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STATUS OF QUALITY PRACTICES IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN PUDUCHERRY STATE

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ABSTRACT

In our country there are various stages of education like Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary and Higher education. Quality education must be provided at each stage. The Present paper discusses the status of quality practices in Government Higher learning Institution in Puducherry State. The respondents are the students of Government Arts and Science College in puducherry region. The tools used for analysis are Reliability Analysis. Sample T- Test, Correlation and Stepwise Multiple Regression .The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between Student's Perception and Satisfaction among the students of Government Arts and Science College in puducherry state.

KEYWORDS

quality education, government higher learning institution.

INTRODUCTION

Progress of a country is possible only when its citizens are dynamic, enterprising and responsible. Without such citizens, a country cannot achieve progress in any field. Education is the most important tool to create such type of citizens. The development of a nation mostly depends upon growth of education in the society. In the development of any country, primary education helps in creating base while Higher Education (HE) is important for providing the cutting edge. Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) contribute to the growth of every nation by providing specialized knowledge and skilled manpower. It is even more important for a developing country like India.

Nobel Laureate and Economist Amartya Sen, a strong believer of bridging the gap between the country's rapid economic growth and its dismal literacy rate has argued that the root cause for most of India's development challenges lies in the education sector. A famous Chinese Educationist Confucius stated that goal of education is to produce men of quality who combines competence with virtue. Quality is multi- dimensional and through HE it strives to develop human resource of global standards. The quality HE seeks to develop human resource with skill, excellence in performance and capable of delivering the goods as a unit of the work force.

This paper makes an attempt to assess of the status of the existing a practices in HLIs in Puducherry State which is listed as a front runner in the field of Higher Education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Study reviews different academic exercises made by many authors in the field of Education.

Nayantara Padhi (2005), has made an attempt to investigate the genesis and concept of (TQM), and reviews the application and benefits of TQM in HLIs and Total Quality Management presents a strategic model for implementing TQM in OD (Open and Distance Learning) Institutions, and a few guidelines for its successful implementation.

Norwani, N.M. (2005), has adapted I-E-O model to analyze the contributions of students input and Institutional environmental factors towards the development of in at Public funded HLIs. The assessment of development was based on academic achievement interim cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and improvement in competencies such as creative- critical , communication and group work.

Westbrook, T.S et al (2005) , in his article reports that the student perceptions of expected and experienced academic service and instructional quality across 4 years of college enrolment. The Study reveals that a particular pattern of perceived change over 4 years with a significant difference between students' expectations and experienced quality. Also, it suggests that there is a continued support for linking in –class and out- of- class faculty and student development initiatives.

Barnes, B. R (2006), has adopted a modified SERVQUAL (Service Quality) instrument to investigate expectations and perceptions of SERVQUAL among a sample of postgraduate Chinese students at a leading management school in the UK and that concludes, the load on exists significant relationship on five SERVQUAL dimensions.

Khan, A.M (2006), has made an attempt to examine the quality status of private sector HE in Pakistan. The population for the study consists of 270 administrators, 6180 teachers and 61108 students in 54 private universities and degree awarding Institutions of Pakistan .Multi- stage random sampling procedure has been used to select the sample for this study. The collected data was analyzed and interpreted by using ANOVA and't' test. It concludes that Male, experienced, permanent and highly qualified administrators have favorable opinion about the quality of HE particularly quality of management and quality of curriculum.

