



Changeover from ISO 9001: 2008 to the Revised Standard ISO 9001:2015: The Case of the North Bengal

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ABSTRACT: The present Quality Management System (QMS) certification standard or to be specific ISO 9001:2008 has been revised recently to ISO 9001:2015 version. The study examines the future conversion, primary causes and impacts anticipated on certified organizations in Indian corporate sector. The revision will be a further step towards TQM that follow the changes which is progressively more composite, challenging and vibrant in present environment, though it assures that the organization that meet the terms and conditions of the standard are capable of providing quality output and make sure that their customers are delighted. The revision will bring some benefits viz. greater emphasis on involvement of top management in the process, address risks and opportunities in a structured manner, use simplified language and a common structure and terms for multiple management systems, address supply chain management more effectively, more user-friendly for service and knowledge-based organizations, less emphasis on documentation. The organizations aspire to implement and upgrade QMS as per ISO 9001:2015 will be benefited from the information given in the conclusion.

Keywords: Quality Management System, QMS, ISO 9001:2008, Transition, ISO 9001:2015, ISO 9001 Revision, Multiple Management Systems, Total Quality Management

I. INTRODUCTION

The organization improves and becomes proficient in terms of customer satisfaction by fulfilling the requirements as set by the standard ISO 9001 Quality Management System¹. It is considered as a step or contribution towards Total Quality Management (TQM)². It is an international standard that identifies the requirements of quality management system (QMS). The standard is being used by the organizations to demonstrate constantly, the capability to supply products and services that satisfy customer and regulatory requirements. It is the only standard in the ISO 9000 family that is popular and certifiable. In 1987, it was first published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), an international agency composed of the national standards bodies situated in different parts of world³. The previous version of the standard ISO 9001:2008 has been replaced by a new version of the standard i.e., ISO 9001:2015 which is released in September 2015. The main areas of concern for the organizations are the steps to be taken to achieve the new version and become compliant with it. The new version is introduced with some important changes in concept and approach. The companies will get three years transition period till September 2018 and the duration is sufficient for smooth transition. One must implement necessary changes, at the earliest to take hold of the opportunities in the market. The surveillance audits may be conducted as per previous standard but after September 2018 recertification audit to be conducted according to the new revision.

II. NEED OF THE STUDY

It is important to keep the ISO standards useful and logical for the organizations with time and that's why, it is reconsidered after every five years and amended. The parameters of increased global opportunities has changed and the organizations are handling more complex supply chains in comparison to what they have done in past. To remain relevant, requires coping up with the changes prevailing in the society, due to better access to

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information, stronger viewpoint of the end users and increased expectations from customers and other interested parties. The QMS certified companies in North Bengal too are sensing the stress of transition.

The study may attract the interest to organizations of North Bengal that have already taken up the standard and now at the verge of transition from previous standard to the revised one. The significance of the study remains in the attempt to find out the awareness level of the companies regarding the new changes and their preparedness to adopt them, so that, they can have an edge over their competitors and grab market opportunities. The study will put together a course of action for everybody who is directly or indirectly involved with the issue.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature of various researchers available in public domain demonstrates that the revised version *i.e.* ISO 9001: 2015 has tried to rejuvenate the quality management system. The earlier versions were slightly biased towards manufacturing industries and less attention was paid to service sector. The fresh revision has shifted the focus to service sector too. The relevant literature on revised version of QMS allows the passing on positive impact on satisfaction level of customer needs and their demands, helping companies in attracting customer and wins their faith.

