

Stakeholders' Perception Of TQM Practices In Higher Education: A Study

Prof A. Sudhakar

*Registrar, B R Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad
monakarthik@yahoo.com*

Mrs. JVR Geetanjali

*Research Scholar, Osmania University, Faculty Member,
Dept Of Commerce, Bhavan's Degree College, Sainikpuri, Secunderabad.-
saigeet85@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

In the present day market scenario intense competition is sharply increasing irrespective of the nature of product or type of industry. Quality management system is indispensable in any industry. Among all service industries, Education plays a protagonist role in the supply of efficient human resources. Needs and expectations of the society are changing very fast and the quality of higher education needs to be sustained at the desired level. Quality assurance in higher education would mainly depend on the quality of all its facets, the faculty, students, infrastructure, etc. Accreditation ensures that the education delivered in a particular stream or college is of an acceptable quality as per prescribed standards stated by National Assessment and Accreditation Council. The present research article is focused to conduct a comparative study on perceptions of staff and students of NAAC accredited and non-accredited undergraduate colleges, towards the total quality management practices followed in their institutions. To observe these perceptions, TQM practices are measured with respect to Integrated Total Quality Management (ITQM) model developed by A.Pal Pandi et.al. (2009)

Key words: Quality, Higher Education, Growth, Accreditation, Perceptions

INTRODUCTION

All the economic activities of a human being result in production of goods and services. Services are intangible which aid businesses as well customers. They include financial services, banking, insurance, health care and education. All developing

countries growth is dependent on the growth of service sector. As the education industry is a part of overall service industries, it helps the economy to maintain the stock of human capital for any category of industry. Therefore higher education is considered as nation building industry.

Quality means the degree to which a specific product satisfies the customer needs and desires. Or simply the totality of features and characteristics to fulfill the customer needs. Quality is a survival skill of the producer. Total Quality Management movement was started in the year 1940 with SHEWART control charts. Later in 1950's Dr. W.B. Deming¹, management consultant, towering personality of Quality revolution, propounded the theory of Total Quality Management. Masaaki Imai (1986), a guru in management philosophies and practices, author of the book *Kaizen*: stated that Quality Management System is a process of continuous development which can be applied to either products or services which help in sustaining market share.

In an industry the raw material, which is the input, is processed to produce finished goods. Drawing this analogy for education, raw material in the form of students' cognitive abilities and connotative qualities are processed through teaching-learning, co-curricular activities and finally with evaluation through examinations. This ensures the student's holistic development. Just as raw materials require machine, equipment and workshops for making an end product, Educational institutes also require qualified principal, faculty, learning resource, library, and infrastructure. These qualitative attributes of institutes transform students into educated and cultured humans. Unless perfect knowledge is disseminated the country's endurance on the global platform will remain uncertain.

GROWTH OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

In India, the higher education institutions exist in two significant categories-- University and Colleges.

As per the UGC report, 2014, 726 Degree awarding institutions are there in the country. Universities are autonomous bodies, whereas colleges are affiliated to universities. Thus, Universities have the prime responsibility of developing higher education system and maintain quality of it. Universities in India are recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC), which draws its power from the *University Grants Commission Act, 1956*. UGC is responsible for coordination, determination and maintenance of standards, release of grants. In addition, 15 Professional Councils are established, controlling different aspects of accreditation and coordination.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council is an autonomous institutions established by the UGC in 1994. NAAC's responsibility is to assess and accredit institutions of higher education that volunteer for the process, based on prescribed certain criteria. NAAC process of assessment and accreditation involves the preparation self-study report by institution, its validation by the peers and final decision by the council.

Growth of Accredited Universities & Colleges.

Quality assurance is an achievement of desired standards through application of agreed procedures. Accreditation is a formal recognition by an authorized agency-NAAC, that an institution having achieved agreed standards based upon 7 criteria.

1. Teaching learning Evaluation
2. Curricular Aspects
3. Research, Consultancy & extension activities
4. Organization & Management
5. Student Support and Progression
6. Infrastructure Facilities.
7. Healthy practices.

