
(A Synopsis report submitted for PhD Registration in Bharathidasan University)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Providing quality services to people are the responsibility of every Grama Panchayats (GPs). For achieving this objective, Government of Kerala envisaged that all Grama Panchayats to implement Total Quality Management (TQM). And all GPs, except two, in Kerala has availed ISO 9001:2015 through TQM. TQM is a management approach and system based on which ISO 9001:2015 Certification is availed. This ISO certification is the hall-mark of quality of services delivered to the public.

The TQM includes both hard and soft components. It is encountered that the GPs have given importance to hard components than the soft components, as the former is more visible and easier to do. Whereas soft component is more of behavioral change than the infrastructure related. This will have negative implication on the sustainability and efficacy of TQM. There are no studies so far to prove this. Hence the present study.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Effective implementation of Total Quality Management in organizations will help for providing better quality products and services to its customers. The GPs, being the cutting edge level local governments, have to provide better service to the citizens. But if it is only for the sake of obtaining ISO certification will defeat the very purpose of TQM. Whether the ISO 9001: 2015 certified GPs effectively implemented TQM and ensuring its sustainability? Aren’t they focusing more on hard components than the soft? How effective are the soft components that are inevitable on the sustainability of TQM? Whether all ISO 9001:2015 certified GPs are ensuring its envisaged quality management system in its entirety? These are some of the pertinent questions not addressed so far by any researcher. Hence this study to find out the effectiveness of TQM in ISO certified Grama Panchayats in Kerala.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study include:

i. To analyze the hard and soft components of TQM in GPs

ii. To evaluate the effective implementation of TQM in GPs
iii. To develop a scoring technique for examining the performance of GPs in terms of TQM

iv. To evolve suggestive measures for the barriers for the successful implementation of total quality management

4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The rural local governments have different tiers of Grama Panchayats (GPs), Block Panchayats (BPs), and District Panchayats (DPs) in Kerala. But this study will mainly focus on TQM in GPs only. Also the scope of this study will be to analyze the effectiveness of hard and soft components of TQM in the GPs.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1. Nature of Study

This study is analytical and conclusive in nature.

5.2. Types of data

Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected for the purpose of this study.

5.3. Sources of data

Both primary and secondary data are required for the purpose of this study.

Primary Data

Primary Data will be collected from the functionaries of GPs – elected representatives and officials.

Secondary Data

Secondary data will be collected from documents and records maintained as part of TQM like ISO files, documentation, minutes book, attendance registers, etc.

5.4. Tools of data collection

For the primary data, questionnaire/schedule will be used. For secondary data, checklist will be used. These will be designed in due course of the research.

6. POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The ISO 9001: 2015 certification availed GPs in Kerala – i.e. 939 GPs - forms the universe of this study. From this universe sampling frame will be designed, giving due consideration to geography and size of GPs.

6.1 SAMPLING FRAME
The sampling frame is multi stage – purposive sampling of districts at the first stage, and random sampling of GPs in the second stage.

Considering accessibility, two districts will be purposively selected viz. Thrissur and Palghat. These two districts will cover the three geographic zones of Kerala viz. high land, midland, and lowland.

From the two districts, random sample of GPs will be selected giving due representation to size of the GPs – small, medium, and large – in terms of geographic area, population, and community categories like general, SC, ST, fisher people. Size of the sample GPs will be decided in due course of the research, as delimitation process is underway now.

7. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

i. The hard components of TQM in GPs are given more attention than soft components.

ii. The TQM in all ISO certified GPs not effective.

8. Usefulness of Study

The findings of the study will help:

i. To improve effectiveness of TQM in GPs

ii. The scoring techniques developed through this study will help GPs to assess their position in terms of TQM

iii. The suggestions evolved from the study will help policy makers to streamline future perspectives.

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