

Role of Quality Indicators in Teacher Education

Dr. Sangoju Rajeswari

Professor, State Council of Educational Research and Training, Andhra Pradesh.

Abstract

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has defined Teacher Education as a programme of education, research & training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency & competence that would enable & empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession & face the challenges therein. According to Goods dictionary of Education teacher education means, all the formal & non-formal activities & experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a number of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively

Introduction

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This paper presents a background perspective to quality in teacher education and its assessment along with a set of quality indicators with descriptors and other details under six key areas. The six key areas identified are namely: Curriculum Design and Planning; Curriculum Transaction and Evaluation; Research, Development and Extension; Infrastructure and Learning Resources; Student Support and Progression and Organization and Management. The paper lists out 75 quality Indicators covering the six key areas and 25 quality aspects, and provides the descriptors, an operational definition details on the importance of the

indicators and areas for looking for evidence. The indicators can be used by the teacher educators and the teacher education institutions for quality assurance through self-assessment; by the external assessors as a guidance document and by the accrediting agencies in systematizing the assessment process. Overall these indicators serve two main purposes of quality improvement: (1) They bring in an understanding and awareness among the institutions on issues of quality, and (2) Serves as a Guidance document for self-assessment and quality planning for the institutions and for benchmarking by external assessors.

The package is in English, catering to the English speaking Commonwealth countries but could be adapted and translated to any other language as required. of institutional functioning. As a result, within an institution a QI may have to be operationalised according to the practice carried out. This may involve suitable ramifications in the way QIs are stated. Taking cue from various other fields in developing indicators, the Expert Group agreed on the following three selection criteria.

- it had to capture an important performance aspect
- it has to have an impact on the overall quality improvement
- it had to be potentially feasible

It has to be recognized that every QI will have a different role in the overall programme context. In other words, all quality indicators will not be similar in respect of their functional relevance. There is need to view each QI in terms of its appropriate functional feature. Accordingly, some relative weightage can be indicated for each QI so that the practitioners place it appropriately. Thus, while quantifying the QIs and assigning weightage to them the following criteria need to be kept in mind:

- Impact on students
- Improving performance
- Policy importance
- Susceptibility to being influenced by the school system and other agencies
- Scientific soundness Face validity - Does the measure make sense logically and in practice? Content validity - Does the measure capture meaningful information on various quality aspects of the programme?

Feasibility: Facilitate recognition of evidence in operation

The identified QIs were grouped in respect of broader aspects of institutional functioning, which have been called “Quality Aspects”. The details on the identified QIs is presented in Section II. The six broad areas of a TEI’s functioning, i.e. the Key Areas are stated below:

Curriculum Design and Planning

A broad curriculum framework is adopted as a common direction provider to all the constituent institutions. Usually it is the macro unit that specifies details of syllabus including the assessment procedures. In spite of all such streamlining the actual curriculum transaction is unique to each institution. This is because of the institutional goals, the way the institution visualizes the how and why of carrying out selected learning activities and plans the academic programme details. In this sense, what the institution implements is its ‘operational curriculum’ and it is designed in an internally relevant manner by each institution. This is very institution specific process. The quality concern of the institution is thus reflected in the manner in which this operational curriculum is designed and planned. It is in this purview the quality aspects under this KA are stated to be - The process of Curriculum design, Institutional vision, Curriculum content, and, Curriculum revision.

Curriculum Transaction and Evaluation

Curriculum transaction is the most crucial dimension of an institution's functioning. The dynamism, flexibility and intentions of the curriculum visualised/planned need to be explicated in the transaction modes, which means, these features must be observable in the manner in which the curriculum design is put to practice. The best laid plans may be rendered less effective by weak implementation mechanisms. The extent of teacher involvement and commitment, student interest and motivation, coordination between and among the various units of the institution as well as the several learning activities, meaningful interconnections among the theoretical and practical activities on the one hand and the institutional and the field based activities on the other are important considerations for effective curriculum transaction. There can be a wide range of transaction practices: from well coordinated meaningful activities pre-designed by teachers and participated by students, systematically monitored by teachers (teacher centric) to entirely learner evolved, learner need based, teacher facilitated, and not pre-designed but evolving set of activities (learner centric). Most institutions are somewhere between these two extremes.

Research, Development and Extension

The kinds and extent of emphasis on research that a university department places will be naturally different from a teaching college. Pursuing practice in field relevant ways requires generating evidence to find out the process ramifications that worked, the impact generation and the outcome relevance of the practice. In this sense, research development and extension are closely linked to practice in education. The work done as development and extension can be very well the substance for research just as any systematic exploration can contribute to enhancing the worth of development and extension activities. It is necessary not only to be aware of the commonly connoted meanings of the terms extension and development, but also be able to visualize in house and/or field based development activities that lend strength to the regular processes in one's own institution and to other institutions.