Luis Miguel Fonseca (2015) in his paper ⁴ titled, '*From Quality Gurus and TQM to ISO 9001:2015: a review of several Quality paths*', tried to re-evaluate the number of paths followed to achieve quality *i.e.* from Quality Gurus and Total Quality Management (TQM) models to the ISO 9000 International Standards Series. ISO 9001:2008 QMS has been revised to the new version ISO 9001:2015 and the paper tried to analyse the changes, underlying reasons and the impact predicted on more than 1.3 million certified organizations. The revision is expected to be a step towards TQM that imitates the changes of an increasingly complex, demanding and dynamic environment and assures that the complying organizations are able to provide conformity products and services that satisfy their customers. The major benefits expected are less emphasis on documentation, consideration of organizational framework and relevant stakeholders, risk based thinking and knowledge management.

Virendra Kumar Gupta (2016) in his book ⁵ titled, '*Understanding ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System*' state that to uphold quality excellence, 2015 version of ISO 9001 conveys many inspiring changes and among them the most important is the strengthening of the fact that ISO 9001 is not just a quality issue but a significant management topic. The author clarified the requirements of the revised (2015) version of ISO 9001 in simple and practical manner and emphasized on objective of enhancing the understanding of the subject matter by managers and quality professionals to enable them to design better systems and processes better suited to their organizations. The author put emphasis on ISO 9001 that focuses more on expected outcomes through processes than giving consent to several requirements.

Craig Cochran (2015) in his book ⁶ titled, '*ISO 9001 in Plain English*' states that the new version brings major changes in requirements and many contents have been reshuffled and shifted to different sections and clauses. With the adoption of ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Consolidated ISO Supplement, 2015/ Annex SL, the revised version looks different in structure. The author explained the revised standard in such a simple manner that the stakeholders at any level of organization may understand the core standard requirements and how to apply them quickly and simply. The author also compared the changes between old and new version.

Purushothama. B. (2014) edited the book ⁷ namely, '*Implementing ISO 9001:2015*' that states that ISO 9000 guidelines were accepted as international standards in 1987, and amended in 1996, 2000, and 2008. The standards are being completely rewritten in 2015, and the committee draft is circulated worldwide for necessary changes and inputs. The book is based on the document ISO/TC/176/SC2/N-1147 released on June 3, 2013 to help the industry align itself to the new standards by the time the rewrite is released. The book was written in advance so that companies can implement new systems proactively and comply with the anticipated ISO 9001:2015 guidelines.

Jan Gillett, Paul Simpson and Susannah Clarke (2015) in their book ⁸ namely, '*Implementing ISO 9001:2015: Thrill your customers and transform your cost base with the new gold standard for business management*' stated that an updated version of ISO 9001 will be released by the end of 2015. The purchasers worldwide are looking forward to their suppliers to hold ISO 9001 certification and research shows that 44 per cent of certified clients have won new business as a result of being ISO 9001 registered. The revisions are significant and will affect professionals at every level, whether they work in industry, certification bodies or training organisations. The new standard will stimulate transformation in how organisations are run throughout the world. In the last ten years certification has grown by 50% globally, with China repeatedly topping the list of new registrations. The book is a comprehensive guide to implementing the new standards. Over a million

organisations worldwide will have to make changes in re-registering to the 2015 version of ISO 9001. The changes can be used to stimulate transformation in organisations and their wider environments, coordinating their processes to achieve both their customer goals and reduced operating costs.

Denise Robitaille (2015) in her book ⁹ namely, '*The (Almost) Painless ISO 9001:2015 Transition*' states that the transition process of ISO 9001:2015 has begun. The new version holds some major revisions like new requirements, new structure, new numbering scheme, and even a few important dropped requirements. The author has developed a process to help the companies to make their transition quick and painless. The book is helpful for easy transition and gives opportunity to convert the quality management system robust and efficient. The author presented a concise explanation of why and how the standard was revised, what was added, what was changed and what was dropped. The book further presented clause-by-clause review, comparing the 2008 and 2015 versions of the standard, and offering expert advice on how implement the new standard's requirements. The explanations hold true for any size organization in any industry, and they can be used by quality managers, ISO 9001 management representatives, production supervisors, production group leaders, customer service managers, quality technicians, or anyone else involved in the corrective action process.

