

## **Total Quality Management Initiative of Barkatullah University**

*A spontaneous step towards New National Education Policy*

After one year of efforts, the launching of total quality management system (TQMS) program of Barkatullah University (BU) by the Hon Education Minister of MP, Dr Mohan Yadav on 11<sup>th</sup> September along with the New Education Policy Consultation event has been a positive coincidence towards the efforts for quality education as envisaged in the Education Policy. The Policy envisions that “Given the 21st century requirements, quality higher education must aim to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals. A quality higher education must enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to the society. It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence”.

Whereas education is considered as the most powerful weapon to change the world (Nelson Mandela), a ‘Quality Education’ grants us the ability to fight war on ignorance and poverty (Charles Rangel). Ensuring quality higher education is one of the most important things for future generation (Ron Lewis). Bill Gates considers quality education as a tool for advancement: “Thanks to quality education, Israel is one of the most advanced countries in the world. Israel is advancing in high-tech even more than other developed countries”.

The TQM initiative of BU is the first of its kind enterprise in Higher Education. After series of brain storming sessions and technical discussions, BU management took the decision of adopting TQM methodology to develop a system for continual improvement at all levels. Established in 1970, BU is a non-profit public higher-education institution located in the urban setting of the metropolis of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Officially recognized by the University Grants Commission of India, BU is a very large (uniRank enrolment range: over-45,000 students) coeducational Indian higher education institution. BU offers courses and programs leading to officially recognized higher education degrees such as bachelor degrees, master degrees, doctorate degrees in several areas of study.

BU affiliates the colleges of Bhopal district and other neighbouring districts, viz Sehore, Vidisha, Raisen, Betul, Hoshangabad, Harda and Rajgarh. BU has been accredited as a B category / Grade university by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (as on 02/11/2018 and valid upto 30-04-20). As per the uniRank 2020 Indian University Ranking of 884 Indian higher education institutions, the country rank of BU is 325; and the world rank is 7780. As per the EduRank, these rankings are 341 and 9095 respectively. BU ranks 6<sup>th</sup> among 15 Universities / Institutions in Bhopal. The NAAC CGPA is 2.5, and the overall rating is 2.9 (Shiksha).

The goal of the TQMS project of BU is to establish a self-sustainable system in Barkatullah University to create a space for quality in all functions. The objectives of this project include Establishment of basic quality framework;

Preparation of quality charter; Processing mapping and reviewing audits; Analyzing the expectations of all the stakeholders. Total quality management is a management system that involves all employees in continual improvement of all aspects of the organization. TQM uses strategy, data, and effective communication to integrate the quality principles into the culture and activities of the organization. The key concepts of TQM include Structured system for exceeding customer expectations; System that empowers employees; Continual improvement; Management centered approach on improving quality. The envisaged outcomes of TQM project embrace Improved competitive position; Increased adaptability to change; Elevated productivity; Eliminated defects; Reduced waste; Improved management communication.

The journey of TQMS in BU is going to be tough and will be confronted with many challenges. The BU Vice Chancellor has *suo moto* taken this initiative to improve the delivery and performance of the alma mater, with the ultimate target to improve the NAAC ranking and branding of the University globally. He deserves appreciation but is facing challenge of little support and much resistance from his team, as most concerned prefer status quo. There are two distinct streams in the governance of BU administration, the Chancellor's office through the Raj Bhawan and the State Government Higher Education Department through Registrar. The VC is answerable to Raj Bhawan Secretariat and Registrar is answerable to Higher Education Secretariat. This conflict of dichotomy gets reflected in the University administration. Because of administrative inexperience, VC is mostly dominated and guided by Registrar office, and is unable to take his own decision in case of any dissent. Even the decisions of the EC, the highest body of the University, can strangely be challenged by the Registrar office. Most faculty members have discord of inadequate support from VC office. For the success of the TQMS, the participation and coordination of all stakeholders is necessary. The BU TQMS project is being implemented through MPCON, the premier professionally managed Technical Consultancy Organization of State Government.

The TQMS project of BU can serve as a great breakthrough and can pave a path for the other Universities to adopt and replicate the model for the implementation of the quality higher education as envisaged in the New National Education Policy.

(A K Bhattacharya)