

AN INNOVATIVE EXPERIMENT IN QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Dr. Shirish Limaye, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Accountancy, Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce, Pune. E-mail id : dr.limayeshirish@gmail.com

Abstract

This research paper is based on an experiment in quality management. Here, the researcher has shared his personal experiences in enhancing the quality of organising seminars in the Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce, Pune, where the researcher has been working as a lecturer since last 33 years. As a teacher in-charge, the researcher was actively involved in organising of different seminars for students. The researcher has closely studied the usual activities required to be conducted for seminar organisation. He has tried to experiment and develop certain systems for simplification of organisation of seminars. This research paper is focused on testing the hypothesis, "It is believed that in organising students' seminar internally by an educational institution, creatively and innovatively developed systems for make the work of registration and certificate distribution easy." Findings of this research will help in more than one ways to all the teacher-in-charges of different colleges who are actively involved in organising of seminars. As the old adage says, "A stitch in time saves nine." Besides taking right action at right time in organising of seminars, this research will also help them in maintaining quality of performance of organisation of activities before, during and after the seminar is conducted. This research is a value addition in quality assurance that has become an integral part of organising programmes in colleges. It also includes an opinion survey on the research findings. (232 words)

Key words : seminar, college, students, quality assurance, quality management, TQM

INTRODUCTION

The organisation of educational seminars and conferences, by an educational institution, is a routine co-curricular activity. This organisation involves a lot of planning, organising, coordinating and controlling. Many people are involved in the process of such organisation. Generally when a seminar or conference is planned, the work is assigned to the Seminar Coordinator. Under his leadership, different committees are formed and work is distributed among the staff members. Each committee has a head to look after the activities of that committee. The committee meets frequently to complete the task assigned to it. Similarly, the heads of these associations also meet occasionally for getting a feedback on the work of

committees. The Seminar Controller or Coordinator gives directions how the things are to be done.

PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

- 1) To predict and foresee the different tasks involved in the registration and certificate distribution activities of seminar organisation
- 2) To develop creative system and procedures for simplification of the work involved in registration and certificate distribution.
- 3) To minimise the requirement of manpower in registration and certificate distribution activities

HYPOTHESIS

This research is focused towards testing the hypothesis, "It is believed that in organising students' seminar internally by an educational institution, creatively and innovatively developed systems for make the work of registration and certificate distribution easy."

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

- 1) The scope of this research is limited to organisation of only two activities in seminar organisation viz. Registration and certificate distribution. Thus, this research ignores the many other activities of seminar organisation such as correspondence, transport, stage management, stage decoration, catering management etc.
- 2) The research is focused on seminar organisation as an intra collegiate activity. However, some of the procedures and systems developed in this research may help organisation of seminars at an inter collegiate level, but it is not the objective of this research.
- 3) The researcher believes that the simplification of procedures, forms and systems, would help making the seminar organisation successful. However, there may be many uncontrollable events that may make seminar organisation difficult and the results of this research may not be applicable to these situations.
- 4) This research is based on the experience of the researcher in seminar organisation in one of the colleges in Pune city in which he is working at present. The researcher has not inquired into the seminar organisation and the systems that are developed in other colleges.
- 5) The use of forms and systems developed in this research may result in increase in the cost of organisation of seminar. However, this research does not consider the costing aspect of these newly developed forms and systems.

- 6) This research is based on personal experience of the researcher, therefore it may be bias.
- 7) It is assumed that the college has a computerized data base of students. So the forms and systems developed in this research will be of a limited use to those colleges who do not have such a computerized data base of students.

METHODOLOGY

The forms and systems developed in this research is the result of the experience of the researcher in seminar organisation. However, the researcher has carried out a survey and collected opinions of students involved in seminar organisation, the student participants and other teacher colleagues from his college and from the other colleges. This survey has been carried out by preparing a questionnaire with closed and open ended questions. The questionnaire was distributed at random to the organisers, participants and teachers. The results of this survey are stated in percentages, averages and other such simple statistical tools. The statistical results are displayed by use of charts and diagrams.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Development of an entrance ticket








Over the period of time, the researcher has organized many seminars and conferences for students. As a result of his experience, he has devised a few forms and procedures for registration and certificate distribution. The normal requirements of registration activity are listed below :

- 1) The registration committee usually starts its activities well before the actual date of the seminar.
- 2) They have to prepare a seminar registration form
- 3) Get the registration form filled from the participant
- 4) Sign for admitting the candidate
- 5) Take registration fee
- 6) Issue receipt for payment of registration fee
- 7) Prepare a list of participants with the following details
 - a) Names
 - b) Roll numbers
 - c) Division
 - d) Cell number

(3)

- e) E mail IDs
- f) Amount of registration fee paid.
- 8) These registration details are required for accounts purpose, certificate preparation purpose, communication purpose.
- 9) The registered students are eligible for breakfast, lunch and tea which is served for the full day programme.
- 10) The registered students who attend the seminar will be entitled to receive a certificate for participation.

