QUALITY INDICATORS: A TOOL FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Parveen Rani, Ph. D

Baba Kundan Rural college of Education, Ludhaiana

Abstract

The challengers faced by teacher education institutions raise pertinent questions for both the school system and the governments. While, the school system has to grapple with the problems of teacher quality and the increasing student and societal expections. Governments are struggling to provide the teacher education system an environment that fosters innovation and match the requirements of the school sector. This calls for a breakthrogh and bold thinking on the part of all the stakeholders. In line with the laid out priorities. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), set out to develop quality indicators for teacher education. The indicators are the outcome of the recommendations of senior teacher educators and experts in education from eleven Commonwealth countries. Using these indicators, which are introspective. The instituation can create internal quality structures for appraisal of the quality provisions of the system, which in turn would lead to continuous monitoring and improvement and to energize and the sector and fostering institution level quality structures and improvement.

Introduction

The character of a institution can be seen in the extent to which is regular functioning reflects concern for quality. Every academic institution evolves its own functional modalities in its efforts to word actualizing its goals. These modalities represent institutional characteristics making in a distinct environment. An academic institution providing professional education programms has working linkages with border framework of a macro context. An institution providing professional education programmes has these features more pronounced as it draws is resources inputs and clientele from the micro set up as well as giving the product benefit to the same. This puts the quality aspect of a professional education institution

under spotlight. A teacher education institution (TEI) is no exception. Further it has to be recognized that the quality of a TEI is not merely determined by the product performance in the field but also has to be seen in respect of its functional elements in the overall context of the institutional vision,

Agencies of quality assurance

Various agencies are involved for assuring in teacher education, the significant ones are as follows:

National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) The NCTE become a statutory body by an act Parliament in 1993. The main objective of the NCTE are to achive 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 standard for twelve teacher education courses in all at pre-primary, primary, secondary, senior secondary, physical and distance education courses. It is amendatory 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. Action 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 programms at per with international standards. NCTE being aware of the importance of information and Comminication Technology (ITC). Has made ICT Literacy a compulsory part of B.Ed course. NCTE has been engaging in organizing number of workshops for teacher educators through out the contry to familiarize them with basic of computer usage. In addition, B.Ed. colleges were provided with CD-ROM's to teach IT Literacy.

In order to inculcate a sense of value judgment, value commitment and value transmission among the teachers, NCTE has published number of print material; and CD-ROM as well as put these publication on its website. Some of the significant publications are: human Rights and National Values ; Gandhi on education; Sri Aurobindo on Education ;Role and Responsibility of Teachers in building Modern India; and Education for Character Development.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC):

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 NAAC on the recommendation of NPE 86. The primary objectives of establishment of NAAC is to assess and accredit institution 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 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. The three – stage process for assessment and Accreditations is as follows:

Preparation of the Self-appraisal report by the teacher education institution for submissions to NAAC validation of the self-appraisal Report by peers visiting the institution and the recommendations of the team of peers.

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 student 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.

Institution 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 these six KAs. In other words, the KAs provide a backdrop for viewing the description of each KA while trying to discern the QIs. The appropriateness of the OIs has to be seen within the scope of the KA. If in a particular TEI any QI seems either to be inappropriate or altered accordingly, but without losing sight of the KA. With a view to clarifying this, a brief description of the KAs is given hereunder.

Key Area I : Curriculum design and planning

It is common knowledge that curriculum of most TEIs are similar in that they share a common goal of teacher preparation. The variations are worked out in respect of the programme being offered by the constiturent 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 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.

Key Area II: Curriculum Transaction and Evaluation

Curriculum transaction is the most crucial dimension of an institution's functioning. The dynamism, flexibility and intentions of the curriculum visualized/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 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 consideration. Besides these, the kinds and procedures of assessment of student learning. Mechanisms of feedback and its use to enrich the curricular inputs, are eqally significant as the curricular inputs, are equally significant as they showcase to students and teacher the actual relevance of the learning activities.

Key Area III: Research, Development and extension

Research is perceived as something technically 'heavy' something that is not ordinary. Is very abstract, etc. thus, every teaching institution may not feel capable of pursuing research. It is true that specialized institutions for research have been established and the earlier expressions may be appropriate for them. The kinds and extent of emphasis on research that a university department places will be naturally different from a teaching college. It is necessary not only to be aware of commonly connoted, 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.