Even though NAAC was established in the year 1994, Accreditation process started only after 4 years. As on November 2014, out of 697 Universities 172 and out of 35, 532 colleges, 4857 were only accredited by NAAC. Out of that 9% are awarded with 'A' grade. But none of these universities could find place in Times' World Ranking of top 200 institutes.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Quality and its management were earlier familiar with manufacturing industries. In early 90's US, UK and other European countries paved way for quality movement in the field of higher education. Human Resource Management identified the necessity of providing skilled labor to meet global demand. Various studies were conducted on experiences of TQM practices. Quality Guru Juran J.M (1988)² defined quality as "Fitness for Purpose". He stated that quality is a continuous process and he had developed the idea of quality trilogy to bring continuous improvement in the process and each of them is-Quality planning, Quality control and Quality improvement. University Grants Commission, an APEX body of Government of India, recognized a student through its NPE policy(1992)³ as a positive asset and a precious national resource which needs to be cherished, nurtured and developed with tenderness and are coupled with dynamism. The CATALYSTIC action of education in this complex and dynamic growth process needs to be planned meticulously and executed with great sensitivity.

Hogg and Hogg (1995)⁴ conducted a study on quality imperatives in United States undergraduate colleges, established the fact as Universities clearly need to examine how they can better meet the needs of their students. Cheng.Y et.al(2003)⁵ described about the experiences and effectiveness of ISO 9000 certified universities of Taiwan. Implementation of ISO standards was an important step for the university transforming from internal integrated system to wards educational excellence. They found the costs of ISO 9000 non-compliance are high, means great incentive. Pandey (2004)⁶ established through his study that HEIs should strive to strike a balance between needs of their stakeholders, demands of the society, and autonomy.

Tilak J B G (2005)⁷ revealed in his study that present scenario of higher education is at crossroads. The Universities transformed into "entrepreneurial universities and

commercial institutions” the important objective of which seems to mobilize more and more resources rather than quality knowledge dissemination.

Yaswanth Raj (2005)⁸ carried out a study with the primary objective of finding out the Quality Management system followed at MATS university. The study revealed a fact that ignoring any dimension of quality would lead to deficiency in QMS and loss of purpose. Deepak Nayyar(2007)⁹ stated that the augmented effect of higher education is the creation of capabilities among people. Najafabadi. H. et al (2008)¹⁰ analyzed through a study in University College of Boras, Quality Function Deployment (QFD) is a methodology that steadily identifies customer needs and expectations on service specifications and designs the parameters. The concluded that training the key personnel and people involved the quality work and establishment of well-done activities must be taken up by the University for implementing TQM for quality work. But the study failed to analyze the stake holders’ perceptions and their feedback about the quality of University College of Boras.

Becket and Brookes (2008)¹¹ presented their review on models of current quality management practices within Higher Education Institutes. Their review included 95 articles with the aim to investigate current environmental forces and their impact on Higher Education quality management practices in different National context. European Framework of Quality management (EFQM), Malcolm Baldrige Quality awards model, ISO:9000 series, Business process Re-Engineering &SERVQUAL models were examined and tested taking into account of the perspective of both internal and external shareholders.

Pal Pandi. A &Surya Rao (2009)¹² carried out their study on perceptions of Engineering college students and established that application of Integrated total quality Management is a vital tool for achieving global quality in technical institutions. Students are considered as important stakeholders of the institutions along with the faculty.

Archana (2009)¹³ conducted a descriptive research with a cross sectional design on quality in higher education in Indian Business schools. Variables considered were quality time and money spent to enhance academic productivity among the students. Academic salaries must be high enough to attract excellent scientists and scholars and teachers who are motivated enough to produce a new clan of students who have the spirit of excelling with a sound foundation.

Niradhar (2011)¹⁴ examined through his study ‘that privatization caused many mushroom institutions to grow which are established with profit concern only. Commercialization leads these institutions to run without qualified staff, without infrastructure, lack of student facilities resulting in low standard education. Josephina (2011)¹⁵ stated the responsibility for the establishment and monitoring of the performance of this large variety of institutions has been exercised by many different statutory regulatory bodies as well as governments and universities, often leading to multiplicity of authorities and duplication of inspection and control. Sambit Basu (2012)¹⁶ acknowledged that the role of higher education is the development of workforce, to meet the domestic as well as the global demand for qualified manpower. Education and training, two complement each other in skill development,

and therefore a holistic treatment of the subject makes it necessary to a student 's growth as well.

Powar KB (2013)¹⁷ observed through his paper that the National Regulation Authority bill was insisting on mandate accreditation for educational institutions by an independent accredited agency. Pragmatism requires competent private players be allowed as agencies for accreditation.