The researcher has developed an entrance ticket. This coupon fulfils all the above requirements. The entrance ticket is divided in 3 parts, each with perforation in between so that they can be separated from each other.

PART I	PART II	PART III
 <p>Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce</p>	 <p>Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce</p>	 SYMBIOSIS Lunch Coupon  SYMBIOSIS Kit Coupon
<p>Department of Accountancy Organises A seminar on "Union Budget 2014"</p> <p>Serial No. 001 Date : 28/7/14</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Roll No. _____ Division _____</p> <p>Row _____ Seat No. _____</p> <p>Rs.50</p> <p>Row _____ Seat No. _____</p>	<p>Department of Accountancy Organises A seminar on "Union Budget 2014"</p> <p>Date : Wed.28th July, 14 Time : 8 am to 5 pm Venue: Vishwabhavan</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Roll No. _____ Division _____</p> <p>Row _____ Seat No. _____</p> <p>Receiver's Sig. : _____</p> <p>Received Rs.50/---</p> <p>Serial No. 001</p>	 SYMBIOSIS Tea Coupon  SYMBIOSIS Breakfast Coupon
		 SYMBIOSIS Certificate Coupon 28/7/14

PART I

The part I of the coupon is a counter-foil which remains with the college for record purpose. It contains the name of the college, coupon number, title of the seminar, name of the student, his roll number, seat number, date of the programme, registration fee, signature of the receiver of the money, etc. This does not include the time and venue of the programme because, this information is for the student. On the reverse of part I the student participant will put his signature as a proof that he has paid the registration money. These counter foils are of immense use for preparation of registration register and for accounting purpose also.

PART II

Part II and Part III are separated and given to the student who registers his name for the seminar. He is supposed to fold it and put it in a plastic sachet which has a tag and which is to he is supposed to wear round his/her neck. This second part also acts as the receipt for payment of registration fees. The concerned student volunteer who is collecting the registration fees will write the details on this part of the coupon. The seat number and row number also form a part of the coupon. This will help the student to know his seating arrangement. The student receiving the registration fees, would sign for receipt of registration fees. The coupon number put on Part I, Part II and Part III would be the same. This will facilitate the cross checking of the coupons, if required.

REVERSE OF PART II

On the reverse of the coupon, i.e. at the reverse of the part II of the coupon, the schedule of the seminar can be typed briefly alongwith the brief bio-data of the speakers who are invited to deliver lectures at the seminar. This will keep the student informed about the sequence of deliberations of the seminar.

	Speaker 1 Profile • • • •	Speaker 2 Profile • • • •	
	Speaker 3 Profile • • • •	Speaker 4 Profile • • • •	
	Seminar Schedule		
	Time	Programme	

PART III

The third part of the coupon will include five perforated parts. This part will be divided in four different sections, the first being the coupon for distribution of seminar kit, the second, for breakfast, third is a lunch coupon and the fourth is an evening tea coupon. The fifth part will be the coupon for receipt of seminar certificate. Each of this coupon will include the same serial number. The student is supposed to separate the respective coupon and give it to the volunteer who is distributing kit, breakfast, lunch, evening tea and certificates. These coupons are attached to the delegation tag. Therefore, the risk of loss of coupons does not exist. Moreover, the coupons will facilitate exercising organizational control over these activities.

Preparation of registration sheet

It is important that the college prepares a list of students with all the registration details on the excel sheet. For this purpose, the college record can be used. The data in respect of participants can be obtained from the college master data. An Excel sheet can be prepared. With following columns :

- Serial number
- Coupon number
- Name of the student
- Roll number
- Division
- E mail ID
- Cell number

It is important to note here that preparation of this list will not at all be difficult. The concerned volunteers need not have to type names of each student. All they can do is that they can just put the roll number and with the use of VLOOKUP function in excel sheet, the data can be obtained from the master copy. The list of participants can be mailed to the printer who will print certificates. Since the list of students has been generated from the college record, there are no possibilities of spelling mistakes in printing of the certificates.

Development of a system for distribution of certificates

It is a usual practice is many educational institutions to distribute participation certificates to the candidates who attend the seminar. If the number of students is limited, say 20 or 30, this process of distribution of certificates is easy. But when we have to distribute certificates to a group of say, 500 students, the certificate distribution becomes a challenging activity.

