

# Industry fails to draw benefits of ISO standards: WQC chief

Our Calcutta Bureau

CALCUTTA 20 OCTOBER

INDIAN INDUSTRY has not been able to utilise ISO standards fully. Tools for achieving high levels of quality standards have yet to seep to the grassroot level of the industry.

Talking to *The Economic Times*, Mr Madhav Mehra, the chairman of the World Quality Council, said unless the basic concept of quality is shared with the workers, the growth in industry in the new century will be seriously hampered.

Mr Mehra pointed out that a series of interactions with large business houses in six major cities reveal that "there is no focused approach in implementing the various standards of quality. Business houses may have implemented ISO standards but have failed to draw all benefits by not having gone to the grassroot levels."

He said this is apparently due to the modern managers in India keeping the "human aspect" out of the picture altogether. As a result, growth is haphazard and not all pervading.

The involvement of the human aspect is important, Mr Mehra feels, otherwise one will lose in the race in a globally competitive market. "We have to utilise tomorrow's tools in solving today's problems."

He pointed out that the gravity of the situation will become focused in the next 15 years when more than 75 per cent of industries in India will be service-oriented. Pure manufacturing units will lose importance.

Stating that industry in India needs to "step into the stride with the rest of the world fast," he said, "there is a need to change at all levels." He was dismayed by the fact that even after a year of its formation, the National Quali-

ty Council (NQC) has yet to elect its office bearers and get started. This apex body has been set up with government support to monitor quality auditing processes in the country.

He said WQC introduced a course recently aimed at setting quality paradigms for the next century when along with environment it will assume top priority. "India, unfortunately, has been slow on the uptake and could fall behind in the race."

Mr Mehra cited the examples of the slow offtake in the ISO 14,000 which deals in setting quality standards keeping in mind the environment aspect. It highlights the role to be played by corporate houses in protecting environment and, in the process, reduce waste. "One factory's waste should be the food for another. This will reduce the wasteful utilisation of scarce raw materials."