

Effective Quality Management of Teacher Education

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Abstract

Now a days the field of education is not only limited with books but has broadened in various new horizons. Development and changes in education have affected teacher education necessitating review and reforms. Teacher education is a program related with teacher proficiency and competence that would make them competent enough to face new challenges in the education. It is a deliberate enterprise aiming to provide good quality service to its customers in order to enable them to contribute significantly for development of the nation. This quality service is essential in the modern context of globalization. Applied to the field of Teacher Education, quality refers to the totality of features and characteristics of the student teacher acquired as a result of the teacher education programme. If the expectations of the schools, students, parents and the society are met, this indicates that the right type of teachers have been prepared by the teacher education institutions. And if the teachers continue to improve themselves, then there is value addition in education. Such teachers will continue to meet the needs of the society. 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. Instead we should consider those indicators, which are applicable to a variety of situations sensitive to the specific needs and functions of teacher education. Hence, there should be flexibility in approaches and methodology for assessment of teacher education institutions.

Keywords

Teacher Education, Quality Control Indicators, Quality Management, MOU

I. Introduction

Teacher education is a global profession that needs to be understood properly. It is essential to grasp a global perspective of the profession as it is today, to make assumptions about it in the near future and to utilize the best thinking and instructional models available in the present times.

Professionally powerful teaching is very important and increasing in our contemporary society as a result of the steam of dynamic initiatives of human development and evolution. Due to these developments and evolution, standards of learning would be higher in the 21st century than it has been in the 20th century. As a result teachers would need to acquire additional knowledge and skills, both general and specific, to be able to survive and be successful in the 21st century school environment.

Teacher education has to become more sensitive to the emerging demands from the school system. For this, it has to prepare teachers for a dual role of;

- Encouraging, supportive and humane facilitator in teaching learning situations who enables learners to discover their talents, to realize their physical and intellectual potentialities to the fullest, to develop character and desirable social and human values to function as responsible citizens; and,
- An active member of the group of persons who make conscious effort to contribute towards the process of renewal of school curriculum to maintain its relevance to the changing

societal needs and personal needs of learners, keeping in view the experiences gained in the past and the concerns and imperatives that have emerged in the light of changing national development goals and educational priorities.

Unfortunately the programmes of teacher education are alleged to be static and stagnant. The existing teacher education model is inherited mostly from British system of education and is suffering a lot due to its inability to keep pace with time adopting necessary modification in its conceptual based theory and practices (Yadav et al., 2011). N.P.E. (1986) and the subsequent program of actions have realized that the program of teacher education in various stages requires a thorough reconstruction in its input, process and output in order to make the system quality oriented.

II. Concept of Quality

The dictionary meaning of quality is—"the degree of excellence".

According to Bennis (1993) —"Quality often is not measured at all, but is appreciated intuitively. One's response to quality is a feeling, a perception that is connected intimately with our experience of meaning, beauty and values in our lives."

According to Jan D. Timmer —"quality is a state of mind...the relentless pursuit of excellence, of never being satisfied with what you do, how you do it and how quickly you do it. There is always room for improvement. Everything can always be done better. Quality should be a part of our soul".

Quality is contextual. It is very difficult to give a comprehensive definition of quality It is the totality of features and characteristics of the product, process or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. In the educational context, quality is seen as a complex issue as education is concerned with human being. When we describe human being as a product, the description cannot encapsulate all the characteristics of teachers or learners in the same way, as one would describe the quality of commodities. Hence, the definition of quality varies depending upon the individual, institution and educational situation, social and national context.

To ensure quality in education (as well as in teacher education particularly), is a massive challenge since it deals with the most sensitive creation of earth i.e. the human resources (Rogers, 1995). Quality has become a defining element of education in the 21st century in the context of new social realities. The information communication revolution, the knowledge economy and globalization are greatly influencing the "next society". How to provide quality education to large numbers at affordable costs is the primary concern of developing countries. Quality makes education as much socially relevant as it is personally indispensable to the individuals. In this context, quality and excellence should be the vision of every higher education institution including teacher education. Acquisition of quality and excellence is the great challenge faced by all higher education institutions.

III. Quality Control Indicators in Teacher Education:

In the field of teacher education, in order to assess the quality of teacher education institutions, certain quality control indicators

are to be considered. NAAC (2005) has identified following seven indicators to assess and control the quality in teacher education:-

A. Curricular Aspects

which includes goal orientation, curriculum development, programs options, academic flexibility and feedback mechanism.

B. Teaching, Learning and Evaluation

Which includes admission process, catering to diverse needs, teaching-learning process, teacher quality, evaluation of teaching, evaluation of learning, and examination reforms.

C. Research, Development and Extension

Which includes promotion of research, research output, publications output, consultancy extension activities, participation in extension and linkages.

D. Infrastructure and Learning Resources

which includes physical facilities, maintenance of infrastructure, library as a learning resource, computers as learning resources and other facilities.

