Impact of ISO 9000 Certification on Sri Lankan Industry and Need for a Total Quality Approach

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ISO 9000 is the world's most renowned quality management system and it has been used extensively as a basis for independent (third party) quality system certifications. Many Sri Lankan organizations have obtained ISO 9000 certification as a means of providing some assurance for quality. However quality of an organization has different aspects like quality of people, quality of work and quality of products. Does ISO 9000 Quality Management System have a significant positive influence on all the aspects of quality? The answer of course, varies from country to country depending on the country's economy, industrial capabilities, working habits of people etc.

The survey was focused on the quality approach, activities and achievements of a sample of ISO 9000 certified companies in Sri Lanka. The main objective of the survey was to identify the impact of ISO 9000 certification on quality of workforce, quality of processes, quality of products/services and quality of environment. Findings of this research provide evidence that ISO 9000 certification has significantly improved the quality of organizational processes but it has failed to make a significant impact on quality of people, quality of products/services and also the quality of the environment. Therefore the certification has been of limited importance.

The certification does not help in the long run unless the quality culture and Total Quality Management philosophy is well established and maintained under the care and nurture of all employees. So we suggest that all organizations should apply the new ISO 9001:2000 as part of a Total Quality Approach to the implementation of socially and economically accountable management systems. The government and the national certification body; Sri Lanka Standards Institution, should identify how the standard can be implemented to match the country's specific requirements and ensure reliable and consistent third party audits on which the local and international community can rely.

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