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Literature Review
The chapter attempts to critically review research work done in the area of organizational excellence in general and excellence in schools in particular. The researcher observed a dearth of studies under the specific nomenclature. The review of literature covers studies in related areas as well, that have some direct implications for the current study.

2.1 Studies on Organizational Excellence

Numerous studies have been conducted over the years to identify the keys to organizational excellence. Most of these studies have been of corporations; but there have also been studies of excellent or effective academic institutions, hospitals, developmental programs, etc. An illustrative sample of these studies and researches is briefly presented below to identify the main attributes of excellence, its creation and sustenance, in organizations.

Peters and Waterman (1982) identified 43 U.S. companies that had a fine track record over 1961-1980 on several financial criteria and were also known to be innovative and responsive to changing external conditions. On the basis of analysis of these companies, they proposed eight characteristics of excellent corporate management. The first was “bias for action” (‘do it, fix it, try it’). The second was being “close to the customer” and emphasis on learning from the customer. The third trait was “autonomy and entrepreneurship”. These companies nurtured many leaders and innovators throughout the organization. The fourth was “productivity through people” achieved through effective human resource management. The fifth trait was “hands-on, value driven” management or management-by-moving around (MBWA). The sixth characteristic was “stick to the knitting” that is, stay reasonably close to the business that management knew well rather than go for unrelated diversification. The seventh attribute was “simple organization
structure and systems” and lean staff at corporate headquarters. The last trait was “simultaneous loose-tight” properties, with characteristics of both decentralization and centralization blended together. This is considered to be a path breaking study in the field of organizational excellence. It helped crystallize attributes leading to creation and sustenance of excellence.

A similar study conducted by Ahmad and Chopra (2004), studied 19 highly admired organizations operating in India. They identified five distinguishing characteristics of high performance organizations, namely:

- Inspiring Leadership: The Driving Force
- Innovative Strategy: Conceptualization of Business
- Distinct Identity: Purpose, Values and Culture
- Process-driven Execution: Processes, Logistics and Technology
- Win-Win Relationships: Satisfying all Stakeholders

Using this framework, authors explained the basic organizational attributes that help sustain performance over long periods. The study established the need in Indian organizations for developing the leadership pipeline and creating a performance culture.

In a study of 79 American manufacturing companies, divided into high performance and low performance groups, Khandwalla (1992) studied a number of elements of management that had been offered as ‘panaceas’ over the years. These were decentralization, participative management, control systems, management information systems, vertical integration, etc. The study concluded that these organizational variables were much more strongly correlated with one another in the high performance companies than in the low performance companies.

Maheshwari (1980) conducted a study on organizational performance in India. He related the decision-making styles of corporates to organizational performance. This study covered a dozen Indian corporations, half of them in public sector and the other half in private
sector. It administered a questionnaire, to measure how far each organization had a participatory and an entrepreneurial style of decision-making. High scores on the participatory style indicated a management committed to decentralization, operating autonomy for managers, a consultative leadership and group decision-making, while low scores indicated a centralized, autocratic mode of management. High scores on the entrepreneurial orientation indicated a management that was good at anticipating problems, quickly responding to them and strongly committed to getting results. Low scores were seen as conservative, traditional, slow and bureaucratic. Organizations that employed a participatory as well as an entrepreneurial mode of decision making performed better in terms of profitability and growth than those employing an authoritarian and conservative mode of decision-making.

Leaders and leadership styles have played a decisive role in bringing about dramatic changes in organizations. Singh and Bhandarkar (1990) intensively studied five Indian transformational leaders who had effected substantial changes in organizations and their performance. Overall, the study listed eleven most widely noted traits of the five leaders:

- Empowerment of people;
- Risk taking ability;
- Clarity about mission, purpose and goal;
- Team builder;
- High degree of balance;
- Good PR person;
- Caring and concerned;
- Open and receptive;
- Good planner;
- Confident and trustworthy and
- Accessible.

Another study conducted by Soltani, Van der Meer and Williams (2004) examined the importance of senior management’s commitment to successful implementation of TQM
initiatives. The study concluded that the interrelationship between CEO commitment, employee commitment and effectiveness of TQM programs is usually a very close and linear one, not least because if a TQM organization wishes to improve, it has no choice but to be committed fully from topmost level to the shop floor.

