

Scripting on a Clean Board rather than Deskillling Adults:

A sustainable approach for TQM promotion

*“Karmande-badhikaraste ma falesu kadachana
Ma karma-fal-hetur-bhuma te sango-astwo-karmani”¹*

1. One of the common languages of the Total Quality Management [TQM] is very much in line to this *shlok* from the *Geeta*: “Give emphasis on the process, continuously improve it, and don’t worry about the result; the result is bound to come.” Obviously, improving the process continuously will not only satisfy or delight, but will even astonish the customers with surprising results. It will generate the “WOW” effect. And, this is the most important Mantra of building a “Win-Win” Situation in the society we live in.²

TQM: Is it a foreign Subject?

2. The pursuit of TQM and quality management implementation and consolidation in Nepal has been rather frustrating, and TQM professionals here are beginning to think that TQM is a foreign subject which cannot be harvested in this country. I have read about such difficulties experienced in almost all countries. How can Nepal be any different?
3. The importance of TQM and Quality Circle and their benefits in productivity enhancement and improving competitiveness has been known in Nepal since the last two decades. The Ministry of Industry and the National Productivity and Economic Development Center (NPEDC), a focal point of the Asian Productivity Center, Japan, has been promoting this concept in various industries in the public and private sectors through training and consultancy services. A number of Nepalese entrepreneurs, professionals, academicians, some supervisors and work leaders have developed awareness about productivity, quality management system and total quality management. But, there are hardly any organizations actually implementing TQM on a continuous basis. The term TQM itself has become a favorite word of many consultants and trainers. The question is, why is TQM not being effectively applied in Nepalese organizations in spite of its awareness among concerned stakeholders?
4. I put this question obliquely to two famous Deming Prize winners, Dr. Hitoshi Kume³ and Dr. Noriaki Kano⁴. They are recognized as the left and right hands of Prof. K. Ishikawa, father of Quality Control Circles and TQM in Japan. The reply of both these Japanese champions of TQM was the same – TQM is a universal concept, and it is feasible in all countries in all types of organizations, both manufacturing, service and even in government. They said that TQM was definitely made and tested in Japan

¹ A Sanskrit slok from the famous epic Geeta. It says” *Proceed rightly on your work, you have no control on the result; so, never care for results, and never stop from working.*”

² *Astonish Customers Always by Understanding the Time Value of Quality [TVQ] Concept*; a paper presented by the author at the 3rd International Convention on Quality Control Circles, 26-28 July 2000, Mauritius

³ I got an opportunity to meet Dr. Kume at Tokyo in July 1996 during the Executive Seminar on Total Quality Management organized by the AOTS, Japan. Dr. Kume has written several books along with the famous book titled “*Management by Quality*”, 1995

⁴ I met Dr. Kano at Kathmandu, Nepal in September 1998 during his lecturing tour on Total Quality Management organized by the AOTS Japan and Nepal AOTS Alumni Society. He is widely recognized for the development of Kano’s methodology in TQM and the book titled “*TQM in Service Industries*” edited by him.

with overwhelming success, but it has been successfully adopted by many developing and developed countries.

5. My endeavor at implementing TQM in Nepal found little success. The reason was the lack of continuity. Continuity is the apparent key to the success of TQM. I discussed this matter with some TQM champions of this region too, as they have more or less the same culture and values as we have. I learnt from Mr. Sunil G. Wijesinha⁵ of Sri Lanka and Mr. AMM Khairul Basar⁶ of Bangladesh that successful implementation of TQM depends on macro-environmental factors such as economic growth, the socio-cultural values and beliefs of entrepreneurs, attitudes of trade unions, government commitments, etc. And, TQM and productivity movement need more time in our part of the world.
6. Then, three years ago, I got a chance to meet the American quality management champion Mr. Donald L. Dewar⁷ at Lucknow, India. Revealing the teething problems he faced while implementing quality circles at Lockheed and other industries in USA, he said that TQM looks like a universal phenomena, but a lot of training and education was necessary, especially for entrepreneurs or managers. It is an arduous process, but when the entrepreneurs realize its importance, it will immediately begin to show results. For this, unstinting top management commitment is a prime necessity.