Pal Pandi, A.et al (2009), has made an attempt to study the status of Integrated Total Quality Management (ITQM) practices in select technical Institutions in Tamilnadu, and also to investigate the assess the performance level of 250 students of self – financing engineering Institutions. The results of the study points out the fact that the status of quality with regard to the knowledge building factor is high in privately run Technical Institutions in Tamilnadu. This finding can also be applied internationally with minor modifications based on culture and need in the Institutions of professional learning.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Quality of education at graduation level is often judged by the number of students who can prove their merit and efficiency by securing a position in the job market and / or by securing a berth in HE sector. In India, at present the enrolment ratio at Postgraduate level is too low. The reason behind may be viewed from different angles. The most important one is the limited scope for enrolment due to lack of sufficient infrastructural facilities. Only most brilliant students can utilize the available opportunities with the help of their skill derived from strong education background. In the job market, where the scope for employment is gradually becoming limited, only those graduates who can freely and confidently communicate their knowledge and understanding about the relevant areas before the board of adjudicators achieve success at the end. Also, it is a fact that most of the graduates are lacking in their employable skills.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study proposes to identify the Students' Perception on the present quality practices in HLIs in Puducherry State which comprises of seven Arts and Science Colleges in puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe, and Yanam regions and to find out deficiencies reason in the HE system. Also, the study aims at providing some valuable clues for improving the standards of our HLIs on par with some of the highly rated universities and colleges in other parts of our country.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify Government Arts and Science Colleges Students' Perception (SP) and Students' Satisfaction (SS) on the quality practices in HLIs.
2. The employers have made earlier a huge shift from the criteria's followed in the selection process for the job positions. Now, the selection is made only on the basis of aptitude and other tests like Pschometric etc. The grades, Percentages etc are no longer the benchmarkers.
3. If the perception is found to be discouraging to find out the deficiencies which are responsible for the present quality status.
4. To provide suitable remedies for the defecencies if any.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference between Perception of Arts and Science students on quality practices between Govt and Private HLIs.
2. There is no significant correlation between perception and satisfaction among Arts and Science students on quality practices in Govt.HLIs.

METHODOLOGY

The data required for the study is collected through Questionnaire framed using Likert Scaling technique from the students of Arts and Science Colleges in Puducherry State

TOOLS USED

This study has applied Statistical tools such as Reliability Analysis. One Sample't' test and Correlation and Regression Analysis by adopting Service Quality (SERQUAL) instrument.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study is restricted only to Arts and Science colleges in Puducherry State.
2. Only Students' Perception is used for the study.

Owing to these reasons, this study which makes an attempt to identify the status of quality practices and to estimate the perception of the students is to be considered as a major step in the high direction.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**STATUS OF QUALITY PRACTICES IN GOVERNMENT HLIs IN PUDUCHERRY STATE – ANALYSIS**

The status of quality practices in Government HLIs has been analyzed in respect of the Perception and Satisfaction of Arts and Science Graduates Students. Observation of the results from Table 1 shows that there are 26 items measuring SP and 5 items measuring SS on quality practices in HLIs in Puducherry State. The reliability analysis for these produces the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .792, which is well above the norm (0.70), indicating that these 34 items are reliable measures.

TABLE 1

Quality Practices	Cronbach's Alpha
Curriculum design is practical oriented and challenging (SP1)	.787
Wide publicity and transparency in the admission process (SP2)	.791
Participative learning Techniques (SP3)	.785
ICT is effectively used with computers (audio- visual aids) (SP4)	.787
Access to library beyond working hours with networking (SP5)	.788
Adequate Common facilities available (SP6)	.780
Internet access to teachers (SP7)	.791
Facilitates faculty to undertake research by providing funds (SP8)	.788
Provisions of enhanced research funds through schemes like SAP, FIST etc.(SP9)	.791
Special coaching classes conducted for appearing in various competitive examinations (SP10)	.791
Makes efforts to reduce the drop-out Rate (SP11)	.788
Self- appraisal of teaching and non-teaching staff (SP12)	.787
Student evaluation of teachers (SP13)	.786
Effective participative decision-making process (SP14)	.787
Sustainable practices for Governance and Leadership (SP15)	.788
Adequate scholarships for Research and P.G. Students (SP16)	.786
No of value- added courses offered (SP17)	.784
Curriculum provides interdisciplinary knowledge (SP18)	.785
Classes regularly conducted (SP19)	.787
Effective Feedback Mechanism is utilized for updating course content (SP20)	.792
Highly experienced Teachers (SP21)	.788
Early declaration of results (SP22)	.782
Examination processes are transparent and reliable (SP23)	.785
Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities (SP24)	.782
Provides proper guidance in Bio-data preparations (SP25)	.782
Better rewards awarded for meritorious students (SP26)	.784
Students Satisfaction	
Active Participation in Institution development (SS1)	.780
Inter- collegiate competitions like sports, music and other extracurricular activities (SS2)	.788
Motivation to become an entrepreneur(SS3)	.782
High degree of Teacher- Student Relationship(SS4)	.787
Feeling proud to be part of the Institution (SS5)	.788
Cronbach's Alpha	.792

TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF SP ON QUALITY PRACTICES AMONG ARTS AND SCIENCE STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT HLIs

Quality Practices	t's value
Curriculum design is practical oriented and challenging (SP1)	-6.343 (.000**)
Wide publicity and transparency in the admission process (SP2)	-2.472(.014)
Participative learning Techniques (SP3)	-3.576(.000**)
ICT is effectively used with computers (audio- visual aids) (SP4)	4.406(.000**)
Access to library beyond working hours with networking (SP5)	8.339(.000**)
Adequate Common facilities available (SP6)	4.333(.000**)
Internet access to teachers (SP7)	.251(.802)
Facilitates faculty to undertake research by providing funds (SP8)	4.358(.000**)
Provisions of enhanced research funds through schemes like SAP, FIST etc.(SP9)	10.564(.000**)
Special coaching classes conducted for appearing in various competitive examinations (SP10)	9.274(.000**)
Makes efforts to reduce the drop-out Rate (SP11)	5.820(.000**)
Self- appraisal of teaching and non-teaching staff (SP12)	.787
Student evaluation of teachers (SP13)	.786
Effective participative decision-making process (SP14)	.787
Sustainable practices for Governance and Leadership (SP15)	.788
Adequate scholarships for Research and P.G. Students (SP16)	.786
No of value- added courses offered (SP17)	.784
Curriculum provides interdisciplinary knowledge (SP18)	.785
Classes regularly conducted (SP19)	.787
Effective Feedback Mechanism is utilized for updating course content (SP20)	.792
Highly experienced Teachers (SP21)	.788
Early declaration of results (SP22)	.782
Examination processes are transparent and reliable (SP23)	.785
Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities (SP24)	.782
Provides proper guidance in Bio-data preparations (SP25)	.782
Better rewards awarded for meritorious students (SP26)	.784

Table 2 presents the t-test results comparing the opinion of Arts and Science students in Government HLIs about quality practices. The t-value of SP1, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP6, SP8, SP9, SP10, SP11, SP16, SP20, SP21 AND SP24, which is significant at 1 percent level, has supported that the level of perception about quality practices differ significantly. In sum, from the above results, it is found that the quality practices such as "Curriculum design is practical oriented and challenging", "Participative learning Techniques", "ICT is effectively used with computers(audio-visual aids)", "Access to library beyond working hours with networking", "Adequate common facilities available", "Facilities faculty to undertake research by providing funds", "Provision of enhanced research funds through schemes like SAP, FIST etc.", "Special coaching classes conducted for appearing in various competitive examinations", " Makes efforts to reduce the drop-out Rate", "Effective Feedback Mechanism is utilized for updating course content", " Highly experienced Teachers" and "Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities" vary significantly among the Arts students in Government HLIs in Puducherry State.