Gopinathan(2014)¹⁸opined that quality education is largely associated with development of human resources focused at developing competencies and capabilities. He synthesized the process of quality assurance based on accreditation and accountability, autonomy& academic freedom, technology & infrastructure facilities. Dhanappa(2014)¹⁹opined that quality of education is directly dependent on role of stakeholders in quality promotion.He stressed the need for exploring the stakeholders i.e., students towards NAAC student charter. NAAC defines 'student charter' as a quality benchmark showing the institutional accountability.

Research Gap

The above research papers were focused on quality of education, shortage of faculty, quality issues in business schools and in engineering education. A few studies were conducted on role of regulatory bodies in developing the standards of higher education. Despite the fact that 74% of the students are inclined towards joining undergraduate Arts, Science and Commerce studies, no specific studies are initiated on TQM practices in undergraduate non-technical programs.Hence an attempt is made to find out Integrated Quality Management practices in accredited and non-accredited undergraduate colleges by analyzing the perceptions of the staff and students.

Objectives of the present study

The present study aims to analyze the perceptions of staff and students of undergraduate accredited and non-accredited colleges on total quality management practices. To comprehend their perceptions broadly the following objectives are proposed.

- To study the perceptions of prime stakeholders i.e., staff and students about the TQM practices of select accredited and non-accredited colleges.
- To measure the perceptions of staff and students about the factors influencing TQM practices in their respective institutions.
- To compare the Total Quality Management practices in accredited and non-accredited undergraduate non-professional Degree colleges.

Hypotheses:

Following Hypotheses are formulated based on the objectives of the study:

H 1: There are no differences in terms of TQM practices between Accredited and Non – Accredited colleges under students' perception regarding the practice of Integrated Quality Management System.

H 2: There is no significant difference in terms of TQM practices between Accredited and Non –Accredited colleges under Teachers' perception regarding the practice of Integrated Quality Management System.

H3: There are no differences in the factors with respect to Accredited and Non – Accredited colleges under students’ perception regarding the practice of Integrated Quality Management System.

H4: There are no differences in the factors with respect to Accredited and Non – Accredited colleges under Teachers’ perception regarding the practice of Integrated Quality Management System.

