

A Study on Quality of Public And Private Funded B.Ed Programme In Northern Region Based On Perception Of Teacher Trainees With Regard To Learning Enhancement

Sukti Barua

Research Scholar: Shri Venkateshwara University, Gajraula, Amroha Uttar Pradesh India

Abstract

One of the key areas of a secondary teacher education programme is to train and prepare teacher trainees to function and carry out their responsibilities with commitment and most importantly as professionals. In the light of this, it is crucial for all teacher education institutions to visualize and share a common goal towards teacher preparation. But in reality, institutions carry out actual curriculum transaction and implement varied learning activities in their own unique manner. The effort is to make consistent efforts to develop in trainees, skills of teaching, the ability to think reflectively and establish interconnection among the various components. With this assumption, in mind, institutions need to ensure that they function within the framework of the six key areas of teacher education, in a well-planned and process-oriented manner. The objective of the study was to find out and compare the quality of Public and Private-Funded Institutions based on the perception of B.Ed students with regard to 'Learning Enhancement' in nine northern regions. The study found that there was no significant difference between the perception of male and female trainees in the age group of 18-24 years and 25 years and above of Public-Funded and Private-Funded Institutions. There was significant difference in the perception of sex, whereas there was no significant difference in the perception of teacher trainees in the age group of trainees of Public and Private-Funded Institutions. Between Public and Private-Funded Institutions, there was significant difference in the perception of teacher trainees; however, trainees of Public-Funded Institutions had more favourable perception than trainees of Private-Funded Institutions.

Key words: Key Areas, Perception, Quality.

1. Introduction

"...Teaching is a profession and teacher education is a process of professional preparation of teachers. Preparing one for a profession is an arduous task and it involves action from multiple fronts and perspectives. Teacher Training Institutions are envisioned as active centres of practical experiments directed to the educational methods, curricula and research, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education". (NCFTE, 2009, pp 15.) It suggests that, if teacher education institutions could be organized to become "...dynamic centres of progressive educational movements, the whole task of educational reconstruction would be greatly facilitated as it provides the necessary space and vision for a convergence between school curriculum and the education of teachers..." (ibid pp22). The extent to which teacher trainees learn and assimilate depends entirely on the quality of inputs they get from teacher training institutions. It is therefore important for institutions to ensure that staff and students seek new information, revising existing ones, using technology and better methodologies, effective learning materials, sharing research work, making available to students ICT facilities, laboratories and learning resources. Institutions need to show concern for students' progression to higher studies. (NAAC, Quality Indicators for Teacher Education, 35 pp)

Unfortunately, the dominant practice is that there is lack of engagement with students, theory is taken as "...given and there is no space to address students' assumptions about social realities, the learner and the process of learning. In the light of this, the proposed process based teacher education as suggested in the focus needs to be on engagement with learners in real-life situations with theoretical enquiry..." (NCFTE 2009, p52).

All the learning experiences should be followed up by feedback, reflection and be used for improvement). This is possible only when institutions have a system wherein all the data and information is collected comprehensively and based on this develop a sound mechanism system which reflects concern for students. In other words, efforts provided for 'Learning Enhancement' only becomes possible when consistent efforts are made for progress in implementation of the programme and achievement of students are monitored regularly. Student support is also provided when institutions provide courses in relevant areas of specialization and offers remedial programmes based on needs of students with qualified staff manning Guidance Counseling Unit(). In the same vein,

institutions need to identify activities and articulate them in their academic calendar in order to ensure provision of opportunities and for optimal use of resources.(NAAC Quality Indicators pp50)

As the curriculum content needs to provide varied learning situations both at college and field levels, once the admission procedures are over teacher trainees need comprehensive orientation about the programme. Both theoretical and practical courses should be such that it provides and develops in trainees a holistic school education perspective with the role of a teacher therein with the capacity for doing both individual and group work to develop in them the ability to practice critical and reflective thinking. The institutions should provide simulated practice teaching experiences which give the teacher trainees adequate practice for lesson transaction, school experiences, classroom processes and get familiarized with overall functions of the school. Trainees should be given adequate practice to understand and establish the interrelatedness among the various components of the curricular activities. Effective curriculum transaction only takes place when there is synergy among the various facets of Teacher Education such as teacher commitment, interest of trainees, meaningful connections between learning theoretical and practical activities.