TABLE 3: CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SP AND SS ON ACCOUNT OF SS1 AMONG ARTS AND SCIENCE STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT HLIs

Quality Practices	Unstandardized Coefficients ()	R2	Adj. R2	F Value
(Constant)	-.191 (.624)			
Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities	.216 (.003)			
Curriculum provides interdisciplinary knowledge	.222 (.005)	.241	.217	9.788
Effective Feedback Mechanism is utilized for updating course content	.196 (.002)			
Wide publicity and transparency in the admission process	.220 (.016)			
Better rewards awarded for meritorious students	.136 (.040)			

Table 3 depicts the cause and effect relationship between SP and SS on account of SS1 among Arts and Science students in Govt. HLIs. It is inferred that the Arts and Science students in Govt. HLIs in Puducherry State have been satisfied with regard to "Active Participation in Institution Development" in respect of the quality practices such as "Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities", "Curriculum provides interdisciplinary knowledge", "Effective Feedback Mechanism is utilized for updating course content", "Wide publicity and transparency in the admission process" and "Better rewards awarded for meritorious students".

TABLE 4: CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SP AND SS ON ACCOUNT OF SS2 AMONG ARTS AND SCIENCE STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT HLIs

Quality Practices	Unstandardized Coefficients ()	R2	Adj. R2	F Value
(Constant)	.997 (.000)			
Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities	.341 (.000)	.152	.141	14.029
Better rewards awarded for meritorious students	.172 (.016)			

Table 4 depicts cause and effect relationship between SP and SS on account of SS2 among Arts and Science Students in Govt. HLIs. It is inferred that the Arts and Science Students in Govt. HLIs I Puducherry State has been satisfied with regard to " Inter-collegiate competitions like sports, music and other extracurricular activities" in respect of the quality practices such as "Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities" and "Better rewards awarded for meritorious students".

TABLE 5: CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SP AND SS ON ACCOUNT OF SS3 AMONG ARTS AND STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT HLIs

Quality Practices	Unstandardised Coefficients ()	R2	Adj. R2	F Value
(Constant)	.853 (.001)			
Provides proper guidance in Bio-data preparations	.270 (.000)			
ICT is effectively used with computers (audio – visual aids)	.162 (.010)	.211	.196	13.901
Better rewards awarded for meritorious students	.170 (.014)			

Table 5 depicts the cause and effect relationship between SP and SS on account of SS3 among Arts and Science Students in Govt. HLIs. It is inferred that the Arts and Science Students in Govt. HLIs in Puducherry State has been satisfied with regard to "Motivation to become an entrepreneur" in respect of the quality practices such as "Provides proper guidance in guidance in Bio-data preparations", "ICT is effectively used computers (audio-visual aids)" and "Better rewards awarded for meritorious students".

TABLE 6: CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SP AND SS ON ACCOUNT OF SS4 AMONG ARTS AND SCIENCE STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT HLIs

Model	Unstandardised Coefficient ()	R2	Adj. R2	F Value
(Constant)	1.760 (.000)			
Classes regularly conducted	.201 (.000)			
Examination processes are transparent and reliable	.173 (.004)	.133	.116	7.948
Provides proper guidance in Bio-data preparation	.166 (.015)			

Table 6 depicts the cause and effect relationship between SP and SS on account of SS4 among Arts Students in Govt. HLIs. It is inferred that the Arts and Science Students in Govt. HLIs in Puducherry has been satisfied with regard to "High Degree of Teacher – Student Relationship" in respect of the quality practices such as "Classes regularly conducted", "Examination processes are transparent and reliable" and "Provides proper guidance in Bio-data preparations".

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

FINDINGS

From the interpretation of the results, this study has identified the following findings with regard to the Status of Quality Practices in HLIs in Puducherry State.