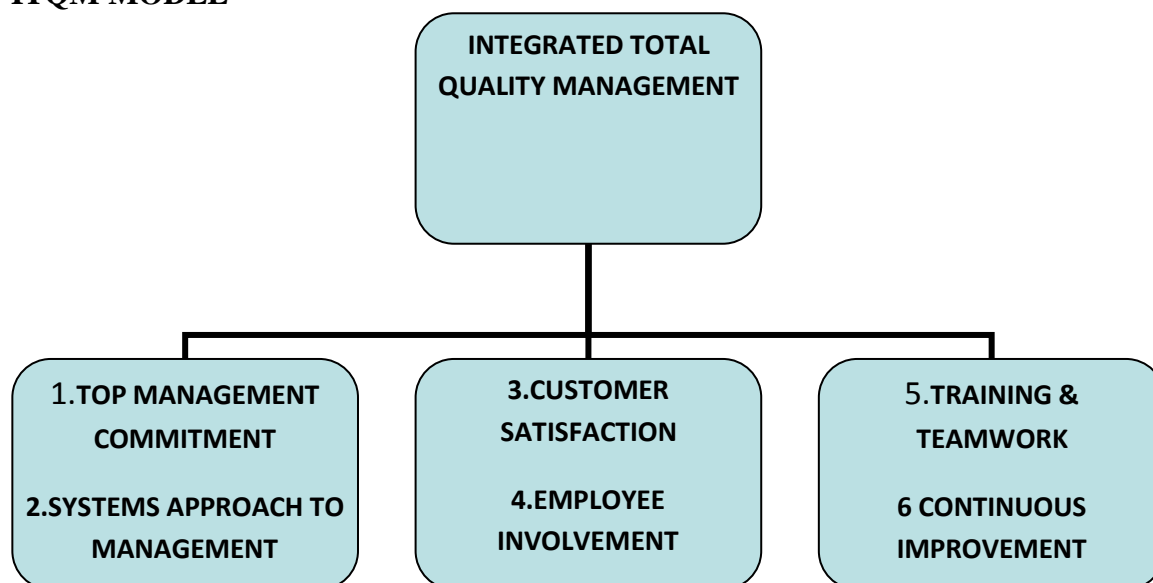
Sample of the study

A purposive sampling method was selected by choosing 5 NAAC accredited and 5 non –accredited undergraduate colleges in twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. In each college structured questionnaires were administered to faculty and students to understand their perceptions on Quality Management System in their institutions. From each college 15 students were selected at random. If total staff of the college is more than 50, ten faculty members were taken as sample, in case if they are below 50, then 5 teachers were taken as sample of study. 110 students & 92 Teachers belonging to Non-Accredited colleges and accredited colleges had participated in answering the questionnaire.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on both primary data sources and secondary data. Primary data is collected by administering structured questionnaires to staff and students of select accredited and Non-Accredited colleges. For Secondary data relating to information about growth of higher education and for review of literature, various books, journals, reports and internet sources are used.

Pal Pandi & et al. developed an Integrated Quality Management model for measuring the quality management practices in higher education. This model is adapted for measuring both student’s and Teacher’s perceptions. Confirmatory Factor Analysis is employed to analyze the data. Under students’ perception the factors considered were F₁ –Top Management Commitment, F₂-Systems approach to Management, F₃- Customer Satisfaction, F₄.Employee Involvement, F₅ –Training, F₆.Continuous Improvement. Statistical tools were used to analyze the collected data to determine the mean score and Standard Deviation of each factor and then factors were ranked. Questionnaires based on 6 critical factors or dimensions with 16 operating items of quality management were created as comprehensive measure of integrated TQM implementation to analyse Students’ perceptions Teachers’ were also provided questionnaires based on 6 factors or dimensions with 17 operating items, (with subclasses) of quality management as comprehensive measure of integrated TQM implementation. These factors are labeled as F₁.Top Management Commitment, F₂. Systems approach to Management, F₃.Employee involvement, F₄.Training, F₅.Team Work and F₆.Continuous Improvement.

ITQM MODEL

Source: A.Pal Pandi, U.S Rao and D.Jeyathilagar IJEA, Vol, 1, 2009, 17-30

FINDINGS

All parameters of Higher Education like Admission, Curriculum design, teaching, learning, learning resources, competent faculty, extra-curricular activities, placement to career management are taken into consideration for analyzing students' perceptions of both accredited and non-accredited colleges. Under students' perception, the correlation between their responses was found out to be 0.842. We conclude response of students for the same parameters are highly correlated, i.e., the responses are by and large same. The perceptions of teachers tested considering the parameters like their qualification, teaching experience, career up gradation, method of recruitment, participation in seminars & workshops, publications and finally their satisfaction towards teaching and management.

Statistical tools used to analyze the collected data to determine the mean score and S.D. of each factor, and then the factors were ranked. Higher the mean score, the greater is the importance of the factor. The ranking of the critical factors under student perception is shown in the table below:

Table 1. Ranking of Students' Perception

Factors	ACCREDITED			NON-ACCREDITED		
	MEAN	SD	RANK	MEAN	SD	RANK
F1	29.75	23.89	1	27.50	17.41	1
F2	14.50	14.82	5	13.75	10.90	4
F3	15.25	12.68	4	11.84	8.77	5
F4	13.60	11.53	6	11.20	11.48	6
F5	24.62	17.09	2	17.85	15.51	2
F6	20.70	23.27	3	17.20	21.70	3

According to Students' perception of both Accredited and Non Accredited colleges, F1-Top Management Commitment, F5-Training and F6-continuous improvement are considered as most important factors for achieving Integrated TQM practices. But there is a very little variation in the opinion of accredited college students 'perceptions on ranking of the factors F2-Systems approach to management as well on F 3-Customer satisfaction. For each factor, the t-test was conducted to test for variations in the average responses between accredited and non-accredited colleges under students' perception. The mean, S.D., the t-value its significance is given in the table below:

Table 2. Comparison of Teachers' perceptions regarding Six Critical Factors of ITQM

	ACCREDITED		NON-ACCREDITED		t-value	Sig. value
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD		
F1	29.75	23.89	27.50	17.41	0.152222	0.884002
F2	14.50	14.82	13.75	10.90	0.081519	0.937681
F3	15.25	12.68	11.84	8.77	1.25	0.215997
F4	13.60	11.53	11.20	11.48	0.466511	0.646446
F5	24.62	17.09	17.85	15.51	1.057443	0.300837
F6	20.70	23.27	17.20	21.70	0.347848	0.731989

The results of the t-test, given in table 2 reveal that all six factors at 5% level of significance are not significant. As the six critical factors, Top management commitment, Systems approach to management, Training, Employee Involvement, Customer satisfaction and Continuous improvement are reflecting their values more than.05 in sig value column. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. So Hypothesis H1 is accepted.