1.1 Need and Significance of the Study

The criterion that should determine the duration of B.Ed programme should be the bulk of tasks that needs to be accomplished and the competencies that need to be developed. It is important that the quality of the 'Product' of the program is satisfactory and according to expectations in the field. One of the important ways to enhance quality is when an institution makes an effort to encourage staff and students to seek new information, revising existing ones, by using technology and better improved methodologies and techniques of teaching and learning. This study will throw light on issues and areas that need to be strengthened identify areas that contribute towards learning enhancement and accordingly prepare and evaluate students to become a committed and professional teacher. In order to do so, it is necessary to find out to what extent public and private funded B.Ed Institutions are able to provide inputs systematically in the six key areas that determine the quality of teacher education.

There is a need to find out, to what extent trainees are given practice for establishing the interrelatedness among all various components of the curricular activities, whether institutions are able to visualize the processes of nurturing and mentoring teacher trainees need in order to experience guidance and counseling at every stage and in all aspects of the training programme. Equally important is to find out, if activities of the training programme are being followed up by a feedback mechanism, based on proper assessment and grading, wherein, trainees can improve themselves, as this process- oriented approach, enables trainees to develop a fair idea about assessment and in the process, appreciate the value of transparency. It is also important to find out to what extent teacher educators are able to provide and put simulations and field experiences together and dovetail both meaningfully.

An investigation into these areas and aspects will not only reveal the extent of impact the programme has on the trainees but it will also establish the indicators that stand for quality programme. Along with this, it will also point out to the number of competencies that need to be developed in teacher educators. The responses to all these questions will enable academicians and policymakers to identify the overall gaps and work towards strengthening of Secondary Teacher Education Programme.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- To find out and compare the perception of teacher trainees of Public-Funded Institutions with regard to six key areas based on sex and age.
- To find out and compare the perception of teacher trainees of Private-Funded Institutions with regard to six key areas based on sex and age.
- To find out and compare the perception of teacher trainees of Public and Private-Funded Institutions with regard to six key areas based on sex and age.
- To find out and compare the perception of teacher trainees between Public and Private-Funded Institutions with regard to six key areas based on sex and age.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in perception of teacher trainees of Public-Funded Institutions with regard to six key areas based on sex and age.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in perception of teacher trainees of Private-Funded Institutions with regard to six key areas based on sex and age.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between perception of teacher trainees of Public and Private-Funded Institutions with regard to six key areas based on sex and age.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference in perception of teacher trainees between Public and Private-Funded Institutions with regard to six key areas based on sex and age.

2. Review of Related Literature

Vasanthi and Anandi (1997), MD Usha (2007), examined teacher effectiveness of B.Ed. student teachers and analyzed perception with regard to relevance and adequacy of existing professional preparation of teachers, Mohanty in (1984), Dash J (1985) and Zayapragassarazan and Pughazhendi and Nirvane Minal (2007) studied facilities, efficiency of teachers, quality of trainees and practice teaching programme, Thiagarajan, P.A and Ramesh R and Kharlukhi, B (2005) studied self-concept of B.Ed trainees and Das Swarnlata (2006) found that link was weakest in theory and stronger in method papers. A study by Panigrahi Ranjan Manas (2010) studied quality of self-financing, understanding and solution of significant educational problem. Chawla, Vibha and Thukral, Praveen (2009) studied relative effectiveness of different types of feedback; V. Sasikala studied skills and academic achievement of B.Ed teacher trainees. Although a large number of research was previously undertaken to assess studies, literature and practical work of teacher trainees, in order to understand relationship between cognitive and affective teaching behavior of teachers, there seems to be a need for a study to look into the quality dimensions that govern the implementation of a one year B.Ed programme. The present study attempted to capture the perceptions of teacher trainees with regard to quality dimensions.