Researchers have also studied the managerial practices adopted by companies, as these can help in creating excellence in organizations. Negandhi and Prasad (1971) selected 15 pairs of Indian companies, in which in each pair, one company was under indigenous management, while the other in the same industry was a subsidiary of a US company and so, reflected American management practices and developed a subjectively assessed measure of excellence which they called ‘managerial effectiveness’. They concluded that American subsidiaries generally outscored their Indian counterparts on progressiveness of management philosophy, organizational practices and managerial effectiveness. Also, companies that had progressive management philosophies tended to have progressive organizational practices and managerial effectiveness, while those that did not have progressive management philosophy tended to be low on progressive managerial practices and managerial effectiveness.

Some researches have outlined HRD practices prevalent in the organizations as an attribute of organizational performance. Enthemkuzhy (1989) studied the relationship between HRD practices and organizational excellence in 68 Indian organizations. He constructed an index of growth in company profitability as a measure of organizational excellence. He found that while HRD profile was not correlated with organizational excellence, HRD climate was.

Van der Meer and Gudim (2001) in their study, titled “Sustaining Excellence in Practice”, discussed the relevant academic literature on organizational excellence and presented a longitudinal case study of a clothing manufacturing plant. It observed that:

- Nature of organizational excellence is “multifaceted” and cannot be simply equated with TQM or any other specific management approach.
Although developing a Total Quality culture may yield significant benefits, improving operations does not, on its own, lead to sustainable organizational excellence. Organization has to build its own, “unique strategic” position.

- Sustainable organizational excellence depends on building dynamic capabilities for “organizational innovation”.
- Top management performs two “vital roles” in sustaining excellence- an ‘administrative’ role of maintaining and exploiting existing organizational competencies, and an ‘entrepreneurial’ role of both continually developing and transforming existing organizational competencies and searching for new competencies to keep pace with the changing environment.

McDonnell (2006) in his study stressed, that excellence is a competitive advantage. The study proposed ways to achieve organizational excellence. The author suggested a six-step program, developed by him in his 30 years of directing and advising diverse firms. The study provided an insight on leadership, communication, employee motivation, strategic planning, participation in decision-making, marketing, HR and staffing. Royal and Stark (2006) studied some companies that excelled at conducting business in the global scenario. The study reported that the companies that were most effective in conducting business globally excelled in the key areas of strategic, operational and people management. The authors recognized above-mentioned capabilities as important for any company that aimed to be a global player. Duffy (1996) crystallized characteristics of high performance organizations. These characteristics were placed into four categories - environment, management, structure and human resources. Out of these, two of the important ones namely environment and management were described in detail.

The features of environment were described as follows:

- Close to customer
- Making a proactive response
- Having a clear business focus
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The features of management were identified as:

- Leadership Vision
- Bias towards action
- Minimal rationality

Pemberton, Stonehouse and Yanow (2001) conducted a survey of 700 companies from manufacturing and service sectors of North-East England. Their paper examined the relationship between benchmarking and organizational learning. It also examined several variables associated with organizational learning. The paper argued that benchmarking brings the greatest benefits to an organization's performance when combined with effective organizational learning. Also, it emphasized vision, training & education, a problem solving culture and HR strategy as some of the key elements associated with benchmarking and organizational success. Kao, Sinha and Sek-Hong (1994) studied the role of social values in achieving effectiveness in organizations. The study provided a spectrum of the latest academic perspectives on the role of social values for effective work organizations in a cross-cultural context. The focus was on the Asian continent. Experiences and insights developed in other non-Asian societies had also been incorporated. It stressed that social values always help determine the degree of success in the performance of organizations.

Management is an exciting, enticing and challenging function. For those in the top management, it is a case of “the higher up, the closer to the door”. For the principal shareholder, it is a life full of tensions, pressures and fears. For the lower management, the work is full of stresses and strains. All this can be avoided. Brown (1979) believed that excellence in management could be achieved. The ideas presented by him were a product of his exposure to the management operations of many corporations, a school board, a division of a large university and several social agencies and his experience as an executive of an international business organization. The book stimulated thinking about the managerial function thereby creating a new environment for operating as a manager. Francis (1994) provided a step-by-step competitive strategy for excelling in this world of
corporate competition. He explained core competitive strategies. The book argued that a winning competitive strategy for achieving excellence would rarely emerge out of one brilliant idea. More often, it would be a conglomeration of hundreds of ideas aligned in the same strategic direction.

2.2 Studies on Excellence in Schools

Several researches have been done and books have been written on the subject of excellence in schools in India and abroad. Some researches have stressed on how excellence can be achieved in schools and on why some schools could not achieve excellence. There have been researches on the role played by organizational factors like organizational culture, leadership, managerial styles, etc. on creating excellence in schools.