Jeremy Hazel, Jose Dominguez and Jim Collins (2016) in their book ¹⁰ namely, '*The Memory Jogger ISO 9001:2015: What is it? How do I do it? Tools and techniques to achieve it*' stated that the book is the best source for everyone in the organization to learn how to comply with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 and maximize the value the framework of the standard. It gives practical guidance on the standard and covers fundamentals of the process approach to auditing as well as an overview of the registration process to ISO 9001:2015. The book assists in quick recall and implementation, including pitfalls and best practices gained over many years of effective industry based experience. This is an indispensable pocket guide on the new standard for an executive, department head, implementer or auditor, new to the ISO world or an experienced quality professional.

David John Seear (2014) in his book ¹¹ namely, '*ISO 9001: 2015 Back to the Future: A Review of the New ISO Annex SL Structure for Certification Standards Using the Draft ISO 9001: 2015 to Explain the Changes.*' states that the revision to ISO certifiable standards is scheduled to take place over the next few years covering ISO 9001 Quality Management, ISO 14001 Environmental management and the new ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety management due 2016 (OHSAS 18001). The author has used ISO 9001 as the example to explain how the new Annex SL structure should be implemented.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

After thorough literature review, it was found that no attempt has been made to study the transition of the companies from ISO 9001:2008 QMS to the revised version of ISO 9001: 2015 QMS in North Bengal. No scholarly work has been done in this area. The author wants to examine acquaintance level of certified companies with the new documents which is a must as some areas of the management system have changed and some remains same. The author adopted the area as per scope of research on account of their similarity in culture, attitude and interdependency in business.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives behind the study are many and versatile but the most crucial are as follows:

1. To understand the need for attainment and maintenance of continuous growth of new registration/certification.
2. To know the consistency between accreditation bodies, certification bodies, auditors, and clients.
3. To know the revision if it has made the process simple and streamlined it for the companies who wish to achieve multiple certifications *viz.* ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.

VI. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The new version *i.e.* ISO 9001:2015 is introduced with some important changes in concept and approach. The companies will get three years transition period till September 2018 and the duration is sufficient for smooth transition but to grab the opportunities in the market one must implement necessary changes at the earliest. The study raised some questions in relation to a transition to ISO 9001: 2015 which are as follows:

- a. Are the organizational perspective and latest requirement identified on the basis of the Quality Management System?
- b. Are all the interested parties and their expectations identified to help the organization to adjust its strategic direction?
- c. Is the organization's present scope of business reviewed?

- d. Is the top management involved in the QMS activities? Are they accountable for the system viz., provides resources; establish quality policy and quality objectives?
- e. Are the QMS objectives compatible with company's strategy?
- f. Are the risks and opportunities evaluated and planned to face the tough competition in the market and achieve desired goal?
- g. Is the change process helpful in improving the documentation pattern?
- h. Are the operational issues in the company under control?
- i. Are all the design and development processes handled properly by the company?
- j. Is the company trying to perform necessary activities to ensure that provider is delivering what is expected from them?
- k. Are the performances of subject in a certified company, its process and frequency monitored and evaluated properly?
- l. Are measurements and reporting done properly?

VII. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The study is based on only one dimension of operations management that is Quality Management. Also the study will focus on North Bengal. The study evaluates the motivational factors, effort given, difficulties faced and benefits received by the organizations before and after implementation of ISO 9001 QMS. Some elements and findings may be beneficial and fit in various activities of the organization but the study cannot be considered as a blue print for improving inferior performance of a certified company. There may be more companies with ISO 9001 certification which the researcher could not get in touch with, so, the list of companies in this study is not comprehensive. This may also be noted that the analysis of collected information will be based on the personal experience of researcher. Moreover, as the study is exploratory, it relies on subsequent studies to confirm and it points out a generalized situation and not any particular company or organization.

