

Collaboration and collaborative advantage: a case of SQC concept promotion in Nepal

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Abstract The article explores the development of Students' Quality Circles (SQC) as a major contribution to education in Nepal. The principles of SQCs are introduced, together with a strategy for sustainable development of a national programme. The creation of collaborative advantage has wider educational and social implications.

Keywords Collaborative advantage · Nepal · Quest Nepal · Students' Quality Circles

1 Introduction

Nepal, a relatively small nation, is situated in central Asia as a bridge between two populous and growing economic giants: China to the north and India to the south. The country has vast bio-diversity, as well as diversity in terms of geo-physical terrain and cultural heritage. From the Great Himalayas with the highest mountain Everest (8,848 m), the Top of the World in the north, Nepal slopes down southward to reach the plain of low bush forest with the lowest land less than a hundred metres above sea level. Nepal is a nation where, from among a population of about thirty million, more than a hundred ethnic groups with different cultural heritage and languages have lived harmoniously for centuries. It has been a sovereign nation since its formation and is in the process of making a new federal democratic constitution, with a collaborative approach among twenty-five competitive political parties who have different competing ideologies, ranging from extreme conservative, socialism and leftist to radical

communism. They are represented in the constitutional assembly elected for this purpose.

1.1 Students' Quality Circles: historical perspective

Students' Quality Circles (SQC) have been adopted recently and represent one of the innovative and proven pedagogies to develop student personality, as well as to solve the problems of students and schools. In brief, SQC is defined as "a small team of like minded students who meet once a week at school to identify, analyse and solve their problems faced by them at school or home, applying Quality Circles tools and techniques for developing their pro-social personality."¹ Students at school voluntarily participate in this SQC process. The teacher just facilitates students with tools and techniques of Quality Circles in this process. SQC educational approach is an offspring of the Quality Control Circles (small group activities) of Total Quality Management as conceived by Dr. Edward Deming, Dr. Joseph Juran and Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa for empowering Japanese workers and solving the quality problems of Japanese industries way back in the 1960s. TQM has spread all over the world for sustainable business growth. Dr. Jagdish Gandhi borrowed this concept of Quality Control Circles and experimented in his famous school, City Montessori School, Lucknow, India, taking help from Dr. Vineeta Kamran, Principal CMS and Mr. Prakash C. Bihari, Quality engineer. This experiment was very successful for empowering students. The SQC approach has already been endorsed by veteran Quality professionals and educationists like Mr. Donald

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¹ The book "A Guide on Students' Quality Circle: An approach to prepare total quality people" (2006) written by Prof. Dinesh P. Chapagain, published by Network for Quality, Productivity and Competiveness, Nepal has given why, what and how of SQC in details.