3. Research Methodology

The study was conducted in the nine northern states of India, taking two co-ed institutions each from Public and Private-Funded Institutions from the states of NCT Delhi, Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan. The total sample comprised of 974 trainees, of which 340 were male and 634 were female.

3.1 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 36 co-educational B.Ed (18 Public and 18 Private-Funded) institutions were identified for the purpose of a representative sample. The total sample comprised of 974 teacher trainees out of whom at least 25–35 male and female from each institution were taken based on random sampling.

3.2 Research Instruments

3.2.1 Construction of Tools

In order to test the stated hypotheses, a questionnaire was formulated based on the six key areas that represented the functioning of academic, administrative and management activities of teacher educational institutions, in order to determine the quality of the programme in Public and Private-Funded institutions. Based on the criterion developed by NAAC a perception schedule was devised on the basis of inputs mentioned for quality assessment of teacher education programme. The quality inputs were first identified and further delineated in terms of actual tasks in order to capture the quality aspects of the teacher education institutions. Necessary modifications and adaptations were made after tool testing and detailed discussion with scholars/guide. The questionnaire comprised of two sections namely:

Part 1-Background Information having seven items that served as independent variables namely: Sex, Age, Household Setting, Household Monthly Income, College Education (Level of Education, Mode of Course, Location of Institution, Type of Management, Medium of Instruction at Graduate / Post-Graduate Level), Reasons for joining Course and Medium of Instruction in B.Ed Course.

Part 2-Comprised of the Perception Schedule containing sixty six items formulated from within the six key areas. All the items in the schedule were based on aspects of the above areas rated at five levels, which were basically descriptions of degrees to which quality was expressed and each level was assigned a numerical weightage.

3.3. Data Collection

Data was personally collected from both Public and Private-Funded Institutions from all the nine Northern Indian States. Prior to data administration the objectives of the study were discussed with the heads and teacher educators of the institutions. Teacher trainees were briefed regarding the importance and purpose of the study and why their perception was important in terms of quality improvement of B.Ed. programme. The sections of the questionnaire and the options were explained. The questionnaire was prepared both in Hindi and in English.

4. Analysis of Data, Interpretation and Discussion

The programme used for computation was statistical package for social sciences formulated by Nie Hull et al (1975). The obtained data was treated by applying Mean, S.D. and 't' value which were subsequently subjected to factor analysis. The values gleaned from the items were arranged in a number of tables separately for each group namely Public, Private, Public and Private and between Public and Private-Funded Institutions. The factors that were extracted were also variables. To make the factors unrelated and to reduce the overlapping, a technique called rotation of factors was adopted. By rotation of factors, the factor structure becomes simple. Factor Loading is the correlation that a variable has with a particular factor. The test retest reliability of the items in the schedule was calculated as 0.946.

4.1 Factor and Factor Loadings

Table 1 shows that the factor loadings of 20 items of 'Learning Enhancement' ranges from 0.346 to 0.719. There were 20 items which were measuring all the items in 'Learning Enhancement' on a 5 point scale (1 being the least and 5 being the highest). The total score of these items was divided by 20 in order to reduce the factor into a 5 point scale.

4.2 Analysis of Public Funded Institutions

Table 2 shows that in a comparison between male and female respondents of Public-Funded Institutions aggregating to 498, (male N=194 and female N=304) the mean value for 'Learning Enhancement' for male and female was 3.84 and 3.74 respectively. The obtained 't' value was 1.62 and was not significant. It indicated that sex had no influence on this factor. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of teacher trainees with respect to 'Learning Enhancement' was therefore accepted.

Table 3 shows that in a comparison of teacher trainees of Public-Funded Institutions aggregating to 498, between group1 (Age 18-24 years N=382) and group 2 (Age 25 years and above N=116), the mean values in the factor 'Learning Enhancement' for group1 and group 2 were 3.79 and 3.77 respectively. The obtained 't' value was 0.33 and was not significant. It indicated that age had no influence on this factor. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of teacher trainees with respect to 'Learning Enhancement' was therefore accepted.