Table 3: Perception of Students regarding Six Critical Factors of ITQM

Critical Factors	Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F-ratio	Significance	INFERENCE
F1	BG	2527.375	3	842.4583	32.24721	0.002917	*
	WG	104.5	4	26.125			
	TOTAL	2631.875	7				
F2	BG	972.375	3	324.125	29.13483	0.003538	*
	WG	44.5	4	11.125			
	TOTAL	1016.875	7				
F3	BG	6565.359	31	211.7858	6.869889	2.27E-07	*
	WG	986.5	32	30.82813			
	TOTAL	7551.859	63				
F4	BG	2287.8	9	254.2	20.66667	2.54E-05	*
	WG	123	10	12.3			

	TOTAL	2410.8	19				
F5	BG	4919.615	12	409.9679	3.009364	0.029801	*
	WG	1771	13	136.2308			
	TOTAL	6690.615	25				
F6	BG	9045.45	9	1005.05	78.82745	4.26E-08	*
	WG	127.5	10	12.75			
	TOTAL	9172.95	19				

*BG: Between the Groups, WG: Within the Groups

The perceptions of students were tested within and between the groups using statistical tool one way ANOVA. F –Ratio is calculated to understand the mean differences between the groups and within the groups. $F = MS_B / MS_W$. Larger this ratio implies greater the variations in mean scores. From Table 3 it is seen that all the critical factors are significant at 0.05 levels. (2-tailed). If the significance value is less than 0.05 then null hypothesis is rejected. If it is less than 0.05 then is significant. So it is found that all the six critical factors play an important role in implementing ITQM practice with respect to accredited and non-accredited colleges under students' perception. So Hypothesis H3 is rejected. It is found in accredited colleges with respect to F3 –customer satisfaction values significantly differ from other factors. Accredited college students perceived facilities provided for them i.e., sports, NSS, Campus placement are better. In case of non-accredited colleges students perceived these facilities are not taken care by the management.

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION

Six Factors or dimensions with 17 main operating items, (with subclasses) of quality management were created, under teachers' perception, as a comprehensive measure of integrated TQM implementation. These factors are labeled as F₁. Top Management Commitment, F₂. Systems approach to Management, F₃. Employee involvement, F₄. Training, F₅. Team Work and F₆. Continuous Improvement Statistical tools analyzed the collected data to determine the mean score and S.D. of each factor, and then the factors were ranked. **Higher the mean score, the greater is the importance of the factor.** The ranking of the critical factors is shown in the table below.

Table 4: Ranking of Critical Factors under Teachers' perception

	Accredited			Non-Accredited		
	MEAN	SD	RANK	MEAN	SD	RANK
F1	12.77	11.12	4	8.68	8.11	4
F2	13.43	12.04	3	9.43	8.54	3
F3	29.35	36.34	1	11.52	9.86	2
F4	22.50	19.09	2	13.00	8.49	1
F5	9.80	8.14	5	6.75	7.63	5
F6	6.00	7.82	6	4.40	5.05	6

Under Teachers' perception F1-Employee Involvement, F4-Training and F2 –Systems approach to Management are considered as most important factors. For each factor, the t-test was conducted to test for variations in the average responses between accredited and non-accredited colleges under teachers' perception. The mean, S.D., the t-value and its significance are given in the table below:

Table 5: Comparison of Teachers' Perception regarding Six Critical Factors of ITQM

	Accredited		Non-Accredited		t-value	sig. value
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD		
F1	12.77	11.12	8.68	8.11	-1.39	0.171
F2	13.43	12.04	9.43	8.54	-0.72	0.487
F3	29.35	36.34	11.52	9.86	-2.17	0.0364*
F4	22.50	19.09	13.00	8.49	-0.64	0.586
F5	9.80	8.14	6.75	7.63	-0.57	0.584
F6	6.00	7.82	4.40	5.05	-0.64	0.526

* Significant at both 0.05 percent level and at 0.01 percent level

From Table 5, it is found that F3-Employee Involvement plays an important role in implementing Integrated TQM practice in institutions. Therefore hypothesis H2 is partially rejected with respect to F3. However, as there is no significant difference found among critical factors F1-Top Management Commitment, F2-systems approach to Management F4-Training, F5-team work and F6-continuous improvement. So hypothesis H2 is accepted with regard to these critical factors under Teachers' perceptions.

