INTRODUCTION

Manufacturing is the bedrock on which the economic wealth of nations is built. The industrial revolution, first in UK and later in Europe, US, shifted manufacturing activity from homes and cottages to factories equipped with power-driven machinery and management from owners to professionals. Which later resulted in developed of World Class Organizations.

In the increasing level of globalization and competition, firms are forced to gain competitiveness in the global market. This ‘improved competitiveness’ in its broadest context is referred as manufacturing excellence (Kinni 1996). If a firm continues to excel in manufacturing, it may dominate world markets, in which case it would be called a “World-Class Manufacturer” (Maskell 1991). The goals of World class manufacturing efforts include maintaining market share, improving profitability and improving the firm’s ability to compete in a global market place (Montgomery et al. 1996)

World-Class manufacturing was developed largely by Taiichi Ohno in Toyota, Japan. A number of names have been used to give the body of knowledge, referred as World-Class manufacturing like Just-in-time (JIT), Kanban, Kaizen, 5-S, Lean, Poka yoke, Six Sigma, Total Productive Maintenance (TPM), Total Quality Management (TQM) and so on.

Of late, the environment facing developing countries like India has become increasingly more turbulent, dynamic and complex. Economic activity today is becoming globalised more significantly.

To compete successfully with World-Class Manufacturers in this dynamically changing environment, Indian firms must adopt World-Class Manufacturing Practices. It will not be exaggeration to say that the best Strategy for Indian
Manufacturing Organizations to endure in New Millennium is adoption of World-Class Manufacturing Practices.

Manufacturing is not merely the conversion process that takes place on the shop floor, but a whole lot of activities preceding and following it, like materials management, equipment and tooling, material handling, assembly, quality control, maintenance, planning, MIS and human resources (Prabhala 1994). For continues success in a competitive market, continuous improvement in all areas of activity is essential.

The origins of World-Class manufacturing can be traced back to 1926, when Toyoda Sakichi of the Toyoda Spinning and Weaving Company invented an auto-activated loom, fulfilling a 25-year dream (Ohno 1992). World-Class manufacturing was developed largely by Taiichi Ohno, VP of Toyota and Shigeo Shingo, Industrial Engineering Consultant.

Maskell states that World-Class manufacturing is a very broad term which generally includes focus on product quality, JIT Production techniques, workforce management and agility in meeting customer requirements.

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As the world is becoming ‘global market’ the standards applied to ‘World-Class performance’ are becoming increasingly expected by customers and buyers. But this requires a systematic analysis and formulation and implementation of strategies to become World-Class Manufacturer. And doing this only will help the Indian Manufacturing organizations to endure in the new millennium.

This research work is specially selected because it is need of hour that Indian manufacturers must see at World-Class Manufacturing Practices very
seriously. To compete with MNC’s the domestics firms must adopt WCM Practices.

Pune region is one of the most important and fast growing IT and manufacturing hub in the state of Maharashtra. Along with various IT MNC’s, many huge manufacturing organizations are also developed and developing in Industrial sectors of Pune like Chakan, Ranjangaon, Pimpri Chinchwad etc.

In this study I had tried to find out that what percentage of various manufacturing organizations in Pune region of Maharashtra are adopting and maintaining world-class manufacturing practices? What are the problems and challenges faced by these organizations? Exactly what is the impact of these practices on various aspects of Production like cost saving, rejection reduction? And finally how these practices can be successfully and effectively implemented and maintained?