4.3 Analysis of Private-Funded Institutions

Table 4 shows that in a comparison between male and female respondents of Private-Funded Institutions aggregating to 476, (male N=146 and female N=330) the mean value in factor 'Learning Enhancement' for male and female respondents were 3.59 and 3.47 respectively. The obtained 't' value was 1.49 and was not significant. It indicated that sex had no influence on this factor. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of teacher trainees with respect to 'Learning Enhancement' was therefore accepted.

Table 5 shows in a comparison teacher trainees of Public and Private Funded Institutions aggregating to 476, between groups 1 and 2 shows that the mean value in factor 'Learning Enhancement' for group 1 (age 18-24 years N= 347) and group 2 (25 years and above N= 129) teacher trainees were 3.53 and 3.46 respectively. The obtained 't' value was 0.90 and was not significant. It indicated that age had no influence on this factor. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of teacher trainees with respect to 'Learning Enhancement' was therefore accepted.

4.4 Analysis of Public and Private-Funded Institutions

Table 6 shows in a comparison between male and female respondents of Public and Private Funded Institutions aggregating to 974 (male N=340 and female N=634) the mean value in factor 'Learning Enhancement' for male was 3.74 and for female was 3.60 respectively. The 't' value was 2.64 and was significant at 0.01 level. It

indicated that Sex had influence on this factor. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of teacher trainees with respect to 'Learning Enhancement' was therefore rejected.

Table 7 shows in a comparison teacher trainees of Public and Private Funded Institutions aggregating to 974, between groups 1 and 2 which was for group 1 (age 18-24 years N=729) and for group 2 (age 25 years and above N=245) mean value in factor 'Learning Enhancement' for age groups 1 and 2 were 3.66 and 3.60 respectively. The obtained 't' value was 1.14 and was not significant. It indicated that there was no influence of age on this factor. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of teacher trainees with respect to 'Learning Enhancement' was therefore accepted.

4.5 Analysis between Public and Private-Funded Institutions

Table 8 shows the comparison between Public and Private Funded Institutions aggregating to 974 (Public Funded N=498 and Private Funded N=476) the comparison between respondents of 498 Public and 476 Private-Funded Institutions respectively, that in factor 'Learning Enhancement', the mean score of Public and Private-Funded Institutions were 3.78 and 3.51 respectively. The obtained 't' value 5.76 and was significant at 0.01 level. It indicated that type of institution had influence on this factor. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of teacher trainees between public and private-funded institutions with respect to 'Learning Enhancement' was therefore rejected.

5 Major Findings

5.1 Public-Funded Institutions

There was no significant difference in perception of male and female teacher trainees of Public-Funded Institutions with respect to key areas in the factors 'Learning Enhancement'. There was no significant difference between perception of two age groups of teacher trainees 18-24 years and 25 years and above in the factors 'Learning Enhancement'.

5.2 Private-Funded Institutions

There was no significant difference between perception of male and female teacher trainees with regard to the six key areas in the factors 'Learning Enhancement'. There was no significant difference between perception of the two age groups of teacher trainees 18-24 years and 25 years and above with regard to the six key areas in the factors 'Learning Enhancement'.

5.3 Public and Private-Funded Institutions

There was no significant difference between perception of male and female teacher trainees in Public and Private-Funded Institutions with regard to the six key areas in the factors 'Learning Enhancement. However, there was significant difference between perception of male and female teacher trainees in Public and Private-Funded Institutions with respect to the factor 'Learning Enhancement'. However, there was no significant difference between perception of the two age groups 18-24 years and 25 years and above of teacher trainees in Public and Private-Funded Institutions with regard to the six key areas in the factors 'Learning Enhancement'.