Key Area IV: 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. Facilities like the library are the actual learning locations and so it is essential that they have adequire information, knowledge and skills required for their study. It is not merely the availability of the space and infrastructure but the way in which it is maintained and productively utilized that decides the quality of the infrastructure.

Key Area V: Student Support and Progression

Students of a TEI are being prepared to operate as professionals with responsibilities and commitment. The extent of their learning and absorption during the TE programme depends considerably on the comfort they feel in the institution. Along with access to the available learning resources and physical comforts it is essential that the students perceive a cohesiveness and involvement in the institution both with the staff and the peers.

The institution has to identify the needs of the students and provide individualized support depending on the nature and extent of problems confronting the students. Facilitating mechanisms like guidance cell, placement cell and financial aid to support students are some examples. This Key Area thus

reflects the efforts of an institution to provide necessary support to students facilitating good campus experiences and their holistic development.

Key Area VI – Organisation and Management

Aneffective internal quality management demonstrates dealing with the processes through team work, improvement and training in management systems, identification and elimination of barriers to teaching-learning and constant review and analysis of data for development. The goals and objectives need to be communicated and deployed at all levels to ensure every individual employee's contribution towards institution development. The institution needs good resource management practices, which support and encourage performance important, planning and implementation strategies. The financial resources of the institution need to be judiciously allocated and effectively utilized. All of these are reflected in this key area.

Quality Indicators: A Tool for Quality Assessment

The QIs can be used by TEIs as a tool for self-assessment in respect of their quality positioning. An institution can select all the KAs and QAs or a particular one on which it intends to ascertain quality improvement and collect necessary data or information about it. The select aspect could be reflected in a regular activity in the institution plans to try out in order to strengthen the quality reflection in the specific aspect. The QIs will help in indicating the kinds of data to be recorded while implementing the activity. On the basis of analyzing the collected data the institution will be able to position its performance in respect of that aspect on a quality scale. An example on the manner of doing this is given in the later part of this document. Such an attempt will enable the institution to not only recognize their own work but also help discern the areas of needed improvement. It documents the institutional effort systematically and make explicit the strengths and nuances in the institutional processes. Further, the information collected will help design implementation strategies that would address both the complexity of the innovations of the institutions of the institution itself and taking into account the complexity of the processes and the diverse classroom situations. The QIs will be a beginning to bring in uniformity of the provision and positioning the teacher educators and institutional agendas in such a way that they address more directly provision and the expressed needs of teachers as well as the conditions in which they work. Each of the QIs thus implicitly or explicitly is concerned with visualizing teacher development in the context of quality improvement.

Conclusion

Teacher education programmes have acquired renewed significance. It has become imperative that the effort and resource mobilized towards teacher education are effective and filed relevant in particular country contexts. It is a pertinent expectation that the teacher education programmes revel/exhibit vibrancy adequate for responding to the emerging paradigms of school education and the teacher roles

there of it is thus necessary that quality concern is explicit in every aspect of teacher education programmes. It pertains to the concern reflected by those involved about ascertaining the true spirit and purpose of each task on the on hand, and on the other, try to enhance its meaningfulness. While the QIs are expected field data/ information for making necessary adjustments/ continuous improvement, the purpose is not to make definitive judgments on quality and student development. On the other hand the information on each QI would help the institution standardize data on relevant areas of improvement, thereby providing a base for future plans through prioritization and necessary adjustments in the processes.

References

Earle, R. (2000). "AECT and NCATE: A partnership for Quality Teaching through Accreditation." Teach Trends, v 44 n3 p53-57 April, 2000.

Gopalan, K. (2004). Some Quality Issues in Teacher Education. In Pillai. L. et al. (ED.) Quality Enhancement in teacher education. NAAC, Bangalore. 28-33.

MHRD (2004). Selected Educational statistics 2002-03 (as on 30th September. 2002). MHRD, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

Mishra, S. (2002) stadying the process – issues for Organizing research and Training in Distance Teacher Education Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Utkal Univ Bhubaneshwar.

NAAC (2004) NAAC A Decade of Dedication to Quality Assurance NAAC Bangalore.

NCTE (1998). Policy Perspectives in teacher Education critique and Documentation. NCTE, New Delhi.

Roy, M., Khan, M. L. A. (2001) Education for all in India: Going up the down staircase, paris. Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE).