

Editor's Note: Quality assurance enables teacher training institutions to achieve local and ultimately global standards for their educational programs. Underdeveloped countries have determined the need for quality education to support economic development and are striving to catch up with global trends in quality education.

Teacher educators' awareness towards quality assurance in teacher educational institutions (TEIS) in Tamil Nadu

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India

Abstract

The present study aims to examine the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in teacher educational institutions (TEIs) in Tamil Nadu. In this normative survey study, the investigators have selected 100 teacher educators as sample by simple random technique from Tuticorin, Madurai, Virudhunagar, Namakkal and Vellore districts of Tamil Nadu. The investigator used standardised self-made Quality Assurance Awareness Questionnaire with 28 items. To analyse the data, 't'-test, chi-square and ANOVA were the chosen statistical techniques. The findings show that (1) there is no significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to gender, (2) teacher educators with commerce master degrees are having more awareness than the teacher educators with science and arts, (3) teacher educators with B.Ed. degree are having more awareness than the teacher educators with M.Phil. and M.Ed., and (4) the level of awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs is moderate. Female teacher educators are slightly more aware than the male teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs.

Keywords: Awareness, Quality Assurance, Teacher Education

Introduction

Education is a systematic and deliberate influence exerted by mature persons upon the immature through instruction, discipline and harmonious development of physical, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual powers of human being, according to individual social needs, directed towards the union of the learner with the educated. Education is a process of human enlightenment and empowerment for the achievement of better and higher quality of life. A sound and effective system of education results in the enfoldment of learners' potentialities, enlargement of their competencies and transformation of interest, attitude and values. This is possible only through quality teacher education.

Role of NCTE in quality assurance

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is designed to ensure planned and coordinated development of teacher education and determination and maintenance of its standards. The Council lays down norms for specified categories of courses and guidelines. These are used to grant recognition to teacher educational institutions for offering TEPs. This process of granting recognition to teacher educational institution (TEI) is to ensure the minimum level of infrastructure, academic facilities and the human resources of requisite qualifications. For encouraging the TEIs to offer innovative programmes and courses in teacher education, NCTE has provided for necessary regulations to recognise such TEPs.

The NCTE became a statutory body by an act of Parliament in 1993. The main objective of the NCTE is to achieve planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system throughout the country. It is also involved in the regulations and proper maintenance of norms

and standards in the teacher education system. NCTE has taken number of steps for raising the quality of teacher education system. It has formulated norms and standards for twelve teacher education courses in all at pre-primary, primary, secondary, senior secondary, physical and distance education courses. It is mandatory for the existing and new institutions to seek NCTE recognition after fulfilling the NCTE norms. Further, these recognized institutions have to submit the Performance Appraisal Report (PAR) annually. On the basis of the PAR, actions are taken to withdraw the recognition in case of violation of norms and standards.

In 2002, the Council also developed the 'Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education' for upgrading the quality of teacher education programmes to par with international standards.

Role of NAAC in quality assurance

All over the world, since the 1980s the expansion of the system of higher education was coupled with mounting criticism about the quality of education. As a result of this, establishment of quality assurance agencies has become a common phenomenon worldwide. India joined this trend in 1994 by establishing the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) on the recommendation of National Policy on Education 1986 report. The primary objectives of establishment of NAAC is to assess and accredit institutions of liberal arts, science and other disciplines in order to help these institutions to work continuously to improve the quality of education, through self-evaluation of performance of an institution and/or its units based on self-study and peer review through defined criteria. Accreditation is the certification given by NAAC, which is valid for a period of five years. The process of assessment followed by NAAC is in accordance with the internationally accepted practice with certain modification to suit the Indian context. For quality assurance of teacher educational institutions, the NAAC and the NCTE have entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for executing the process of assessment and accreditations of TEIs coming under the provision of the NCTE (Sharma, 2013).

Need for the study

The quality assurance of higher education has become an important global trend. Nearly half of all countries worldwide have created quality assurance mechanisms, of one type or another, during the last decade or two. The following factors help explain this trend:

Due to the rapid expansion of higher education systems, there is now a more diverse range of providers of higher education, comprising public and private institutions, cross-border institutions and distance education organizations (Castillo, 2013).

Globalization has brought with it an increasing level of academic fraud, or fake credentials. This increases the demand for trustworthy organizations that can establish confidence using quality assurance methods.

The quality of public higher education institutions has suffered in many countries due to economic constraints and a shift in priorities from advanced levels to basic education.

There are strong expectations that quality assurance mechanisms will ensure continuous quality control and improvement. Quality assurance is linked to professional mobility, and a growing number of regional and international integration processes. This raises the need for more effective mechanisms for the professional recognition of higher education credentials (Gangwar et al, 2013).

In the above context, Quality teaching has become an issue of importance as the landscape of higher education has been facing continuous changes. The quality of teaching is decided in what ways learners get education and training. Teacher education has a vital role in deciding the quality of the nation. The investigator, being a research scholar of Teacher Education

Programme, is interested in this area of research. After 2004, there was a mushroom growth of Teacher Educational Institutions across the nation as per the requirements quoted by Knowledge Commission. Tamil Nadu is not an exception to this. There are about 665 colleges of education in Tamil Nadu. Everyone accepts that the quantity has increased, but at the same time it is essential to verify whether the quality of Teacher Education is maintained in all teacher education institutions. This investigator has studied the awareness of quality assurance in teacher educational institutions in Tamil Nadu.

Operational definition of the key terms

Teacher Educators are the teachers who teach and give training to the student-teachers or prospective teachers systematically by the teacher preparation programme. Here the investigators mean the teachers working in any one of the colleges of education of Tamil Nadu.

Awareness is the state or ability to perceive, to feel, or to be conscious of events, objects or sensory patterns. In this level of consciousness, sensory data can be confirmed by an observer without necessarily implying understanding. More broadly, it is the state or quality of being aware of something.

Quality Assurance (QA) is the planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled. It is the systematic measurement, comparison with a standard, monitoring of processes and an associated feedback loop that confers error prevention.

Teacher Educational Institutions (TEIs) refer to the institutions or colleges that adopt the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community.

Objectives

To find out whether there is any difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to gender, educational qualification, and professional qualification.

Null hypotheses

- There is no significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to gender.
- There is no significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to educational qualification.
- There is no significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to professional qualification.
- There is no significant association between gender and the level of awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs.

Methodology

In this normative survey study, the investigators selected 100 teacher educators as the sample by simple random technique from Tuticorin, Madurai, Virudhunagar, Namakkal and Vellore districts of Tamil Nadu. The investigator used a standardised self-made Quality Assurance Awareness Questionnaire with 28 items. To analyse the data, 't'-test, chi-square and ANOVA were used as the statistical techniques.

Data analysis

Table-1
Distribution table of the sample with respect to gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	28	28%
Female	72	72%
Total	100	100%

It is inferred for the above table that 28 % of male and 72% of female teacher educators were taken as sample for the research work.

Table-2
Distribution of the sample with respect to PG Degree

PG Degree	Number of Respondents	Percentage
M.A.	38	38%
M.Sc.	35	35%
M.Com.	27	27%
Total	100	100%

Among the research respondents, 38 %, 35 % and 27 % are M.A., M.Sc. and M.Com degree holders respectively in this study.

Table-3
Distribution of the sample with respect to professional qualifications

Professional Qualification	Number of Respondents	Percentage
B.Ed.	12	12%
M.Ed.	43	43%
M.Phil.	45	45%
Total	100	100%

Among the research respondents, 12%, 43% and 45% are qualified with B.Ed., M.Ed. and M.Phil., professional qualifications respectively in this study.

H_01 : There is no significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to gender.

Table-4
Difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to gender

Gender	Sample Size	Mean	SD	't' Value	'P' Value	LOS
Male	28	25.75	2.914	1.191	0.236	NS
Female	72	24.9	3.294	1.257		

Since the calculated 'P' value is greater than the table value at 5% level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to gender.

H_02 : There is no significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to educational qualification.

Table-5
Difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs in terms of educational qualification

Educational Qualification	N	Mean	SD	'F' Value	'P' Value	LOS
M.A.	38	24.50	2.586	1.377	0.257	S
M.Sc.	35	25.34	3.725			
M.Com.	27	25.78	3.203			
Total	100	25.14	3.2			

Since the calculated 'P' value is greater than the table value at 5% level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to educational qualification.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to professional qualification.

Table-6
Difference in the awareness of teacher educators
towards quality assurance in TEIs in terms of professional qualification

Professional Qualification	N	Mean	SD	'F' Value	'P' Value	LOS
B.Ed.	12	26.17	2.125	2.947	0.057	S
M.Ed.	43	24.28	3.127			
M.Phil.	45	25.69	3.356			
Total	100	25.14	3.2			

Since the calculated 'P' value is greater than the table value at 5% level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to professional qualification.

H₀₄: There is no significant association between gender and the level of awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs.

Table-7
Association between gender and level of awareness of teacher educators
towards quality assurance in TEIs

Gender	Level of Awareness of Teacher Educators towards Quality Assurance in TEIs			Total	Chi-square Value	'P' Value	LOS
	Low	Average	High				
Male	8.4 (30.00%)	11.8 (42.14%)	7.8 (27.86%)	28	0.841	0.657	S
Female	21.6 (30.00%)	30.2 (41.95%)	20.2 (28.05%)	72			
Total	30	42	28	100			

It is inferred from the table that 30.00% of males have low, 42.14% of them have moderate, and 27.86% of them have high level awareness towards quality assurance in TEIs. 30.00% of females have low, 41.95% of the have moderate and 28.05% of them high level awareness towards quality assurance in TEIs.

Since the calculated Chi-square value is greater than the table value at 5% level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant association between the gender and level of awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs.

Findings and interpretations

There is no significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to gender.

There is a significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to educational qualification. When comparing the mean scores, the teacher educators with commerce master degree (25.78) are having more awareness than the teacher educators with science (25.34) and arts (24.50). This may be due to the fact that the commerce teacher educators studied and applied the commercial tactics and techniques. Moreover, they have to complete their master degree before doing their bachelor degree in education. Therefore they are much more aware than their counterparts.

There is a significant difference in the awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs with respect to professional qualification. When comparing the mean scores, the teacher educators with B.Ed. degree (26.17) are having more awareness than the teacher educators with M.Phil. (25.69) and M.Ed. (24.28). This may be due to the fact that they may be interested in pursuing higher education to improve their qualification and so they have more awareness compared to others.

There is a significant association between the gender and level of awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs. The level of awareness of teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs is moderate. Female teacher educators are slightly more aware than the male teacher educators towards quality assurance in TEIs. It may be due to the fact that female teachers have to improve their knowledge to maintain their position. In teaching profession the number of female teachers is more than males. The percentage of female teachers in the TEIs of Tamil Nadu is about 80% when compared to males. This is also evident in the ratio of female and male teachers in the sample taken for this study.

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