E. Student Support and Progression

Which includes students profile, students progression, student support and student activities.

F. Organization and Management

Which includes goal orientation and decision making, organization structure, powers and functions of functionaries, perspective planning, human power planning and recruitment, performance appraisal, staff development programmes, resources mobilization and financial management.

G. Healthy Practices

Which includes total quality management, innovations, value-based education, social responsibilities and citizenship roles, overall development and institutional ambience and initiatives.

IV. Quality Management in Teacher Education

Though the concept of quality management has been introduced mostly to improve the quality of industrial product, its relevance in the field of academic institutions has also been realized by educators. Particularly in the field of teacher education, its effective implementation might ensure a better possibility of increased involvement of various stake holders, more team work, the process of redesign, competitive benchmarking, constant measurement of the outcomes, long range vision, team based problem solving, and closer relationship with community (Kaun, 1996).

In any educational institution there are three aspects to be managed-academic, administrative and financial. Besides these there are the human and physical resources to be managed to their optimum level. In other words management of input-process-product is of utmost concern of the system of teacher education. If every component is of good quality then the final product will be perceived as fulfilling the needs of the consumers.

Applied to the field of Teacher Education, quality refers to the totality of features and characteristics of the student teacher acquired as a result of the teacher education programme. If the expectations of the schools, students, parents and the society are met, this indicates that the right type of teachers have been prepared by the teacher education institutions. And if the teachers

continue to improve themselves, then there is value addition in education. Such teachers will continue to meet the needs of the society. There is fitness of educational outcome and experience for use. There will be defect avoidance in education process of teachers in a quality teacher education institution.

Quality management adopts a number of management principles that can be used by upper management to guide their organizations towards improved performance. The principles are:

Customer focus, Leadership, Involvement of people, Process approach, System approach to management, Continual improvement, Factual approach to decision making, Mutually beneficial supplier relationships.

Various essential criteria and steps to be taken for an effective quality management program in teacher education Yadav et al. (2011) are as follows-

A. Commitment of Management and Governing Body

Management should be accountable and committed to their service, have adequate concern of various quality aspects and norms in the field of teacher education and not only profit making approach.

B. Identification of Quality areas

Areas to which quality improvement is required are necessary to identify. Teacher education institutions may consult various indicators identified by apex bodies like NAAC in this regard.

C. Appointment of Quality Assurance Cells

Teacher education institutions should have its own internal quality assurance cell to monitor various functions of the institution and suggest for the necessary improvements.

D. Establishment of Various Steering Committees

Various committees may be formed and the tasks may be distributed among them in view of the priority of quality areas.

E. Design of Process and Objectives

Objectives of each steering committee need to be formulated and operationalized in terms of achievable outcomes. Depending upon this, process of functioning of each committee may be decided.

F. SWOT Analysis

It is one of the most essential functions of various steering committees to identify strength-weakness-opportunity-threat in the related fields and to prepare the necessary plan of action in this regard.

G. Awaiting Quality Aspects

Assurance of quality is a team work. Therefore, all concerned persons should be well informed about the quality criterion and various efforts planned and acted upon by the management to raise the quality standard of institution.

V. Some Suggestive Measures to improve the Quality of Teacher Education:

With liberalization and globalization of economic activities, the demand for teacher education at nationality comparable and internationally acceptable standards has increased. This demands the teacher education institutions to be innovative, creative and entrepreneurial in their approach to skill development among the students.

Teacher education institutions have to shoulder the responsibility of inculcating the desirable value system among the student teachers

commensurate with social, cultural, economic and environmental realities at the local, national and universal level.

Our teachers should be trained to the technological innovations that are readily available. Effective use of information and communication technologies in teacher education institutions can improve the quality of teacher education.

Instead Quality assessment by NAAC and NCTE, we should consider those indicators, which are applicable to a variety of situations sensitive to the specific needs and functions of teacher education. Hence, there should be flexibility in approaches and methodology for assessment of teacher education institutions. There should be continuous in-service programmes organized both through face-to-face and distance mode in order to make the teachers to cope with the latest development.

Each teacher should do action research for qualitative improvement of classroom teaching. They should also be involved in developing teaching and learning (print and non-print) instructional materials, psychological tools, etc. this will help the teachers in updating their knowledge and skills continuously as well as improving their self-esteem. There should be continuous monitoring of teacher education institutions by NCTE and the affiliating University in order to maintain the standard of teacher education programme and its quality enhancement.

Conclusion

Due to expansion of higher education system, the quality declines. Teacher education system is not the exception of it. In the name of development of teacher education for access to maximum, self financing teacher education institutions are mushrooming now a days. The quantitative expansion has been accompanied by qualitative deterioration. The implication of quality management in this way may help an institution to achieve quality in various fields by ensuring customer satisfaction, accountability, credibility, and thus to maintain a certain standard of excellence.

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