TQM in Nepal: A Continuity Problem

7. I had an opportunity to present the Nepal experience⁸ and the difficulties faced in implementing a sustainable TQM system during a regional seminar on Japanese Style Management at Colombo, Sri Lanka three years back. Those cases were highly regarded and endorsed by the participants agreeing Sri Lanka too had similar experience. In fact, I learnt that the cases reflected similar situations in most countries, and that I need not feel so frustrated after all. There, one of the senior resource persons assured me saying that it was rather difficult to deskill adults; and so it may take some time, but success will be achieved in the long run. That made me quite happy then.
8. Two typical cases are highlighted here, which may shed light on the problems of TQM implementation in Nepal. The obvious reason for the problems expressed in the case is nothing but the thinking and preference profiles of individuals whose foundations lie in their psychosocial and cultural backgrounds. It is of no use talking only about the technical aspects of TQM and quality circles if we cannot improve these individual traits.

⁵ I have regular meetings with Mr. Wijesinha in various regional and international quality seminars. Mr. Wijesinha, CEO of Merchant Bank of Ceylon is a pioneer and successful promoter of productivity in Srilanka. He is also the recipient of the famous APO productivity award.

⁶ I have regular contacts with Mr. Bashar, General Secretary of Bangladesh Society of Total Quality Management, who is a promoter of TQM in Bangladesh and has written books on Quality circles and 5-S in Bengali language for Bangladeshi people.

⁷ Mr. Dewar, President of QCI International, USA is the one who implemented Quality Control Circles successfully in USA for the first time in 1973 at the famous Lockheed Company where he was working as industrial engineer. His contributions to the quality worlds are many. He is president of the internationally renowned monthly magazine of "Quality Digest", USA.

⁸ The paper "Application of Japanese Management in Nepalese Industries" presented at the Regional Convention on Japanese Style Management organized by the Japan Sri Lanka Technical & Cultural Association (JASTECA) at Colombo in 1999 by the author covers 5 cases of problems faced by him while implementing TQM in Nepal.

Case A: A scared manager not accepting creativity

A progressive entrepreneur wanted to implement TQM to improve quality and productivity in his noodle factory at Pokhara, 200 km west of Kathmandu. He believed that with his interpersonal relationship with the workers he could achieve what the Japanese people did. He even allowed an extraordinarily decorated boardroom to be used by the workers for quality circle meetings. He openly professed his readiness to extend all support needed for promoting workers education in lieu of developing productivity and quality. The production manager in the factory was a self-taught hard working technician who was appointed to lead the quality circle programs. Despite the positive attitude of the workers to learn and work toward improving the quality in the factory, the quality circle program did not succeed. The problem was that the manager was scared to share the new knowledge with his subordinates and his self-ego prevented him to accept the creative ideas coming from workers. Despite tangible benefits like lowering of wastages from 4.8% to 1.5% within six months, the QC program did not get continuity.

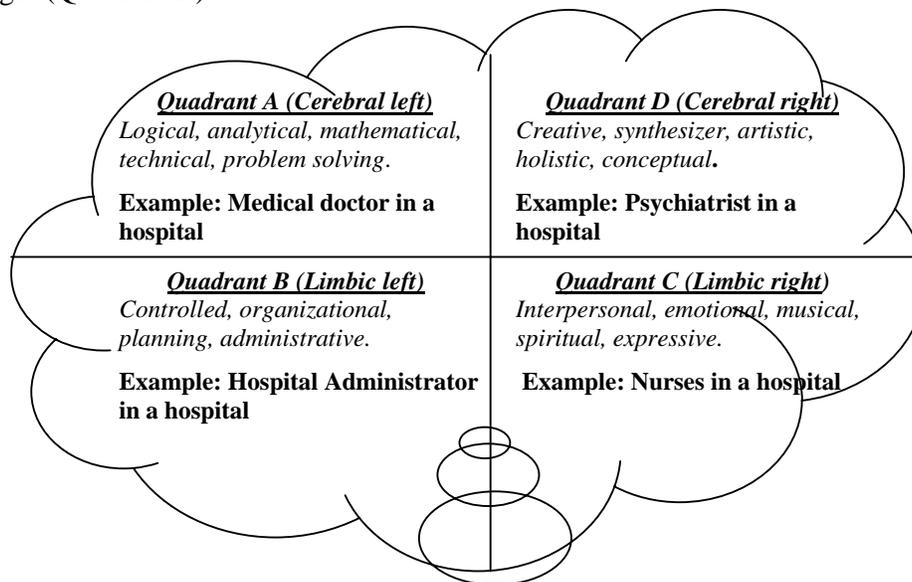
Case B: CEO needs only ISO Certification