Infrastructure and Learning Resources

Resource sufficiency is crucial to the effective functioning of an institution. It goes to building up a congenial atmosphere, supports and sustains the working ethos within an institution. In a TEI inputs for theory and practical components of the programme require different types of physical infrastructure. Therefore, it is essential that a mechanism is in place to ensure availability of adequate and appropriate infrastructure and for its constant augmentation to keep pace with the academic growth of the institution.

Organisation and Management

An effective internal quality management demonstrates dealing with the processes through team work, involving people from all units and levels, improvement and training in management systems, identification and elimination of barriers to teaching-learning and constant review and analysis of data for development. Participatory management procedures and creative governance of human and material resources are important areas which reflect the quality of an institution and ensure that the academic and administrative planning in the institution move hand in hand. The goals and objectives need to be communicated and deployed at all levels to ensure every individual employee's contribution towards institutional development. The institution needs good resource management practices, which support and encourage performance improvement, planning and implementation strategies. The financial resources of the institution need to be judiciously allocated and effectively utilised. All of these are reflected in this key area.

Agencies of Quality Assurance

Various agencies are involved for assuring in teacher education, the significant ones are as follows:- and standards for twelve teacher education courses in all at pre-primary, primary, secondary, senior secondary, physical and distance education courses. It is amandatory 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 “Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education” for upgrading the quality of teacher education programmes at par with international standards.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an organization that assesses and accredits institutions of higher education in India. It is an autonomous body funded by University Grants Commission of Government of India headquartered in Bangalore. NAAC was established in 1994 in response to recommendations of National Policy in Education (1986) [10]. 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 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 education institutions, the NAAC and the NCTE have entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for executing the process of assessment and accreditations of all teacher education institutions coming under the provision of the NCTE.

Universities

The university is responsible for providing affiliation to the teacher education institutions situated in its jurisdiction. It conducts combined entrance tests and grants admissions to students against non-management seats to these teacher education institutions. It also design curriculum, coordinates for quality teaching, and conducts examination. It also prescribes norms for certification of faculties. It is also engaged in capacity building through faculty development programme and research.

Institutions of Teacher Education

Teacher education institutions create appropriate infrastructure for providing quality teacher education and grants admission against management seats. It organizes teaching as per prescribed curriculum of the affiliating university. It is also engaged in appointing faculties and overall management of the institution. It also coordinates with the affiliating university, NCTE and the State Govt. in all matters regarding teacher education.

Few Measures for Improving Quality of Teacher Education

Quality of an institution or a programme is generally considered on the basis of placement of its products. It is ascertained from quality of material and human resources. Various factors that affect quality are: finance, sincerity of faculty and students and management, skills of management, skills of teaching of faculty members, and quality of brain of students. In order to accelerate qualitative improvement in higher

education, National Knowledge Commission (2009) [9] recommended establishment of 30 new Central universities, 16 in States where they do not exist and 14 as World class universities (all India admissions, course credits, regular syllabi revision, incentives for faculty, strong linkage with industry and research institutions, no affiliated colleges, outsource nonteaching functions. The main indicator of the quality of teacher education can be visualized in terms of its products the learners achievement. both in scholastic and co-scholastic areas i.e. the performance in various subjects of study and habits, attitudes, values and life skills necessary for becoming a good citizen. The need of teacher man power planning has resulted in mushrooming growth of teacher education throughout the country. The following measures may be helpful for improving quality of teacher education:

1. To provide professional development for practicing inservice teachers by updating their knowledge and skills
2. Effectiveness of the new initiatives curricular reforms
3. Intensive use of ICT for school education and also involvement of the community
4. To adopt innovative Teaching strategies in teacher education and Improving educational administration practices
5. To evolve strategies to enhance professional competency in teacher education
6. To provide expert advice to local schools upon request
7. To analyze the future of teacher education institutions
8. To provide Infrastructure facility in teacher education
9. Teacher education and professional competence of teacher educators
10. Spreading sense of ethical values in teacher education

Conclusion

Quality in Teacher Education is an established notion which is described vividly in terms of desirable characteristics of the activities undertaken, individuals involved, and infrastructure needed. Confronted with declining standards, primarily due to expansion of higher education system, the question of quality become critical. Teacher education system is not the exception of it. For the higher education scenario in the local context, quality is achievable if the factors influencing quality are identified and then consciously manipulating these will allow quality to be induced in the education system in our country.

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