STATUS OF QUALITY PRACTICES IN GOVERNMENT HLIs IN PUDUCHERRY STATE

- The quality practices such as "Curriculum design is practical oriented and challenging", "Participative learning Techniques", "ICT is effectively used with computers (audio-visual aids)", "Access to library beyond working hours with networking", "Adequate Common facilities available", "Facilitates faculty to undertake research by providing funds", "Provision of enhanced research funds through schemes like SAP, FIST etc.", "Special coaching classes conducted for appearing in various competitive examinations", "Makes efforts to reduce the drop-out Rate", "Effective Feedback Mechanism is utilized for updating course content", "Highly experienced Teachers" and "Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities" vary significantly among the Arts and Science students in Government HLIs in Puducherry State.
- There exists significant relationship between SP and SS on account of SS1 among Arts and Science Students in Govt. HLIs in Puducherry State.
- The Arts and Science Students in Govt.HLIs in Puducherry State are adequately satisfied with regard to "Active Participation in Institution Development" in respect of the quality practices such as "Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities", "Curriculum provides interdisciplinary knowledge", "Effective Feedback Mechanism is utilized for updating course content", "Wide publicity and transparency in the admission process" and "Better rewards awarded for meritorious students".
- There is a significant relationship between SP and SS on account of SS2 among Arts and Science Students in Govt.HLIs in Puducherry State.
- The Arts and Science Students in Govt. HLIs in Puducherry State are moderately satisfied with regard to "Inter-collegiate competitions like sports, music and other extra-curricular activities" in respect of the quality practices such as "Encouraged organizing and participating seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities" and "Better rewards awarded for meritorious students".
- There is a significant relationship between SP and SS between Arts and Science students in Govt. HLIs in Puducherry State.
- The Arts and Science Students in Govt. HLIs in Puducherry State are having satisfaction with regard to "Motivation to become an entrepreneur" in respect of the quality practices such as "Provides proper guidance in Bio-data preparations", "ICT is effectively used with computers (audio – visual aids)" and "Better rewards awarded for meritorious students".
- There is a significant relationship between SP and SS on account of SS4 among Arts and Science students in Govt. HLIs in Puducherry State.
- The Arts and Science Students in Govt. HLIs in Puducherry State are having satisfaction with regard to "High degree of Teacher – Student Relationship" in respect of the quality practices such as "Classes regularly conducted", "Examination processes are transparent and reliable" and "Provides proper guidance in resume preparations".
- There is a significant relationship between SP and SS on account of SS5 among Arts and Science Students in Govt.HLIs in Puducherry State.
- The Arts and Science Students in Govt. HLIs in Puducherry State are adequately satisfied with regard to "Feeling proud to be part of Institution" in respect of the quality practices such as "Curriculum provides interdisciplinary knowledge", "Classes regularly conducted", "Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities" and "Participative learning Techniques".

SUGGESTIONS

- There should be an effort on the part of the College administration to review the syllabus in the traditional subjects periodically.
- Research among faculty and students of the conventional programmes could be further encouraged.
- All students must be encouraged to participate either in NCC or in NSS or in some kind of physical activity in time slots suitable for each group of students.
- Video-conferencing facilities may be provided for interaction with higher centers of learning and research.
- More number of foreign languages may be introduced in view of globalization as it provides more opportunities.
- Former students are to be involved in quality assurance initiatives.
- Student support services like counseling, soft skill training, placement, etc. may be strengthened, and creation of better facilities for sports/ extra-curricular activities is to be expetited.
- The Institutions should create a future road map for overall development and quality enhancement.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the study has made a through investigation on the SP and SS on Quality practices in HLIs in Puducherry State, by adopting SERVQUAL techniques. It is further understood that the Students are adequately satisfied with regard to all the Quality Practices such as "Active Participation in Institution Development", "Inter-collegiate competitions like music, sports and other extracurricular activities", "Motivation to become an entrepreneur", "High Degree of Teacher-Student Relationship" and "Feeling proud to be part of the Institution" is influenced commonly in respect of "Encouraged to organize and participate seminars, conferences and workshops and other cultural and sports activities", "Provides proper guidance in Bio-data preparations", "Self-appraisal of teaching and non-teaching staff", "Better rewards awarded for meritorious students", "Facilitates faculty to undertake research by providing funds", "Classes regularly conducted", "Sustainable practices for Governance and Leadership" and "Special coaching classes conducted for appearing in various competitive examinations". Also, this paper concludes that HE should be quality based and has to facilitate different stakeholders namely students, teachers and administrators for the empowerment of the next generation of this country.

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