One very successful entrepreneur with a tremendous record of business growth wanted to introduce Quality Management System in his steel mill at Biratnagar, 500 Km south east of Kathmandu. He built a conference room inside the factory with excellent furniture and logistics. All he wanted was only an ISO-9000 certificate. The production manager here was quite cooperative. He was quick to understand the strength of quality circles and participation of employees in establishing standards and norms, and preparing documents. The manager even took several classes to train the workers. Workers participated in teams to identify norms and even tried to improve processes. However, this program did not get the continuity that was necessary. The objective of the management was to only get ISO certification but not the creative collaboration of workers for improving the process.

9. Although quality circle program in Nepal started around the 1980s, they have not been able to really take off due to the problem of continuity. An observation of various enterprises that implemented the program revealed that application was not done whole-heartedly by the owners or the top managers, but only by the initiatives of some energetic managers or external experts. Something, therefore, is missing that is hindering the success of this universal concept in Nepal. What are missing are the zeal for continuous improvement, the approach of collaborative action, and the passion for systematic problem solving. At this juncture, it becomes necessary to understand the traits, thinking processes and preferences of individual stakeholders. Stakeholders, here, includes employers/managers, workers/staffs, and customers/communities. So, in a country like Nepal, instead of trying to convince entrepreneurs to implement TQM simply by narrating its virtues and successes in countries like Japan, USA, and Singapore, the whole approach to TQM has to be reengineered to a different mode. We have to reach out to the roots, start by nurturing the individual traits towards the psychological profiles that are suitable for TQM.

TQM: A Psychosocial Substance

10. The big question is WHY it was easier to develop and implement TQM in Japan? How did the 1954 JUSE seminar motivate scientists and engineers to develop the foundation of TQM? The answer to this is getting quite clear now. If we look at the context of the time, the World War II had clean-slatted the brains of the Japanese industrialists and bureaucrats operating during that period. Everything was devastated – the infrastructure and the peoples’ psyche – and everybody had to start from scratch. While Americans induced some insights to rebuilding the nation, Japanese quality gurus started writing scripts on the clean slates of Japanese people regarding new methods of group dynamics and continuous problem solving for improving the quality of life. Thus, TQM is more of a psychosocial substance. It should not be seen merely in the context of some simple technical tools, but more as a study of human behavior. Here, an attempt is made to explore what lies behind TQM and the making of total quality people – people who can make the world a place worth living in.
11. To understand the human psychosocial traits, many writers have postulated a number of theories. It is worth noting here Herrmann’s four-quadrant brain model.⁹ The research carried out by Roger Sperry¹⁰ and others in the 1960s have revealed the dual function of the brain. The left hemisphere of the brain, which controls the right side of the body, appears to have the function of logical, analytical, sequential and rational thinking, whereas, the right hemisphere tends to perceive the world and people in a global mode, i.e., instantaneous initiative, visual, synthesizing, emotional and expressive. Recently, a new dimension has been added to this famous brain theory by Ned Herrmann who differentiated the left and right brain into four clear quadrants: upper left (Quadrant A) lower left (Quadrant B), lower right (Quadrant C) and upper right (Quadrant D).