Table 6: Perception of Teachers' regarding Six Critical Factors of ITQM

Critical Factors	Sum of Variances	Sum of Squares	Degrees Of Freedom	Mean Squares	F-Ratio	SIG	INFERENCE
F1	BG	3634.727	21	173.0823	7.184546	1.07E-05	*
	WG	530	22	24.09091			
	TOTAL	4164.727	43				
F2	BG	1229.429	6	204.9048	10.70398	0.003143	*
	WG	134	7	19.14286			
	TOTAL	1363.429	13				
F3	BG	19774.39	21	941.6374	1.776446	0.094445	-
	WG	11661.5	22	530.0682			
	TOTAL	31435.89	43				
F4	BG	380.25	1	380.25	5.191126	0.150365	-
	WG	146.5	2	73.25			
	TOTAL	526.75	3				

F5	BG	409.4	4	102.35	4.45	0.066476*	
	WG	115	5	23			
	TOTAL	524.4	9				
F6	BG	935.2	14	66.8	5.505495	0.001114*	
	WG	182	15	12.13333			
	TOTAL	1117.2	29				

*BG: Between the Groups, *WG: Within the Groups

The perceptions of teachers were tested within and between the groups using the statistical tool one way ANOVA. Except F3-Employee Involvement and F4-Training, all the other factors differ significantly which affects implementation of ITQM for growth of the institution. It indicates a significant difference of perceptions found regarding subclasses of those factors like participation in seminars, workshops, publications, Management support and encouragement. When compared to non – accredited colleges' teachers' perception, teachers belonging to accredited college are having more contentment towards F1-Top Management Commitment, F2-Systems Approach to management F5-Team work, F6-Continuous Improvement. Hence Hypothesis H4 is rejected with regard to these critical factors.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is evident that most of the students are showing inclination towards joining undergraduate non-technical courses. Therefore onus lies with higher educational institutes to ensure holistic development in the student by dissemination of quality education. The present study aimed to observe the perceptions of Faculty, who are directly engaged in the process of transforming a student into industry sufficient as well the perceptions of students, who are prime stake holders in the higher education. Accreditation is a formal recognition by an authorized agency of an institution having achieved agreed standards. As perceived by the students of accredited and non-accredited colleges all six factors are given importance in implementing ITQM practices. But the result of ANOVA analysis(table 3) indicated the significant variance in the perceptions of accredited college students to non-accredited with respect to all six factors majorly Top management commitment, Training and Employee involvement. When compared with non-accredited college students' perceptions, F3 –Customer Satisfaction is significantly better in accredited colleges. This factor comprises of 8 sub items of various facilities provided by the management like, drinking water, canteen, toilets, infrastructure and campus placements. In the case of Teachers' perceptions, the result of one way ANOVA analysis elucidated that all the critical factors except F3-Employee Involvement and F4-training, all the other factors differ significantly. Accredited colleges' teachers professed are found with encouragement from management, ideal student teacher ratio, and with good interaction with management. Thus we can understand better TQM practices exist in accredited colleges when compared to non-accredited teachers' perceptions. As per the recommendations of Yashpal²⁰ Committee, accreditation must be made compulsory. It is observed accredited colleges are following systematic process for

continuous improvement of the institutions. The study revealed quality management practices are not followed by non –accredited colleges to the extent of students’ and teachers’ satisfaction. After examining the importance of six critical factors of ITQM, the study recommends implementation of these ITQM practices in all undergraduate non-professional colleges. It acts as panacea to supply skilled human resources.

Limitations of the study

This study is restricted to one geographical area of Telangana State especially to the affiliated colleges of Osmania University. The data is confined to the staff and students of self-financed and aided degree colleges of Hyderabad and Secunderabad cities. The study can be extended to Government Degree colleges and comparisons can be made between self-financed colleges to Government colleges.

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