

## Felicitations of Janak Mehta

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It is my privilege to be part of this felicitation of Janak Mehta. I speak as a friend. He has been the face of India in international forums on quality for over two decades. If the history of India's progress in quality management is written, it would have to begin with Janak who launched TQM in India with the watershed Nasik Experiment in 1983 – indeed the first of the cluster method India is now known for.

I first came into contact with Janak in 1987 when he was already Director of the TQM Division of CII, spearheading a nascent movement with a combination of calmness and zeal. One of the things he had managed to do then was to have gotten the participation of a large number of CEOs and business heads into a National Committee on Quality – which is where I got to know him. Around this time, he started taking annual 'missions' of chief executives and senior functionaries every year to Japan for a two week program by JUSE. Getting upper executives out on a two-week training program was no mean feat. His efforts produced a critical mass of top managers who then went on to change the face of Indian industry, and made it competitive in a globalized world.

Janak was never just a visionary administrator. He has always grasped quality management in its profound sense. Janak also personally designed and taught in TQM courses for senior management, both open and company-specific. He teaches well. What is more, he handles the necessary statistics with ease.

In the second phase of his journey, he seemed to somewhat drop out of public view, while quietly helping a great number of organizations. This was also the phase when he established relationships with organizations in both USA and Japan and developed powerful programs. He also founded the Indian Society for Quality. ISQ now represents India in many international forums.

The third phase probably started in 2001, when he was invited into the Alaska meeting of the informal 'Global Quality Futures Workshop' led by Dr. N. Kano, and then went on to become a key member of this group. In 2003, he got pulled into the formation of Asian Network for Quality (ANQ) which he has gone on to chair, with distinction. While China took over as the chair organization in 2011 Janak took a special position in which he carries the responsibilities of executing the work of ANQ. Finally, in this phase, he has not only got elected to the International Academy for Quality (IAQ), but has quickly taken over in 2011 as its President for the next three years.

2012 has been a landmark year in Janak's professional achievements. First he was conferred the Lancaster medal by the American Society for Quality (ASQ) for his exceptional leadership and outstanding contribution in the international scene in promoting quality. And now in November he has received the high honour of the Deming Distinguished Service Award for Dissemination and Promotion (overseas) from JUSE, Japan. Needless to say he is the only one from India to have been honoured thus. The Deming Award citation calls him 'the father of TQM in India.' There is poetic justice in this appellation – Janak after all means father in Sanskrit.

Janak is a person who would be described in Sanskrit as a *karma-yogi* – one who is steeped in action but seeks nothing for himself out of it. He is unaffected by praise or calumny. Thus he has been unstoppable. At 71, he seems to draw upon some vast, unseen reservoir of energy. I believe therefore that his best is yet to come!

It is thus with great pride that on behalf of Indian Society for Quality, and indeed on behalf of all of India, I greet and felicitate Janak Mehta for what he has accomplished and for bringing honour to the country.

I now request our Conference chairman Mr. Ajay Shankar to present Janak with a plaque as a measure of our respect and affection.