whether they can bring qualitative improvement in their workplace. (Table: 18.1)

On personal interaction with the class II officers, it has been found that the majority of the class II officers are of the belief that qualitative improvement is a group or collective effort rather than an individual effort. Hence, although bringing change(s) in the workplace may be quite within one’s own ability, bringing qualitative improvement is difficult.

**Interactions at the workplace**

- 100% of the class I officers have chosen very often as the frequency of job-related interactions with colleagues in the workplace. 85% of the class II officers and 93.48% of the class III officers have chosen often as the frequency of job-related interactions with colleagues in the workplace. (Table: 19.1)

This shows that an overwhelming majority of the officers have a very high frequency of interactions which is very essential for the smooth functioning of QCs.

The success of QCs largely depends on the frequency of interactions and proper communication between the QCs and the department head. It is necessary for QC members to realise that, in their own and larger interest, they should keep the departmental head and others informed about the activities of QCs, preferably after each meeting. If the departmental head is taken for granted or ignored by the QCs, he/she may deliberately hamper the operation of QCs. It is extremely important that QC members are briefed about what is expected of them and how they should go about their activities, involving everyone connected with the problem fully, from the very beginning. Poor communication also causes dissatisfaction and undue tension. QCs help improve communication through group activities which take place frequently. People become open minded too. It acts as a catalyst in the development of a more helpful attitude.
**Group dynamics**

- 43.48% of the officers have chosen *partially* as the extent of their independent functioning, indicating their functioning as a group. (Table: 20)

- It is further observed that almost 57.97% of the officers have chosen *sometimes* as the frequency of seeking cooperation from their boss. (Table: 21)

It can be said that the formation of QCs develop a high degree of cooperation. The enthusiastic commitment to follow up activities is also generated as a result of group functioning. Group activities also result in better communication, the lack of which is a bane to many organisations. QCs are a very useful device for bringing collective knowledge and judgement to problem solving. Some problems require the coordinated efforts of people from different areas. Through the use of QCs, it is easier to attain this cooperation. Similarly, when complex problems are resolved through integrated group discussions, the quality of decisions becomes generally better because of the group’s interest, and implementation becomes little easier. QCs recognise the importance of cooperation and teamwork. Instead of individual competition, QCs encourage team accomplishments. Those who work in QCs realise that all the people in the group have to work together to solve problems. They criticise ideas but not the person who suggests them. Most of the members help each other and put aside their differences. In this way, group activities promote teamwork. Groups formed in QCs permit wider participation from a number of people. Members are also allowed to participate in the decision-making process. This gives them a sense of belongingness and a sense of security and self-fulfilment. Group dynamics lend a number of advantages which are realised through the formation of informal groups. Pooled knowledge and judgement calling for coordinated efforts of all concerned result in better quality of decisions and easier implementation due to the effect of synergy. The number of ideas that emanate from a group are many more than what any individual can contribute.
Grievance Redress

- It is observed that almost 93.65% of the officers refer their grievances to their superior. Only a meagre 6.35% of the officers refer their grievances to the union. (Table: 22)

This response strongly supports the case for QCs as it is well understood that QCs are not a forum for grievances or a spring board for demands. Conflict resolution has been a significant off-shoot of QCs as a result of employees developing an 'adult' approach to problems.

Kendall Coefficient of Concordance

Interpretation of Kendall's W, calculated by using the responses to item no. 23 (see the attached questionnaire/Annexure 4), assessing the degree of agreement or not among the respondents, i.e., the officers, has been done. The test statistic $W$ is 1, when all the respondents are unanimous, and each respondent has assigned the same order to the list of concerns. $W$ is 0, when there is no overall trend of agreement among the respondents and their responses may be regarded as essentially random. Intermediate values of $W$ indicate a greater or lesser degree of unanimity among the responses.

The value of $W$ as shown in the Annexure 3 is 0.8027, indicating a greater degree of unanimity among the responses.

In terms of total score of the ranks given by the respondents to the individual interests, the ranking below has been found. The point is that the least total score represents the best rank.

Rank 1: (g) a job that matches your level of educational attainments and level of skills
Rank 2: (f) a job which is challenging enough
Rank 3: (e) scope for independent functioning
Rank 4: (h) a job that elevates the social and organisational status
Rank 5: (a) a job that brings recognition
Rank 6: (d) many subordinates can be supervised
Rank 7: (c) more power to exercise
Rank 8: (b) there is scope to earn more

It can be said that the responses of the officers reflect their attitudes and beliefs.
QCs and Motivation

