

**CHALLENGES IN DELIVERING QUALITY SERVICES  
IN  
MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL LIBRARIES**

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# QUALITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN LIS: THE BASIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR ISO STANDARDS

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The education and training in the schools of library and information science (LIS) has become technology oriented since the recent past due to the application of information and communication technology in library services. Few decades back library users were asking for books, but now they demand the response to their queries on specific topic should be precise, relevant and up-to-date. Library professionals are feeling the pressure of users' demands while providing comprehensive, relevant and current information at the minimum loss of time. On one hand they have to overcome the barriers of overabundance and scatter of literature, and on the other, they have to take note of shrinking budgetary provisions. Every year there is going to be escalation of subscription prices of journals/books and conversion of the foreign exchange rates. To offset these constraints and to increase the effectiveness of information services, libraries have started relying upon information technology to a great extent.

The use of information and communication technology necessitates heavy investment on establishment and maintenance. The users demand expeditious retrieval of information and constant updating of technology. Therefore, day-by-day the customer needs are becoming more and more stringent, and on account of this, there is felt need to rely upon standards for maintenance. The standards provide

- systematic steps for maintenance of gadgets and operations
- procedures for maintenance of quality in education and services
- strategy for constant evaluation of performance of teaching and training
- guidelines for improving competency of the staff through training and updating skills

- opportunity for the evaluation of the customer satisfaction (i.e. students' satisfaction)
- opportunity for the continual improvement in the system's overall performance.

Application of "ISO 9000 standards" is suggested for "quality management system" in library of information science schools. ISO 9000 is a series of generic standards for building, operating and documenting quality management system. The mission of ISO is to provide international standardization to facilitate worldwide exchange of goods and services. While serving in the competitive world there is need to implement quality management that delivers an edge in productivity and performance. This will ultimately create satisfaction in the minds of the customers, which is very much expected of the modern library services.

The concept of improvement in performance has gained momentum on account of the Japanese techniques of: "Kaizen Approach", which aims at day-to-day improvement in the organization. Whatever may be the situation today, there should be commitment, cooperation, and contribution from every staff for improvement of the system, let it be to a slight extent, ex: erecting a panel of painting on the wall, placing a flower pot at the right place. Teamwork and leadership both are required and emphasized here for sustenance of quality education. By quality they mean the totality of characteristics and features of a product or service that bears its ability to satisfy the stated or implied needs of the customers.

## 2. WHY QUALITY IN LIS EDUCATION

The demands of the students of LIS are becoming more and more stringent on account of mechanized information processing and retrieval. Because when these students are employed in libraries they will be expected to install, maintain and improve the IT based services. More than anything, the faculty of the LIS schools have to be systematic in their training approach and meet the needs of their students convincingly. Therefore, the following are the main purposes of going for quality management system.

- to provide confidence to the management regarding quality being achieved and sustained.
- to provide confidence to the students that the intended quality is being achieved in imparting education and training

- to achieve and sustain quality of education to meet continually the stated or implied needs of students.

Apart from the above three needs, the faculty will be subjected to regular updating and evaluation of competency. The faculty will be get international recognition as they are trained in adopting and monitoring quality techniques. Some of the important advantages of going for ISO are indicated below.

- Waste disappears from the system
- Products/services works better and last longer
- Eliminates the process of assessment by the external agencies/corporate bodies (customers)
- People love their jobs and their organization as well
- Helps to identify and clearly study the weaknesses of the system and inefficiency of the staff

While applying the standard, the organization's policy and objective statements must be clearly defined, free from discrepancy. It is the policy and objectives that make every faculty of LIS to determine the steps to be initiated for achieving quality in education and ultimately the satisfaction of the students. By going for ISO procedures or in the process of ISO movement, the LIS schools become more and more:

- Technology oriented
- Student oriented
- Revenue oriented, and
- Faculty orientated

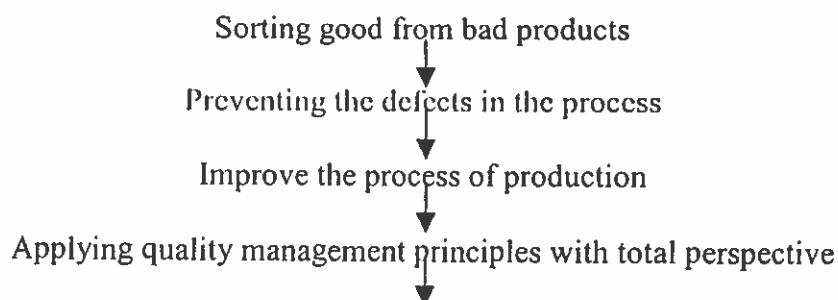
Once the procedures are determined by compiling quality manual and operating manual, the system becomes convinced of the elimination of the following five undesirable elements in the system. In industrial sphere, they are commonly known as "5 R"s.

