

Factors Affecting Quality In Secondary Education: A Study

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Abstract

The ability to provide opportunities for high-quality education to the children in the country will determine the future of our nation. 'Quality' has become the watchword of current educational scenario in all the countries across the globe. A quality education is one that focuses on the all-round development of the child – the social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive development of each student regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status or geographic location. It prepares the child for life, not just for examinations. This is possible only when the teachers possess favorable positive attitude towards teaching profession and determination to provide quality education to the students. The present study is an attempt to explore the attitude of teachers towards the factors that influence the quality of education in secondary schools. The researchers used a well prepared and standardized questionnaire as the tool for collection of data from a sample of 300 teachers selected from 50 secondary schools located in the rural as well as urban areas of Visakhapatnam District in Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random Sampling technique. The data were analyzed using Mean score values, standard deviations and t-tests. The findings of the study revealed Gender and Age of teachers have no influence on their attitude towards the factors that influence the quality of education in secondary schools. However, the experience of teachers has a positive significant influence on their attitude towards quality education in secondary schools. Teachers with a teaching experience of more than 10 years exhibited better attitude towards quality improvement in secondary schools as compared to the new entrants into the profession. The

study suggests that the managements of secondary schools should recruit to the schools only those teachers who have passion for teaching with a view to provide quality education to the children in secondary schools.

Key words: Teachers, Secondary Schools, Quality improvement, Passion for teaching.

Introduction

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration and cultural preservation. Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximizing our country's rich talents and resources for the well-being of the individual, the society, the country and the world.

The ability to provide opportunities for high-quality education to the children in the country will determine the future of our nation. 'Quality' has become the watchword of current educational scenario in all the countries across the globe. A quality education is one that focuses on the all-round development of the child – the social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive development of each student regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status or geographic location. It prepares the child for life, not just for examinations. In the words of Jean Piaget, **"the goal of education is not to increase the amount of knowledge; but to create the possibilities for a child to invent and discover, to create men who are capable of doing new things"**.

THE ROLE OF A TEACHER IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

A good education institution is one in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a wide range of learning experiences are offered; and where good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students. Attaining these qualities must be the goal of every educational institution. The teachers working in the schools play a very significant role in attaining these

qualities. The successful running of any educational system depends mainly on factors like the teacher, the pupil, the curriculum, the teaching equipment, the learning environment etc. Of these, the teacher is the pivot on whom the entire educational structure rests. We need teachers who are committed and dedicated to the profession. The reputation of an institution and its influence on the community is invariably determined by the kind of teachers working therein.

The best system of education may fail to achieve the desired ends in the absence of sincere, competent and professionally talented teachers. Recognizing the importance of the teacher, the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) remarked: "We are, however, convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher's personal qualities, educational qualifications, professional training and the place that he/she occupies in the school as well as in the community. Priority of consideration must, therefore, be given to the various problems connected with the improvement of their status" **(Report of the Secondary Education Commission, 1952-53, p.163)**. Hence, it is the responsibility of School Management to recruit 'quality teachers', who are dedicated to teaching and outfitted with essential knowledge, skills and competencies to deliver the goods up to the expectations of people living in the society. Teachers who have real passion for teaching should alone be taken into the teaching profession to provide quality education to the children.

FACTORS AFFECTING QUALITY IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

The National Education Policy-2020 envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all; and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The Policy envisages that the curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop among the students a deep sense of respect towards the Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values and a conscious awareness of their roles and responsibilities in a changing world. The vision of the Policy is to instill among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living; and global well-being.

‘Quality in secondary education’ refers to a conscious and continuous effort to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and eminence of teaching in educational settings at secondary level. To improve quality in teaching at secondary level, the Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) offering Teacher Education Programmes for secondary school teachers need to be strengthened. In this context, the National **Education Policy (NEP) -2020** recognizes the importance of quality in teacher education; and emphasizes the need for incorporating necessary steps to reorganize the entire system of Teacher Education across the nation. As a stepping stone in this direction, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has introduced recently 4-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) from the current academic year, 2023-24 in selected Universities and Teacher Education Institutions across the nation to improve quality in teaching at Secondary level.

Quality in secondary education can be influenced by various factors. The following are some of the important factors affecting quality in secondary education.

- (i) **Curriculum:** The design and relevance of the curriculum to real-world needs and academic standards significantly impact the quality of education. A well-structured curriculum should cover essential subjects, incorporate modern teaching strategies and methodologies; and should regularly be updated to reflect the necessary changes in knowledge, skills and other learning needs of the students.
- (ii) **Teaching Quality:** The effectiveness of teachers plays a crucial role in determining educational quality. Highly qualified, experienced and motivated teachers who employ innovative teaching methods, provide personalized attention to students and create a positive learning environment contribute significantly to student success.
- (iii) **Infrastructure and Resources:** Adequate infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries and technology resources, is essential for delivering quality education. Schools with sufficient resources can offer a wide range of learning opportunities and support services to students.
- (iv) **Assessment and Evaluation:** Fair and transparent assessment practices, including both formative and

summative assessments, help monitor student progress accurately and provide timely feedback to improve learning outcomes. Assessment practices should align with educational objectives and promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity among the students.