5.4 Between Public and Private-Funded Institutions

By variable factor 'Learning Enhancement' there was significant difference between Public and Private-Funded Institutions. Trainees of Public-Funded Institutions had more favourable perception than Trainees of Private-Funded Institutions.

6. Discussions

Public-Funded trainees from rural background, those belonging to economically weaker sections and those from 'Hindi' medium had favourable perception regarding learning enhancement. The possible reason for this could be that trainees studying in public-funded institutions are more meritorious than their private institution counterparts. Hence, despite socio-economic constraints, their determination to pursue a professional course in order to meet their aspirations could well be the reasons for having favourable perception.

With the expansion of teacher education in the private sector, more and more private institutions are being established in far-flung remote areas. As a result, people living in these areas have become much more aware

about the value of professional courses than what they were a few years ago. Despite high fees charged by Private-Funded Institutions, the lowest economically weaker groups, the groups who studied in the vernacular or in 'Any other' language and trainees from rural setting have a positive attitude about the change that has come about in the educational scenario. A realization has come upon them that such a change in the environment will only increase their chances of coming to the mainstream of educational opportunities.

Trainees of Public and Private-Funded Institutions mostly male, from rural, household setting, those with rural educational background, economically weakest group, post-graduates and above educational level had favourable perception, the possible reason for this could be due to high motivational, aspirational and social mobility reasons. Having higher educational qualification despite disadvantaged background, these groups seemed to be somewhat satisfied with 'Learning Enhancement' opportunities available in the institutions in the form of seminar and debate, use of ICT and Library facilities.

Between Public and Private-Funded Institutions, trainees of Public-Funded Institutions showed more favourable perception, possible reason for this could be due to the fact that having achieved better academically, expectations from institution in terms of Curriculum Transaction, qualified staff and overall programme implementation was high, which institutions were able to meet.

7. Conclusions

Both Public and Private-Funded Institutions need to upgrade not only their infrastructure, but must also update their programmes for quality improvement. The teaching faculty needs to gear up its academic processes such as curriculum development and planning, designing textbooks and instructional aids, and most importantly they need to work on the instructional processes in order to promote reflective thinking and self-learning. With all of this in place, institutions need to engage trainees in various ways through fruitful academic interactions so that, their learning needs are supported. Scope of practice teaching in schools is limited and not related to theories and field realities. Research in the area of teacher education is quite neglected. The need of the hour is to find out to what extent an institution is performing beyond the minimum specifications for achieving quality and excellence. More such studies need to be undertaken in order to understand the nature and extent of support rendered by institutions in terms of academic flexibility and feedback. In addition to this, it is important to throw light and understand the nature of Curriculum Transaction and Evaluation in terms of induction orientation, transaction of theory, transaction of practical experiences, assessment and evaluation. Furthermore, in terms of Research Development and Extension, it is important to study and understand whether institutions are functioning as "Learning Centres" or are they merely functioning as 'training institutions' churning out teachers who are lacking in professionalism and qualities that make a teacher humane. More and more creative, participatory and active methods need to be adopted for better classroom management, for removing learning difficulties, for making learning materials, developing sensitivities towards the learner, removing gender disparities and social inequalities.

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About the Author

Sukti Barua is the founder member and Director of UHNMEsh a Resource Agency, working in the areas of Education and Health since the year 2000. With a background in school teaching, teacher education and development sector she has been actively involved in several Teacher Training, Material Development and Research Projects for both rural and urban sectors at national and international level.