- Rejects;
- Reworks;
- Recalls;
- Returns; and
- Regrets

While revising the course curriculum or designing the syllabi, attention is very much required to the response of the students and practicing heads of the libraries. Due importance should be given to the views and opinions of the subject experts drawn from the field of information technologies, computer science and service providers from the field of database management and electronic products/services. The quality management system necessitates the need for application of certain principles. There are sets of eight principles, which need to be adopted for achieving quality in performance. They are

- Student focused organization
- Development of leadership qualities
- Involvement of the staff
- Process approach
- Systems improvement
- Continual improvement
- Factual approach to decision making
- Mutually beneficial supplier relationship/relationship with service providers.

The adoption of quality management techniques and attempts to improve the performance in production and product quality/service quality can be seen in the earlier days as well. Industries were seen to have applied certain crude methods to improve their performance.



### 3. ANNOUNCING QUALITY ASSURANCE

The contention of every industry/ service organization is to have consistent improved performance in the quality of service or product. LIS schools offering education with predominant IT course contents are not an exception.

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ISO 9000 series of standards were designed and issued by the International Organization for standardization situated in Geneva In 1987 and subjected to major revisions in the years 1994 and 2000. There are differences between these two revisions on improvements.

SI No	1994 Version	SI No	2000 Version
1	Emphasis on Procedures	1	Emphasis on customer satisfaction
2	Biased towards industries	2	Service aspects included
3	190 cases of redundancy	3	Said to be more precise
4	Rule based	4	Result oriented
5	Procedural approach	5	Process approach
6	Less about training of personnel	6	Emphasis on training and improving competency

The level of quality cannot be determined by the implementation of ISO 9000 or other quality system, when compared to other similar organization. For instance, Hyundai, Cello, Opel Astra, Muruti are certified companies for quality assurance and management but the level of quality of products varies from one another. Here, it is certain that they have maintained minimum level of performance/quality and there is consistency and uniformity in the quality of products/services delivered.

There are quite a number of quality systems or quality control techniques that can be adapted to the organization as a whole or any sub system of the organization. A section or department of LIS school can go for certification. IT is also suggested to achieve quality part by part when the organization is too big to manage and control. Some of the popular quality control techniques are.

- Six Sigma
- CE-Mark (Hygiene and safety)
- Bench Marking
- CMM Technique (capability Measuring Models)
- Statistical quality Control (SQC)

Authority and responsibility will have to be clearly fixed in the ISO procedures. Each staff has his own duties and responsibilities to be discharged in a specific way, which will be evaluated through customer feed back. Otherwise, everyone thinks that anyone can do the job. In fact, it may be an easy, simple job that anyone can do it. Ultimately, no one does it. Therefore, there is authority and responsibility in the ISO procedures.

The quality performance assessors are concerned with verification for conformances. In the course of seeking conformances, they may come across non-conformances, and appropriate measures need to be applied for the prevention of defects or applying corrective measures.

Quality audit is not a fault-finding mission; rather it is a fact-finding exercise to identify demerits of the system and its procedures in extending services. Auditing a quality system is like holding a dove in the hand. Squeeze it too much, it is likely to die; hold it loosely; it is likely to fly away. (Bhat, 2001) Auditors are usually trained for positive attitude, positive approach- they appraise conformities and give credit to the system supervisors and the employees. Non-conformances are classified, into three categories- Critical, Major and Minor.

Those lapses which might cause injury, and where there is risk to the life of an individual staff or customer, they are noted as *critical non-conformances*.

Those non-conformances that affect objectives to a great extent are classified as *major ones* Ex: Lapse in coverage of the potions, absence of Internet facility, lack of classification schedules for practice.

The *minor ones* are usually lack of systematic arrangement of books in the library, lapse in conducting user orientation lectures for students, lack of fans in the reading room, improper filing of newspapers.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Adopting the standards for quality management helps the schools of LIS to identify weakness in the education system and study the reasons analytically. Further, the Quality Management System gives confidence to the students, as well as, faculty that there is quality in rendering education and training. The fixing of duties and responsibilities eliminates anxiety from the individual faculty or management whether or

not the part work will be attended to. Above all, there will be continuous feedback from the students, which helps the management to set the things in right order applying corrective and preventive actions.

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