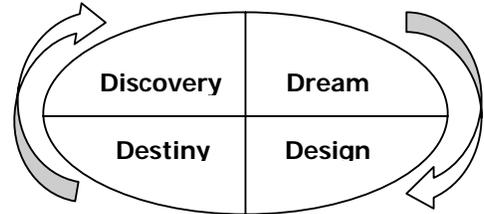
12. Studies have revealed that 7% of the people have single dominant, 60% have double dominant, 30 % have triple dominant and only 3% have quadruple dominant profiles.

⁹ Ned Herrmann’s “*Whole Brain Business Book*” published by McGraw Hill, NY, 1996. He has also developed Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument [HBDI] that permits one to become aware of his thinking preferences in order to use them better in one’s personal and professional life.

¹⁰ Referred in the handouts in the “*Symposium on Innovative Human Resources Management Practices: Thinking and Innovating through the Whole Brain Model*” 22 – 24 August 2001, organized by APO and TPI, Bangkok.

Every individual possess some dominance profiles. There is nothing like good or bad in individuals having any of these profiles. Understanding TQM philosophy and utilizing its techniques and tools need people with quadruple dominant profiles, preferably ones preferring Quadrant A and Quadrant B, and using Quadrant C and Quadrant D.

13. TQM puts emphasis on people to be more process- oriented. David Cooperrider's Appreciative Inquiry (AI) theory, in essence, contends that the fact of an organization is not a problem to be solved, but "*a miracle to be embraced.*"¹¹ It postulates the 4D cycle (Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny Cycle) for organization development (OD).



AI emphasizes on entrepreneurs to be persons who can dream, have wide vision, and ones with the capability to envisage the future and its environment. TQM, as such, does not disagree with this. Its only contention is that far out dreams may be harmful. Taking a step-by-step problem solving approach at the process level is better. It subscribes to the *slow and steady wins the race* philosophy. It assumes that creatively solving problems continuously with an eye on customers' expectations, and applying the PDCA¹² (Plan, Do, Check and Act) cycle helps them to be competitive.

14. However, TQM needs people in the organization with appropriate values that make them recognize the important of being
- Customer (process) oriented not only profit (result) oriented
 - Collaborative (unidirectional cooperation) not only participative (democratic exercise)
 - Problem solvers (continuous improvement) not only dreaming (innovation)
15. This requires an overall orientation of managers, supervisors and workers towards understanding the customers and their needs, and solving problems continuously in a collaborative way to improve the process. Such orientation depends on the values, beliefs and traits of each individual within whose minds these psychosocial scripts are written right from their early childhood – at home, at school and, later, at their working place. According to Stephen Covey, individual behaviors are reflected as per the script written earlier.¹³

Scripting TQM Values in Human Brain

16. Human behavior theorists are on a continuous search for better ways of motivating people for organizational development. The psychologists are trying to enhance their understanding of individual traits to develop different approaches of deskillling adults through experimental learning. These methods are widely used for changing the behavior and attitude of the working people for effective implementation of TQM. TQM is actually a working culture rather than a management system, and it has to be infused in an organization for creating conducive environment for enhancing performance. Deskillling adults proved to be an arduous and time-consuming process.

¹¹ David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastava, "Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life," in R.W. Woodman and W. A. Pasmore, eds., *Research In Organizational Change and Development*, Vol. 1, Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1987.

¹² Dr. W. Edwards Deming's "*Out of the Crisis*", MIT Centre for Advanced Engineering Study, Cambridge, MA, 1986 is a very important book for understanding this W. Shewhart or Deming Cycle.

¹³ Stephen R. Covey, "*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*", Simon & Schuster Ltd., UK, 1992.