TABLE: 1

FACTOR AND FACTOR LOADINGS

FACTOR	Q. NO.	ITEMS = 20	FACTOR LOADINGS
LEARNING ENHANCEMENT	1	Institution has a well-organized, guidance and counseling unit, which is accessible to all students.	0.719
	2	The institution has qualified staff and faculty for providing guide and counseling service.	0.648
	3	The guidance and counseling unit provides for holistic development of the students.	0.639
	4	Institution provides courses in relevant areas of specialization and remedial programmes as per the requirements of the students.	0.623
	5	The teaching-learning material, ICT facilities, laboratories and learning resource center necessary for implementing the programme are available and utilized.	0.602
	6	The institution shares research work with students to strengthen Teacher education programme.	0.588
	7	Progress in implementation of the programme and achievement of students are monitored, discussed and weaknesses are identified for further improvement	0.571
	8	The institution uses adequate technology for learning enhancement.	0.566
	9	Feedback is valued from within institution, from schools, community and others.	0.565
	10	The concern for the development of students is reflected in the student monitoring system.	0.526
	11	Data / information is collected and collated comprehensively	0.516
	12	Efforts are made by teachers to develop and utilize effective learning materials in the class.	0.507
	13	Feedback is used for improvement	0.499
	14	The activities contained in the academic calendar are for optimizing use of available resources	0.467
	15	Teachers use improved techniques, to innovate, improve curriculum transaction, according to the level of Students.	0.437
	16	The staff and students seek new information, revising existing ones using technology and better methodologies.	0.408
	17	The quality of the product of the program is satisfactory and according to expectations from the field.	0.408
	18	Institution shows concern for students' progression to higher studies and a teaching career as well as their retention in it.	0.394
	19	Teachers gain professional development by participating in in-house discussions, seminars and debate.	0.375
	20	The learning activities develop sensitivities towards community issues, gender disparities, social inequity, and similar issues.	0.346

Table 2
Comparison of Factors on Perception Scale with regard to quality of B. Ed programme in Public-Funded Institutions between Male and Female Trainees.

Public Funded Institutions N = 498					
Dimension / Factor	Male n = 194		Female N = 304		"t" - value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Learning Enhancement	3.84	0.72	3.74	0.64	1.62 N.S.

N.S. Not Significant

Table 3
Comparison of factors on Perception Scale with regard to Quality of B. Ed Programme in Public-Funded Institutions with reference to Age of trainees

Public Funded Institutions N = 498					
Dimension / actor	Age 18-24 yrs N=382		Age 25 yrs above N = 116		"t" - value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Learning Enhancement	3.79	0.65	3.77	0.75	0.33 N.S.

N.S. Not Significant

Table 4
Comparison of Factors on Perception Scale with regard to quality of B. Ed. Programme in Private-Funded Institutions between Male and Female trainees.

Private Funded Institutions N= 476					
Dimension / Factor	Male N = 146		Female N = 330		"t" - value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Learning Enhancement	3.59	0.82	3.47	0.79	1.49 N.S.

N.S. Not Significant

Table 5
Comparison of Factors on Perception Scale with regard to quality of B. Ed. Programme in Private -Funded Institutions with reference to Age of trainees.

Private Funded Institutions N = 476					
Dimension / Factor	Age 18-24 yrs N = 347		Age 25 yrs above N = 129		"t" - value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Learning Enhancement	3.53	0.80	3.46	0.81	0.90 N.S.

N.S. Not Significant

Table 6
Comparison of Factors on Perception Scale with regard to quality of B. Ed. Programme in Public and Private- Funded Institutions between Male and Female trainees

Public and Private Funded Institutions N = 974					
Dimension / Factor	Male N = 340		Female N = 634		"t" - value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Learning Enhancement	3.74	0.77	3.60	0.74	2.64* *

*** Significant at 0.01 level*

Table 7

Comparison of factors on Perception Scale with regard to quality of B. Ed. Programme in Public and Private-Funded Institutions between Age of trainees

Public and Private Funded Institutions N = 974					
Dimension / Factor	Age 18-24 yrs N = 729		Age 25 yrs above N = 245		"t" - value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Learning Enhancement	3.66	0.74	3.60	0.79	1.14 N.S.

N.S. Not Significant

Table 8

Comparison of Factors on Perception Scale with regard to quality of B.Ed. Programme between Public and Private-Funded Institutions.

Institutions Funded N = 974					
Dimension / Factor	Public N = 498		Private N = 476		"t" - value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Learning Enhancement	3.78	0.67	3.51	0.80	5.76* *

*** Significant at 0.01 level*

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