TTTI, Madras faculty team (1986) conducted a case study on polytechnics. They studied selected polytechnics in the southern region of India. Some key areas that contributed to effectiveness were- Curriculum Implementation; Resource Utilization; Staff Development & Deployment; Student Personnel Administration and Institutional Management. The study uncovered the devices and strategies adopted by the polytechnics for progressively attaining perfection and excellence in their performance. On the other hand, Brabeck and Shirley (2003) conducted a study on excellence in schools and offered insights on why schools, colleges and departments of education failed to achieve excellence and how excellence, involving building strong partnership with schools and community could be achieved.

Another study was conducted by Bobbett and Ellet (1997) on America’s schools to develop a model for analyzing statewide educational reform initiatives. The study proposed appropriate means and ends to achieve greater equity and excellence. Yet another study by Sharon (1998) aimed at understanding effective schooling. The study explored complexities involved in discovering the determinants of the ‘differential success’ of schools. It concluded that neither management nor teaching nor the social context of schooling alone contributed to success or otherwise of schools. The study demonstrated the
intricate and intimate connections between the school managers and teachers. It also highlighted the role of socio-economic environments within which schools operate.

The perusal of writings and researches on the subject reveals that the terms ‘excellence’ and ‘quality’ have been used interchangeably. A study of Mukhopadhyay (2005) focused on quality in education and how educational institutions can improve and sustain quality. The writer adopted the TQM philosophy and methodology, which originated in industry-to suit education and anchored it in the Indian cultural ethos. He espoused a human-intensive quality management approach and proposed a practical and flexible management model that could be employed by educational institutions after required adaptation.

Ekambaram (1980) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of the inputs, training and regular feedback program, in bringing about changes in respect of organizational climate, leadership behavior and staff’s morale. The study employed pretest-posttest experimental-control group design. The study found that the staff exhibited change in behavior as a result of behavioral training given to teachers and regular feedback. This further led to significant changes in the classroom climate, one of the most prominent being productivity.

Sequeira (1986) studied managerial styles and achievement motivation of educational institutions in relation to institutional efficiency. A sample of 15 educational managers and 15 industrial managers, rated as relatively efficient by a panel of experts, was selected for the study. He used tools like Blake-Mouton Self Assessment of Key Managerial Orientation (SAKMO) and Murray’s Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). It was found that there was no significant difference between the dominant managerial styles of educational managers and industrial managers. There was significant positive relationship between the 9.1 managerial style and high need for achievement (n-Ach) scores.

Researches have also been conducted on the kind of managerial techniques to be used in educational institutions. Caputo (1980)’s study was a comparison of traditional and modern school management techniques for use by administrators. He concluded that the
traditional style was represented by the management style of ‘The Wizard of Oz’, and the modern style by five goals of “school-based management”. Dwivedi (2000) described innovative trends and perspectives in business schools. He indicated how several innovative Indian business schools, like IIMs, Bajaj, FMS, XLRI, etc. were turning themselves inside out to meet the challenges posed by globalization and technological change. The book ascertained that excellence of human resources is a prerequisite to accomplish sustainable competitive advantage in a swiftly changing global economy. The study highlighted the need for achieving excellence and how managers need be geared to the situational requirements in this fast-changing environment. The new age manager’s task is drastically different than what it was of his counterpart in the industrial age prior to nineties. An attempt had also been made to indicate what helps and hinders effective learning at business schools. A research study by Sehgal (2002) attempted to construct a conceptual framework of school excellence. The writer provided research design for her study in three phases. The first phase is providing a theoretical framework of the concept of school excellence. In the second phase, different attributes of school excellence have been outlined in detail. Finally, in the third phase, a case study of a school that exemplifies excellence is presented.

Principals are the heads of educational institutions. Researches have been conducted to study their role and their importance in development of schools. Their role has been compared with their counterparts in the corporate world. Snyder and Anderson (1987) opined that Principals too could learn from the experiences and day-to-day working of the corporate world. In their study, they illustrated the points dealing with organizational behavior and corporate management that are applicable to the effective management of elementary schools. The study related principal’s administrative skills with that of the manager’s in the industry. The similarities between effective school management and corporate management had also been highlighted through this study. Denbo and Ross (1983) conducted a study on how the Principal could achieve equity and excellence in schools. The suggestions presented here were designed to assist principals in improving school effectiveness through a well-planned, well-executed strategy including program of staff supervision and curriculum development. Awasthi (2004) studied various leadership
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styles of principals and the organizational climate of schools and inferred that there is a direct relation between the leadership qualities of principals and school's performance.