17. It is very difficult to change or re-script as time passes, or at later stages of life. The question, therefore, arises whether the individual traits come by nature or they are nurtured. The answer to this is that some traits come naturally, while many are nurtured. Parents at home do the nurturing or re-scripting of a newborn child; for a school going child, teachers at the school do this; and, the boss largely contributes to this as far as his subordinate is concerned.
18. Thus, scripting on a clean board is rather easier and an effective approach than deskilling the skills that one has acquired by his/her experience. However, we cannot wait for some nightmares like that Japan went through to clean slate our brain to gain from the virtues of TQM in our countries. Furthermore, with the strong assaults of globalization on our developing economies, we cannot afford longer time to deskill our workers and entrepreneurs to implement TQM in a sustainable manner in our places.
19. An alternative approach is to start much earlier – targeting the children, i.e., attuning the behaviour of children so that they have positive inclination toward development through creatively and continuously solve problems for improvement. The brain-slate of a child is always clean, and therefore readily accepts any script on it. To bring about positive changes in the behaviour of a person, one has to infuse reinforcements at his earlier age. This is a universal fact. That is why educational curricula are carefully developed to teach ethical and cultural norms and inculcate progressive value system in life. Today's school and going children and university students will be tomorrow's managers, workers, entrepreneurs or leaders. When the attitude and behaviour of the student is molded in a manner that empowers him to identify the challenges (problems) of the world, analyze them with facts of life and solve them thoroughly by collaborating with other fellow friends for continuous improvement, then implementing TQM will not be very difficult.

Total Quality People for Total Quality Management

20. Swami Vivekananda has once referred to educational institutes as man making organizations. Educational institutes have the responsibility of producing Total Quality People (TQP) – persons who can develop their latent capabilities, productive skills and who can coordinate their expression for the enrichment and progress of society. This is the saying of Mr. Jagadish Gandhi¹⁴, a visionary man who started a campaign of Students Quality Circle to make Total Quality People for the future. While exploring the attributes of Japan's progress during his visit to that country in 1992, Mr. Gandhi identified Quality Circles and TQM as the main contributors to the country's success. He reasoned that if this management philosophy could work in the shop floors of Japan why couldn't it work in the school grounds. After returning to India, with his very qualified and dedicated lieutenants, Dr. Vineeta Kamran and Mr. Prakash Bihari, he initiated the Students Quality Circle (SQC) in City Montessori School, Lucknow, India. Making tiny students exercise *Quality Control Circles in a Classroom* was a remarkable and historic job. As these students are going to be our future managers and workers, one can imagine the positive effects the Students Quality Circle (SQC) can have.

¹⁴ Mr. Gandhi is the Founder Manager of City Montessori School, Lucknow, India, a school with 23,000 students. This school with the maximum number of students in a single city has the distinction of figuring in the Guinness book of world record.

21. Quality people are those with commitment, positive outlook, leadership abilities and the desire to excel. The quality people are not created by chance, but a constant and conscious effort is needed to groom them. They have to be trained right from the beginning with quality consciousness as their second nature. Our academic institutions and schools have to adopt innovative ideas to respond to changing times. Their responsibility lies not only in imparting formal education but also in shaping the attitudes and personalities of their pupils. In institutions like these, empowerment programs like quality circles have tremendous potential in molding children into total quality people, total quality citizens and total human beings.
22. Forming Students Quality Circle (SQC) at schools, colleges and university will help to realize these objectives. On the similar principles of Quality Circles in industries, the SQC is a small group of voluntary students of the same school that meets regularly one hour a week to carry out problem solving activities for self-development and mutual development. In the process, the students of SQC improve their personality and communication skills and develop a sense of social responsibility and global outlook. Students Quality Circle program, introduced as an integral part of TQM in schools and universities, will help to reorient the psycho-social traits of students who as future leaders and managers can promote TQM culture in their respective organizations to develop win-win playing fields.
23. The definition of Students Quality Circle (SQC) in line with the Quality Control Circle (QCC) of TQM would be:
 - a small group of voluntary students of the same school
 - who meets regularly one hour a week
 - to identify analyze and solve their problems
 - for their self development and mutual development
 - for improving personality and communication skills
 - developing a sense of social responsibility and global out look.
24. CMS School at Lucknow, India is probably the first school in the world that experimented with this approach. There, I found the solution to the problem I was long facing – the difficulty in implementing TQM in industries in a sustainable manner. SQC, the Students Quality Circle (not to be confused with Statistical Quality Control) is an ideal approach to script the minds of students with the idea of solving problems in a collaborative manner right from the young age.
25. The principles of SQC can be expressed as 10Cs:
 - making a *Complete person*,
 - having *Creativity, Commitment and Communication skills*;
 - developing *Cooperation, Coordination and Collaboration among peers*;
 - striving always for *Continuous improvement*
 - by adopting *Circle activities* and
 - systematically solving *Common problems*.

