

**Q**UALITY has become the overriding factor in today's corporate world, be it business or service, and the master who passes the ultimate judgment is the customer. Even mere survival is at stake if a company falls on the quality front. So to pass on a lesson or two on quality, the Sixth World Congress on Total Quality is on in the four major metros of the country: Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore. The person behind this enterprise is Madhav Mehra, the acclaimed guru in the field of quality management. He is not only the president of the Institute Of Directors (IOD), but also the chairman of the Worldwide Quality Management Network Ltd. Mehra talked to Kohinoor Mandal about the Congress and some vital issues in quality management. Excerpts:



# "Quality can Coexist with Quantity"

**What will be the main aim of this World Congress on Total Quality?**

The main aim of this congress will be to impart the knowledge of total quality and to inculcate this consciousness both among the heads of the institutions and also among their management workers. For this, we have divided the subjects into two sections. First, we would present the idea of Total Quality Management (TQM) and make participants identify their mistakes. And

second, we will impart techniques required to achieve TQM.

**As you are in this field since 1974, what are your feelings about this consciousness among the Indian corporates? Are they really interested?**

Yes. To be very frank, the consciousness has ultimately penetrated after

initial haziness. Today, there is a tremendous upsurge and the number of companies receiving ISO 9000 certificates are also increasing day by day.

**There are rumours that the certificates issued do not carry any value. Is it true?**

Well, I will not say that these cer-

tificates are valueless but the rumours that are doing the rounds are not all baseless. Today, this ISO 9000 business has become an industry, and I admit that the skill of the persons working in bodies that provide the certification are poor. Moreover, there is no organisation to govern these bodies and India does not have any accrediting body like UKCRS, RVA or BSI.

**What solution do you prescribe in such a scenario?**

I feel that a system of policing must be introduced to oversee the functions of these certificate-issuing bodies.

**Will you please give us some idea about IOD?**

IOD is a registered non-profit, apex organisation of corporate directors committed to improving competitiveness of the Indian industry through total quality strategies. It has been organising several conferences, exhibitions, programmes and workshops to help com-

pany directors and senior managers in India to achieve an increasingly competitive market.

**What will be the main feature of this sixth congress?**

The main feature of this congress will be the pre-congress and post-congress nationals, which will be con-

ducted by the quality gurus of the world. It is a rare opportunity for Indian companies to train their entire management cadre. An exhibition, Qualex 96, has also been arranged to run concurrently with the congress. At the congress we will also be awarding the prestigious Golden Peacock National Quality Award for 1995.

**Do you think that consciousness about TQM will grow simply by being imparted to corporates? Why are you not starting any course on this subject in the educational institutions?**

We are starting from the directors because it is the leaders only who can spread this consciousness. All along, the hype regarding the lack of quality consciousness has gone against the workers but I think that the management is also responsible for it.

**What about the public sector, which perhaps has no sense of quality?**

For this we have invited ministers and bureaucrats to the congress. Moreover, the advisory board of the congress has leading members of the government like Najma Heptulla, S Z Qasim and G V Ramakrishnan of the Planning Commission; N Vittal, secretary of the department of electronics; G Sundaram, secretary to the Union ministry of consumer affairs; and Rajendra Singh, chairman of the National Thermal Power Corporation.

**Finally, do you think that quality can go with quantity?**

Yes. Quality can always exist side by side with quantity. What we are trying to put through is to make people learn to do the right thing at the very outset. All the resources that are lost in the country are only because the people do not use the TQM technique, and as it happens, especially in the public sector. ♦