IX. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The research here is of the type of exploratory in nature. The proposed work and its outline make it clear that the study is dependent primarily on field-based data. The proposed study has utilized several methodological tools, like, informal interview on the basis of both structured and unstructured interview schedule. Utmost stress was given to observation. The questions asked were structured as close and open ended so as to get the respondents involved in conversation. However, for interviewing, sampling method was employed.

In-field, personal interview was conducted in different languages, such as, Bengali, English, Hindi, and Nepali. An interview schedule was prepared to collect primary data from the companies. The information regarding ISO 9001 QMS certified companies were collected through telephone directories, search engine like Google, newspapers, quality management consultants, certification bodies and individual visit to the companies. ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Consolidated ISO Supplement, 2015 was used to find out various directives in relation to the revision. The study covered seven districts of North Bengal, namely, Malda, South Dinajpur, North Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Coochbehar.

X. ANALYSIS OF DATA & FINDINGS

As per survey on 25 (twenty five) ISO 9001 certified companies, the information gathered was processed category wise and a sampling frame was created that comprises 9 (nine) manufacturing units; 5 (five) Hospitals & Diagnostic Centres, 4 (four) Educational Institutes and Coaching classes, 4 (four) Hotels and Hospitality units, 3(three) Logistic and Transporter units. The data collected after the survey was converted into desirable data that was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The overall tasks of data compilation, processing and the final drafting has been done using computer.

The study helped to find out the level of awareness in relation to the implementation of revised ISO 9001: 2015 standard and in identification of ways of measuring the economic impact of quality improvements in the companies of North Bengal. The findings are as follows:

1. The certified organizations are sensitive to continuous improvement and try to grow with time and abide by ISO standard.
2. The study shows that most of accreditation bodies, certification bodies, auditors, and clients are aware of the latest changes and trying to meet the terms as per standard.
3. Most of the stake holders admitted that the revision is uncomplicated, making the process simple and streamlined for multiple certifications like ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.

4. The certified organizations and the organizations involved in training or certifying others are aware of the urgent need of transition and are acquainted of phases and processes of switchover from ISO 9001: 2008 to the new standard.
5. The certified business houses are familiar with the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the ISO Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO) agreement of three-year transition period from the publication date of ISO 9001:2015 allotted to the organizations and individuals using ISO 9001 standard and encourages to change at the earliest.

XI. CONCLUSION

The study shows that for successful transition to new standard, some perfection and collection of the following steps are essential:

- To identify the gaps that need to be addressed, a full review of the ISO 9001:2015 standard should be performed by top management.
- A plan of implementation should be developed with assigned responsibilities.
- All quality management system documents should be updated to reflect any new or revised processes.
- All necessary awareness and transition training should be completed.
- The scope of business decides the trustworthiness of Quality Management System (QMS) so its review must be done during this transition period.
- A full system internal audit followed by a management review should be complete.
- Corrective actions for all internal audit findings should be in process or complete.
- Coordination with the consultant and plan of transition arrangements must be done.
- Identification and listing of expectations of all interested parties that will help the organization to adjust its strategic direction.
- The new version emphasis more on leadership and involves top management in the QMS activities to make the system more accountable and resourceful.
- The QMS must be compatible with strategic direction of the company, quality objectives must aim in the same direction as other activities in the company. The plans for achieving the objectives must be created, and that is the requirement of the new version.
- The evaluation of risks and opportunities must be done and before addressing them the companies need to have proper planning for them.
- Better control of the processes, including operating criteria and implementing controls of processes according to the criteria must be prioritized.
- The design and development processes require to be discussed elaborately. The measurement and reporting are the two main areas where the new version stresses more.
- Plans for performance evaluation, internal audit, measurement and reporting and management review are to be set up.

The findings in this research can be further extended and modified to accomplish the ultimate goal of promoting and improving sustainable practices in business management and operations. This area of research can be expanded to investigate in other places of India and abroad, with the opportunity to draw some interesting national and international comparisons.

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