These principles, if introduced in the young brains of the children during their student life, their activities in the future will be directed towards continuous improvement, which is the Mantra of TQM.

Students Quality Circle (SQC) in Nepal

26. I am witnessing the growth of SQC in Nepal since I first introduced this concept in 1999. Tiny students have solved many interesting problems, which were very difficult

for the teachers to even identify. The school principals are now taking interest in this noble methodology of child development. Thanks to the World Council for Total Quality and Excellence in Education, which has been organizing annual conventions since 1997.

27. Himalaya Vidya Mandir¹⁵ in Siphel, Kathmandu is the first educational institute in Nepal that tried this new concept of SQC. In 1999, they formed one circle with six students with an average age of 14 years from classes VIII and IX. They practiced circle activities during the school time. This circle bagged a special award in the 2nd International Convention on Student Quality Circle (2nd ICSQCC) held in December 1999 in India. Under the name “AUM”, they presented a case titled “Towards Maintaining Discipline Among Students”¹⁶ in which they identified the following benefits after involving in Student Quality Circle activities. They
- learnt to tackle a problem systematically
 - developed consciousness about wearing school uniform properly
 - learnt to prioritise to identify the best from the rest
 - developed the capacity to think creatively
 - developed consciousness towards quality
 - learnt to be more specific
 - undertook more interest in the systems in school
 - learnt to manage time through action plan
 - improved school environment
 - developed unity among SQC members by respecting other’s views
 - developed power of expression
 - understood that group work can produce synergy effect in solving problems.
28. Whereas, the first time two principals, two teachers and six students participated in the 2nd International Convention on SQC (1999) held in India, eleven principals/directors/ conveners of schools from the eastern region of Nepal participated in the 3rd International Convention on SQC held at Mauritius in 2000. It was quite encouraging to note that in the 4th International Convention on SQC held in Lucknow (2001) 15 schools with 84 principals/teachers and students actively participated. They bagged several awards, too. The interest is growing and in the 5th International Convention on SQC held recently in July 2002 in Kentucky, USA eleven principals and directors and one student participated.
29. A National Forum for Students Quality Circle is already established in Nepal with Mr. Keshab R. Nepali¹⁷ as convener and principals from different schools as executive members. The major objective of this forum is to train facilitators, promote the concept of SQC, organize national conventions, etc. The SQC is active in many schools at the Eastern part of the country. At present, the schools from cities like Kathmandu, Dharan, Biratnagar, Urlabari, Itahari are practicing the Students Quality Circle. Much more effort is still necessary to place the concept of SQC within the mainstream of education system in the country.
30. The efforts of those principals who are keen on developing Total Quality People really need to be appreciated. This will definitely set a platform for the future to

¹⁵ Ms. Savitri Singh, the founder principal was very interested in grasping the opportunity to introduce this very new concept of SQC in Nepal for the first time.

¹⁶ The quality circle case presented at the 2nd International Convention on Students Quality Control Circle, 15-18 December 1999, CMS Lucknow, India.

¹⁷ Mr. Keshab R. Nepali is Director of Studies at Vijayapur School at Dharan, Nepal

implement TQM and to gain the competitive edge in any business in the future, and for the development of our people, our country and the whole world.

Proposal for Humble Initiation

31. Here, I like to propose that **scripting on a clean board rather than deskilling adults is a correct approach** of implementing TQM for countries like ours that are late starters of TQM. And, **Students Quality Circle is an initiating strategy**.