The success of QCs depends, to a great extent, on the kinds of beliefs held by the managers and subordinates. The beliefs, according to McGregor (1960), may be classified into two categories: having X Assumptions and having Y Assumptions. QCs' efforts in the departments, with managers and supervisors having Y Assumptions, are likely to succeed because they have trust in the intrinsic worth of their subordinates and they believe that, given proper opportunities, the subordinates are capable of coming out with creative and innovative suggestions concerning their jobs and work environment. According to Herzberg, Mausman, and Synderman (1959), the stimuli to which an employee responds in his/her workplace may be classified into two categories: hygiene or maintenance factors and motivators. Hygiene or maintenance factors include working condition, job security, economic factors, social factors, etc. The absence of one or more of these usually makes an employee dissatisfied but the presence does not necessarily ensure job satisfaction. According to Dey (1988), the top management, desirous of introducing QCs in the organisation, must think beyond hygiene factors and take positive steps to design and introduce motivators in the workplace. If the management is not prepared to do so, it should abstain from introducing QCs. According to Mohr (1983), QCs provide a climate where job satisfaction can grow and alienation is reduced. According to Maslow (1970), after an individual's physiological, safety and social needs are satisfied, he/she would like to satisfy his esteem needs which may be in the form of self-respect or self-esteem or a desire for appreciation of good work and recognition. A QC satisfies the special needs of employee because he/she is identified as the member of a team. His/her QC offers him/her the opportunity to interact with the QC members and develop team spirit through team work. If the management takes the initiative to recognise good performance of the QC members, not necessarily in terms of monetary incentives, it provides for the fulfilment of their esteem needs. The QC concept enables employees to utilise their intrinsic wisdom and creativity in the work that they are engaged in. QCs help to create a climate in work areas wherein employees voluntarily work together and happily contribute to improving the standard of performance of their activities for their individual development as well as the organisation's betterment.
Suggestions

Based on the extensive review of literature and the empirical findings, the researcher has tried to come out with some concrete suggestions mentioned below in order to effectively appreciate the perceptions of the officers vis-à-vis the potential of QCs in employee involvement and the initial steps to be taken in the SU's in Kolkata in particular and the administrative personnel in the HEIs in general.

- Because there exists a mindset among the officers which is in favour of introducing QCs in the HEIs, there is a definite need to make the officers aware about the functioning and role of QCs in employee involvement.
- Although there is a general awareness and understanding of quality among the officers, yet the officers need to be educated about the different concepts of quality in today’s changing environment in the HEIs.
- In terms of the task of ensuring quality, difference in opinion expressed by the class I officers on the one hand and the class II and the class III officers on the other must be resolved. It should be made clear that the responsibility of direction and control of quality must be vested with the class I officers and the implementation must be the task of everyone.
- The class II officers in particular need to be educated about the difference between work-related problems and other problems. This is necessary for smooth functioning of QCs.
- The officers (especially the class II and class III) need to be made aware of different problem-solving approaches.
- Although there is a high frequency of interactions among the officers at the workplace, yet it can be said that instituting QCs will improve communication through group activities. Officers will be open minded too.
- The educational attainments and skill of the officers suggest that they are capable of identifying the problems and providing solutions. This is conducive to the institutionalisation of QCs.
- The QCs may be formed among the class III officers with necessary help from the class I and class II officers who can act as facilitators.
• A number of QCs can be formed among the class III officers on the basis of the homogeneity of work and the size of each QC should be restricted to 6 to 8 members.

• In the beginning, only problems which are inevitable in administrative work such as normal delays, duplication of work, delay in processing, etc., should be taken up.

• In the later stage, complex problems such as red tapism, reducing absenteeism, etc., can be taken up with requisite help from the top management.

• The help from the QCFI may be sought to organise workshops/seminars to have a sound groundwork before introducing QCs in HEIs.

• The formation of QC in HEIs will help bring out the intrinsic, untapped and innovative knowledge and wisdom of the officers which, in turn, will lead to qualitative improvement.

Although QCs are formed voluntarily, given the average Indian mindset, there is a strong need to implement it compulsorily for some time so that the impacts of it can be seen and experienced. Self discipline, ethics, and intangible, unquantifiable trust among all result in incalculable benefits for an organisation.

Limitations of the Research

Some of the important limitations of this study are stated below

• The study is confined only to two (2) SUs in Kolkata, though those, by themselves, are quite important and representative ones.

• All the class I officers could not be covered, in spite of best efforts, as they are either too busy or over engaged.

• Personal interaction with all the officers in the universities covered, in order to have a better understanding of their attitudes and beliefs, could not be done.

• The empirical analysis has been done primarily on the basis of the officers’ levels in the organisation though such type of analysis could have been done on the basis of gender, age and qualification of the officers.
In order to have a holistic view towards implementing and operationalising QCs in HEIs, it is important to take into account the other factors such as students, teaching staff, non-teaching staff as well as the external stakeholders such as society at large and government which has been ignored in this study.