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Business Eye covers the region encompassed by the DTI Indo-British Partnership (IBP) and the Southern Asia Advisory Group (SAAG) – India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives Islands, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Its aims include the furtherance of prosperity and the acceleration of economic growth.

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Never mind the width feel the quality



Quality guru Dr Madhav Mehra, president of India's Institute of Directors, and chairman-elect of the new World Quality Council, says India is undergoing a revolution in its quality standards, with Britain in a strong position to help

In 1990 just one Indian company had won the universally recognised ISO 9000 quality management standard. By the end of last year 1,200 companies were ISO 9000 accredited, and by the end of this year around 3,000 will have qualified for the standard. It is anticipated that there will be around 15,000 Indian ISO 9000 rated organisations by the new millennium.

This revolution in standards is in some part down to the work of Dr Madhav Mehra, a former Indian government official, who over the past three decades has been involved with quality activities and institutions, and is himself recognised as a pioneer in quality management.

Dr Mehra, who was born in India, and now has homes in both India and the UK, first

came to Britain in the 1960's, where he studied for a PhD in Management by Objectives at the University of London. He went on to become a director in the Ministry of Indian Railways, and taught both quantitative and behavioural management at schools in both India and internationally.

In 1974 he was back in London where he founded Quality Management International, the world's first quality consultancy on Total Quality Management and ISO 9000. Now, after more than 20 years of commitment to quality issues, Dr Mehra sees himself as chairman-elect of the new World Quality Council, which was officially formed at the 50th Annual Quality Congress of the American Society for Quality Control held in Chicago in May. This puts him at the

pinnacle of his career, and allows him a strong position to take an overview of global developments in quality management.

Not surprisingly Dr Mehra feels a particular affinity for India, and he is convinced that the UK is perfectly placed to assist its traditional partner in achieving higher standards. As organiser of the annual World Congress on Total Quality, held since 1990 in New Delhi, it is also in his interests to promote close links between our two countries.

The 7th annual congress, jointly organised by the Worldwide Quality Management Network and the Institute of Directors, is slated for February 1997 in New Delhi, and Dr Mehra is confident it will attract at least 4000 delegates from more than 40 countries - including a strong British contingent. The theme of the congress is 'Transforming Role of Quality in a Turbulent World', and will be addressed by several world leaders in the field.

Says Dr Mehra: 'India is an appropriate place to hold Asia's biggest quality event, and it is equally appropriate that a UK based organisation be involved in running the event. Britain is recognised as being at the leading edge of quality management development. We have been involved in this area from the very beginning and our reputation is second to none.'

'For its part, India is still at

an early stage in recognising quality standards. India can benefit from our expertise. South Asia is already one of the world's fastest growing economic regions and for India to take its rightful place among the world's leading economic powerhouses, it must learn from the sophisticated and highly-developed systems pioneered in countries such as the UK.'

It is no accident that the dramatic rise in ISO 9000 accreditation in India parallels both the introduction of economic reforms and the annual World Congress on Total Quality. Dr Mehra believes that Britain's natural affinity with India will also help the UK in the 'accreditation race', with organisations from different countries. These accreditation organisations are vying with each other for business in lucrative growth markets such as India.

Dr Mehra cites factors such as a common language, strong historical ties, a mutual respect for the laws of contract and the democratic nature of both countries as advantages the UK holds over some of its competitors. And what of his vision for India's future: 'India will be part of the economic powerhouse of the world, that by the year 2010 will be Asia. India needs help in making sure it performs to its potential and we in Britain can help in that process.'

Indian ISO 9000 accredited companies

Year	No of Companies
1990	1
1991	8
1992	25
1993	120
1994	500
1995	1200
1996	3000 (est)
2000	15000 (est)