Usually following are the expectations of the participants from certificate distribution process:

- a. It is expected that the certificate distribution process is completed quickly.
- b. There are no spelling mistakes on the certificate.
- c. All the necessary details must be filled up on the certificate and no detail is missing.
- d. There should be no crowding at the distribution centers.

Similarly, the organisers want an acknowledgment for distribution of certificate.

When the number of participants is more, the organisers follow different practices for certificate distribution. In almost all the seminars and conferences, the certificates are distributed according to the alphabets of surnames of students. This process of distribution of certificates can be summarised in following points.

- a. The certificates are arranged alphabetically.
- b. The certificates are grouped in 5 or 6 sets, say A to E, F to J and so on.
- c. Actual distribution takes place at 5 or 6 different locations.
- d. The organisers must have 5 or 6 teams of volunteers for certificate distribution.
 - i. Each team will consist of one volunteer to take acknowledgment for receipt of certificate,
 - ii. One volunteer to search and handover the certificate to the participant.
 - iii. One or two volunteers to control the crowd. This requires 4 volunteers at 6 locations i.e. 24 volunteers.
 - iv. Moreover, there is a lot of crowding of participants round the certificate distribution table. This creates the work of distribution of certificates difficult. It looks unorganized.
 - v. When the number of participants is more, there is a difficulty in searching a certificate of a delegate.
 - vi. Each participant will have to sign on the acknowledgment register for receipt of certificate.

An experiment in developing a procedure for distribution of certificates

In this process, following steps are taken for smooth distribution of certificates :

1. Each certificate is printed by using the college data.
2. At the right hand side bottom corner, the coupon number of the concerned student is written in a very small font size.

3. 10 students take 50 certificates for distribution.
4. The students are told about the range of coupon numbers that each volunteer will be distributing.
5. Students come on the stage row-wise and collect certificates.
6. These volunteers distribute certificates against the certificate coupon. The students tell the volunteers their coupon number and the volunteer gives the certificate which bears the particular coupon number. Thus, he need not have to read names on certificates.
7. Since, certificates are issued against coupons, it acts as an acknowledgement for issue of certificates.
8. The distribution takes place on the stage itself simultaneously for 10 students at a time. Thus it saves time. Number of students collecting certificates on the stage can be monitored by the volunteers in the wings and in the volunteers in the audience.
9. There is a separate desk for solving queries of students regarding details printed on the certificate.

EXPERIMENT, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The researcher had experimented and implemented these two systems at the time of students' Seminar on Budget, 2014 which was organized in Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce. Nearly 500 students attended this seminar. Out of the organisers who were present and who witnessed the benefits of the two systems which were implemented in the seminar, certain key persons were interviewed personally by the researcher. The persons interviewed include Dr. Hrishikesh Soman Principal and Head, Department of Business Practice, Dr. Mrs. Sunayini Parchure Vice Principal and Head, Department of Economics, Mrs. Marcelle Samuel, Head, Department of Banking, and Mrs. Tessy Thadatil, Head, Department of Costing, all belong to Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce. All of them had participated in the students' Seminar on Budget 2014, in which these two innovative systems were interviewed. Their comments on the preparation of entrance coupon and the procedure for distribution of certificates are given below :

Dr. Hrishikesh Soman, Principal	“We have been using this innovative system of registration and certificate distribution since 2008 when our college had organized a seminar of “Effective Life Management” for about 400 participants. Since then we have used it in many seminars. I can positively say that for implementation of this system we need less manpower, it is efficient and effective.”
Dr. Sunayini Parchure, Vice-principal	“When a student registers his name, he receives an entrance ticket along with the set of coupons (which he could puts in a plastic sachet with a tag to wears it round his neck.) The serial number of entrance ticket is also printed on snacks coupons and certificate coupon. This help simplify snack and certificate distribution process.”
Mrs. Marcelle Samuel, Head, Department of Banking	“The activity of distribution of certificates to a group of 500 student participants was carried out easily, smoothly and efficiently. This system worked out well even when we have limited student organisers looking after the entire activity.”
Mrs. Tessy Thadathil, Head, Department of Costing	“The student participants were having the entrance tickets, they did not misplace the coupons because the coupons were attached to the entrance ticket, they were able to read the programme and were punctual in attending the seminar sessions because the programme was printed on the reverse of the second part of the entrance ticket.”
Dr. Hilda David, Coordinator, Liberal Arts Programme.	“I have used the same idea of coupons while organising the seminars for my students of Liberal Arts. This idea is creative and very effective even when the team of organisers consists of a limited number of students.”

According to the opinions expressed by these key persons in an educational institute, who are involved in organising the students’ seminar, it can be concluded that in organising students’ seminar internally by an educational institution, creatively and innovatively developed systems for make the work of registration and certificate distribution easy.

