CHAPTER 5

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“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”
-A Chinese Proverb

SUMMARY

Secondary education in India faces the dual challenges of expansion and quality. Increasingly, these twin challenges are getting integrated into expansion with quality. Without assuring minimum acceptable quality of education, mere expansion of educational provision will be of little use and consequence. With globalization, there is no other choice left for India except to improve the quality of her manpower. There is enough available evidence that primary/elementary education and higher education in India have received a lot of importance. However, the importance of secondary education as the basis for human resource development has remained unrecognized over the decades. Though attempts have been made to implement the recommendations of the Mudaliar Commission (1954-55), Kothari Commission (1964-66) and the National Policy of Education (1986) - all stressing on the issue of quality of Secondary Education - nevertheless, in reality, development has taken place only in quantitative numbers. However, the need of the hour is that the parameters of internal and external efficacy of secondary education have to be expanded considerably so that the secondary school graduate can contribute fully to the development of a nation. The pre-requisite to quality improvement and management is quality assessment with respect to a well-defined set of indicators of quality.

The present study has been undertaken to develop a methodology and instrument of quality assessment at the institutional level. It also aims at providing a handy usable mechanism for quality assessment as a basis for quality management in school education.

Objectives of the study are to:

- develop a theoretical construct for quality assessment;
- identify/develop a set of instrument for quality assessment that can be applied to selected schools;
- carry out institutional quality assessment; and
Review of related literature

There have been extensive researches on the issue of quality in education in the western world. In the context of this study on assessment on school quality, it is found that a number of authors have dealt with definition of quality in different manners. Majority of them made qualitative statement on quality. For example, some authors have tried to derive the definition and nature of quality from beauty. Quality lies in the eyes of the consumer (Mukhopadhyay, 2000). The Oxford English dictionary (1970) categorically defines quality as the nature and kind of character of something indicating the degree and grade of excellence of a thing. The quality has also been defined by its attributes like 'quality as a dynamic idea', 'a positive concept', 'quality as not a chance but a choice', 'quality as a degree of fitness for purpose and function', etc. (Deming 1986, Sallis 1996, Shejwalkar 1999, Oakland Crawford and Shutler, 99).

About assessment of institution, the literature reveals that there are several inter-related issues pertaining to institutional assessment. The major issues are: Parameters of Assessment, Tools of Assessment, Participants in an Institutional Assessment.

In parameters of assessment, there is a wide divergence in the opinion as to what constitutes quality or what the indicators of school quality are. Some contend that sense of responsibility, open-mindedness, critical thinking ability, teacher quality; administrative mechanisms are the indicator for school quality (Kevin 1997, Moore 1996, Fetler 1989). Whereas Davies and Ellison stated that quality might vary among the clients and beneficiaries, implying what is quality indicator for teachers may or may not be a quality indicator for parents.

Concerning tools for assessment, there are several instruments developed for assessment of institutions. Govt. of Maharashtra, Department of Education has developed an instrument. Mukhopadhyay's Institutional Profile Questionnaire, Institutional Assessment Instrument, Johnston County School's Total Quality in Education, Standardized tests on Teacher Morale; job satisfaction etc. are some of the examples of such institutional assessment instruments (Mukhopadhyay 2000, Frazier 1997, Pareek and Rao 1974).
Among participants in institutional assessment, several authors have tried to explain who would carry out an institutional assessment. Total Quality Management in particular emphasises on involvement of all— from assessment, diagnosis to development and quality improvement, focus is essentially on the beneficiary and hence it is important to list down external customer of an educational institution as well as internal customers (Mukhopadhyay 2000, Frazier 1997). Luff (1970) suggested the case of known and unknown elements of an institution to the principal and others can be meaningfully plotted in the windowpanes of a JOHARI window.

As would be evident from the foregone review, there is very little comprehensive work on methods and tools of assessment of school quality. Therefore, the present study is aimed at providing a mechanism and a set of tools to the educational planners and managers for assessing school quality, the stepping-stone to quality improvement.

Methodology of the study.

This study is an exploratory research, following descriptive survey method. According to this type of research, a meaningful and significant description will follow the proper analysis of the gathered data. Descriptive research studies are designed to obtain precise information concerning the status of phenomena. Of course, descriptive research goes beyond mere collection and tabulation of data. It involves meaningful analysis of the data and drawing out the relevant inference and significant conclusions.

Tools construction

The following procedure for the development and finalisation of tools has been used:

Research review on methods and tools shows that different researchers have attempted to develop different tools for assessing the quality of schools that are broadly categorised as direct observation, personal interview, questionnaire, projective technique etc.

Taking all these considerations together, the researcher adopted questionnaire as the tool for her study.

Further, on the basis of the review of literature, the self-assessment tools were identified and developed by the researcher in order to meet her research need.
The researcher used three instruments for her study. On review, she adopted two instruments from Mukhopadhyay's Institutional Assessment System and according to the requirement of the study she developed the third one herself.

All the tools have been pre-tested to verify their appropriateness. The questionnaire was pre-tested on 10 schools' principals, teachers & administrative staff. The researcher selected five schools from New Delhi & five from Silchar. In the process of pre-testing, many teachers felt that the questionnaire was too long. But when this feeling of teachers was expressed to five experts, they reviewed the questionnaire item-wise & found that this particular questionnaire consisting of 110 items covered almost all the indicators of quality the researcher mentioned earlier. They found each item of the questionnaire is simple, clear & pinpointed, unambiguous and self-sufficient to collect the required data. Hence, the format and content of the questionnaire retained as such.