Cunningham and Gresso (1993) studied cultural leadership and the role of leaders in bringing a culture of excellence in schools. This study confronted administrators who seek to create a culture of excellence in schools. They examined the role of effective leadership in achieving significant educational improvement thereby creating excellence. Rosario (1986) reported that studies on excellence in education lack substance and proper focus. He suggested that focus should be more on organization and its underlying factors that include school culture. A case study of a secondary school King Harold School, Waltham Abbey was presented by Beresford (1999) that suggested that as a management tool for school improvement, a modified form of target setting would be the best option. For this, a school culture where there is openness to external ideas and where there is an interest or willingness to experiment in the field of teaching and learning was needed.

Duke (1989) reviewed research on the school organizational factors related to well-disciplined school environments and discussed the kinds of leadership functions needed to establish environments conducive to good school discipline. Researches have also linked excellence in schools with academic performance. Knight (1987) pointed out that excellence in schools must be defined more broadly. It should not cover only the scores students earn on achievement tests. He also commented that academic achievement has been increasing in schools but at the same time, dropout rate is also rising.

A distinct topic of study in excellence in schools is related to the racial inequality and its effects on excellence. Klein (1997) conducted a study on excellence in schools and racial equality. This study was a critical response to the 1996 white paper entitled 'Excellence in schools' which pointed out educational deficiencies, racism and overall poor education for minorities and ethnic groups within the UK educational system.

Some researches on excellence in schools and education have been area specific. Pol (2001) in his study focused on changes in school management, evaluation and monitoring.
in Czech education. The study stressed on the need for removal of the dysfunctions of the existing education system in Czech Republic. Sim (2001) in his study on ‘Thoughtful Schools’ highlighted the schools and education system in Brunei Darussalam. The paper concluded that thoughtful schools emphasize the concepts of creativity, reflectivity, responsibility and reciprocity in the areas of teaching, learning and school management. A study on educational research was conducted in the states of North-Eastern India by Malhotra and Mittal (2001). It talked of creativity in management along with the factors responsible for it in the schools of North-East India.

Lack of proper school environment is one of the hindering factors in achieving excellence. In her research on schools and classroom discipline, Cotton (1988) talked about disorder and danger in some school environments like drug use, cheating, truancy and intimidation. The research literature made distinction between these schools and the well-disciplined, smooth-running schools. The research studied the factors behind effective classroom and school-level disciplinary practices as-

- Commitment on the part of all staff.
- High behavioral expectations.
- Clear and broad based rules.
- Close ties with communities.

Excellence in schools has been studied from the point of view of female representation as well. There are two contrasting researches in this area. The lack of female representation in administration is a hindering factor for the nation in achieving excellence in its schools. This finding was based on the study by Ginn (1989). On the other side, Tetreault and Schmuck (1985) in their research work had found that gender is not relevant category in the analysis of excellence in schools.

Danuse (2002) stressed on the use of action research for improvement in schools. The main focus was on managing the process of change and quality in schools. This could be achieved by adopting new ways of promoting professional development of school leaders.
through university-school partnership and self-evaluation methods. Head teachers could be developed as team leaders in action research that is designed and realized in each school. The main orientation in this study was on 'quality' improvement.

A survey of the literature on excellence in schools reveals that the topic has been studied by a number of well-known researchers. The researchers have covered the concept of excellence in schools and have explored factors contributing to excellence in schools. Several attributes present in these schools have been crystallized by them. However, it is also evident that so far very little research has been conducted in the field of creating and sustaining excellence in schools. The key concern is of 'sustainability' and not just discovering the secret of excellence.

Modern schools are facing the challenge of local as well as global competition. A large number of schools are struggling to survive in this challenging environment. Expectations of parents and society have increased manifold. The issue of sustaining excellence in schools is becoming increasingly important in the highly dynamic, competitive and unpredictably changing environment not only in India but also across the globe. Therefore, there is a need to understand factors and characteristics that lead to creation and sustainability of excellence in schools. That shall help evolve a unique model of creating and sustaining excellence in schools.

The succeeding chapter relates to the methodology adopted for pursuing this study on excellence in schools. The problem statement, research objectives, rationale, benefits, procedure of conducting the study and limitations of the study have been outlined.