The sample was selected from different educational institutions of Delhi and Silchar. Principal and teaching staffs from different educational institutions selected, with a sample size of 622 that is, 30 Principals and 592 teachers. The number of schools selected for this study was large enough so that data and information could be dependable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silchar</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Delhi</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>592</td>
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The following tools have been used for the study:

- **Teachers’ Questionnaire (MIPQ):** Consists of one hundred and ten statements on a five-point scale ranging from very true to false, to be answered by teachers of the selected schools.

- **Principal's Questionnaire:** Consists of thirty-five statements on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, to be responded by the principals of the selected schools.
School Information Blank: For each school, this has been filled by the investigator herself for profiling the school.

Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected were coded and analysed manually with the help of scoring sheets.

There are seven sub-areas in the principal questionnaire. In order to ensure that the respondents’ answers actually represent an honest feedback, a number of questions have been designed to elicit response in each area and placed randomly scattered sequence in the questionnaire. For example, in the sub-area of customer orientation, the question numbers 1, 11, 17, 23 and 30 have been allotted. Moreover, the score of responses of all the five items can be summated in order to find the score of each particular sub-area. The items in the questionnaire can be responded on a five-point scale.

The scoring procedure for second questionnaire, i.e., the teacher’s questionnaire, is almost same as in the principal’s questionnaire. In the teacher’s questionnaire, there are 11 sub-areas and in each sub-area there are 10 questions; five each positively keyed and negatively keyed. Moreover, the sum of the values of positively keyed items minus the values of negatively keyed items is the score of each sub-area. For scoring, a numerical value of 4 to 0 is attached to each category of response.

In addition, the third questionnaire consists of information. Therefore, there is no need of any scoring.

Finally, each score sheet is illustrated through graph in the analysis and interpretation chapter. The graph categorically illustrates the strongest and the weakest areas of the school and indicates their relative position among each other.

Using various tools the data have been collected, coded and analysed. Accordingly, the explanation and graphical interpretation of each sample school’s profile as well as the average score of the principal & teachers’ perception of their schools have been discussed. Each of the case studies has been conducted the following generalized format:

- Introduction, which contains staff strength, infrastructure facility, type of management etc.
• The average score of the teacher’s perception about their own school, which includes the stronger & weaker areas of the school and their relative position among each other.

• Principal’s perception about his/her school.

**Major Findings of the study:**

a) The correlation metrics indicates high degree of internal consistency among all the variables measured by the MIPQ (questionnaire for teachers and principal).

b) According to the perceptions of the teachers, Delhi schools appear to be of better quality than the schools in Silchar.

c) The study also shows that the teachers in both the places feel that teacher as well as teaching quality is good but the quality of student is not up to the mark. Further, according to the teachers of the respective schools the areas like linkage, student quality, office management, resources and their job satisfaction is low in both the places and significantly low in Silchar School.

d) The instruments identified and developed in this study can differentiate the quality of schools.

e) It is observed that 90 per cent schools at Silchar are not having the minimum infrastructure. Though the schools of New Delhi generally have minimum infrastructure in place, yet there are wide variations amongst fully government schools, government aided schools and private schools. The government schools generally have bare minimum infrastructure even in Delhi in comparison to government-aided and private schools.

f) In both the settings, linkage of the school with outside agencies and parents’ involvement in the activities of the school is very little.
g) About 80 per cent teachers in both the areas were not found to be getting overall satisfaction from the school.

h) Like teachers, 90 per cent principals in both the areas also seemed not to be satisfied with the parents’ involvement in the school.

i) The library facilities were reported to be very poor and collection of books also very scarce in 90 per cent schools at Silchar town. There was no separate librarian in 70 per cent school in Silchar, the teachers acted as library in-charge, turn by turn, to perform the duty of librarian.

j) About 75 per cent teachers in both the settings expressed that office management of the school was poor.

k) About relationship within the school, 80 per cent teachers in both the settings were found to be satisfied.

l) 60 percent teachers felt that leadership of the principal in both the settings was very good.

m) It was found that if proper attention is given to the area like quality of teaching then automatically the quality of student, customer orientation, client education etc. will improve.

CONCLUSION:

In India, quality movement in education is of recent origin. Quality is a continuous process. Quality assessment is the beginning of the quality improvement in an institution. Quality assessment is a measure of overall personality of the school. The findings of such assessment are expected to help the administrator to utilize and mobilize the human potential in the best possible way. Institutional assessment provides the baseline data on various aspects of the institution on which the developmental schemes can be built upon.

History of educational development in India has witnessed that more emphasis is always given on the development of primary and higher education, and secondary education has always been neglected.

However, due to the pressure of globalisation, universal access to secondary education is an obligation of the state. Secondary education is viewed as a field where the students develop their skills and
competencies that is very important for the labour market. However, recommendations of the Mudaliar Commission (1954-55), Kothari Commission (1964-66) and the National Education Policy of 1986 stressed on the issue of quality of secondary education. Despite that, much has not been done in terms of quality in education. It is agreed that to some extent quantitative development has taken place in this stage of education. Nevertheless, in today’s world of globalisation with the resulting intense competition amongst nations, there is little choice left for an organization other than to be quality conscious. The term quality in education is no more limited to student’s performance only; it also covers teaching and academic programmes, buildings, facilities, equipments, management of the school and the academic environment, internal self-evaluation and external review. All are vital for enhancing quality.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, the pre-requisite for quality development of any institution is the quality assessment. Assessment of an institution throws significant light on the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, and accordingly the areas of intervention for development can be chalked out.