- (v) **School Leadership:** Effective leadership at the school level is essential for setting clear goals, fostering a positive school culture, promoting professional development among staff and ensuring efficient management of resources. Strong leadership can inspire teachers, students and parents to actively engage in the educational process.
- (vi) **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensuring equity and inclusion in education is critical for promoting quality and addressing disparities among students based on factors such as socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity and disability. Schools must adopt policies and practices that provide equal opportunities for all students to succeed.
- (vii) **Community Engagement:** Collaboration between schools, families, communities and other stakeholders can enhance the quality of education by creating supportive learning environments, mobilizing resources and addressing local educational needs. Engaging parents and community members in decision-making processes can also lead to greater accountability and transparency.
- (viii) **Teacher Professional Development:** Continuous professional development programs for teachers enable them to stay updated with the latest educational research, teaching methodologies and technological advancements. Investing in teacher training enhances their instructional skills and contributes to improved student learning outcomes.
- (ix) **Student Support Services:** Providing comprehensive support services such as counseling, mentoring and extracurricular activities, helps to address the diverse needs of students and fosters their holistic development. Schools should offer interventions to support struggling students academically, socially and emotionally.
- (x) **Education Policies and Governance:** Government policies, regulations and funding mechanisms significantly influence the quality of secondary

education. Effective governance structures ensure accountability, transparency and the allocation of resources to areas of greatest need, resulting in the enhancement of the overall quality of education.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

The studies carried out earlier by the other researchers on improving quality in teaching at secondary level have been examined; and a brief review of the same is provided in the following paragraphs.

Amatul Qadeer et al. (2024) conducted a study to investigate the factors that affect the quality of education in the secondary schools of south Punjab, a proposed province in Pakistan. This study tries to cover all the aspects that can influence the quality of education from a broader point of view. The respondents for this study were 2560 (1280 male & 1280 female) Tenth Grade students, 256 secondary school teachers and 48 head teachers. Data were gathered through a survey using a questionnaire. The quality of education is cross checked through their annual examination of 9th grade. The data were analyzed using t-tests and ANOVA. The finding of this study is very helpful for the policymakers, educators and stakeholders for the development of their policies to improve the quality of education in secondary schools. The study suggested that Secondary schools can improve educational outcomes and provide students with the knowledge, skills and competencies they need for future success in their career. The investigators felt that the findings of this study are of immense help for the policymakers, educators and stakeholders for the development of their policies to improve the quality of education in secondary schools.

Qurat-ul-ain et al. (2022) conducted a study on 'Factors affecting Quality Education at Secondary Level: A Case Study of Federal Directorate of Education, Islamabad'. The factors of quality education include the learning environment, teacher and teaching, curriculum and assessment. All these factors intend to merge and produce quality learning and the success of an educational system is generally measured through the learning achievement of students. The study was carried out at secondary level while considering school heads and teaching staff under Federal Directorate of Education (FDE). The objectives of the study were to investigate the factors affecting quality education at secondary level and to find out the affect

of quality factors on the secondary education under FDE. The population and sample of the study were these secondary school heads and teachers. A 5-points Likert scale questionnaire with the attributes - learning environment, teacher and teaching, curriculum and assessment was administered to collect data from the respondents. These factors were further divided into ten sub-factors. From the result of the study, it was found that the learning environment needs to be improved, curriculum requires revision; and continuous professional development of teachers as well as trained staff is required for purpose of providing quality education. The study concluded that subject mastery needs to be developed among the teaching staff.

Rahul V. Mulay (2021) conducted an empirical study on quality improvement in higher education institutions with reference to selected processes. The study involved administering a survey questionnaire to students, faculty, administrative staff and process owners in private engineering and management institutions. Data were collected from 12 engineering institutions and 8 management institutions. The total sample size was 725 respondents. Data analysis was done using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) software. In this study, the admission process was found to have the most impact on quality, and exam and placement processes also had a significant impact on quality. The authors recommend that private higher education institutions should strive to improve and maintain good quality.

Nilufer Ulker (2021) conducted a study to investigate instructors' perceptions on the influence of student evaluations on teaching quality. Interviewing methodology was used to explore how student evaluations can lead to improvement of teaching quality. Data were collected from Turkish and American instructors via semi-structured questionnaire forms and analyzed through thematic analysis from a comparative perspective. The findings of the study demonstrate that student evaluations can lead to improvement of teaching quality on condition that articulated concerns are elaborated on with regard to design of the evaluation scheme, administration of evaluation of teaching quality and post-evaluation procedures. Pedagogical implications are presented to widen understanding about the concerns that instructors hold with regard to student evaluations.

Need for the Present Investigation

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration and cultural preservation. In this context, it is felt that the education system of the country should aim at developing in the young minds the necessary skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, problem-solving and reasoning.

It is the need of the hour to improve the quality in secondary education, as this stage forms the central link between primary and higher education. It is considered as the minimum level of attainment for people to survive in the modern technological world. It provides opportunities for several middle level jobs, pre-job training courses and self-employment. In fact, it is the secondary education on which the social, economic, technical and cultural efficiency of the nation depends. The teachers working in secondary schools should work with commitment and dedication in the profession. They should develop a positive attitude towards the profession. In this context, the researchers thought it relevant to conduct a study on the attitude of teachers towards the factors influencing quality of education in secondary schools. The present investigation is an attempt in this direction.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the present investigation is to study the attitude of teachers towards the factors that affect the quality of education in secondary schools.

The study also aims at finding out the influence of gender, age and teaching experience on the attitude of teachers towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the present investigation:

- (i) There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above

towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education.

- (ii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years & above towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to find out the influence of gender, age and teaching experience of secondary school teachers on their attitude towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education. Further, the study is confined to 300 teachers working in 50 secondary schools located in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh.

Design of the Study

(a) Method of Research

The investigators used Normative Survey method for the present investigation, as this method involves collecting data from the respondents with the help of a survey.

(b) Sample

The sample of the study consists of 300 teachers from 50 secondary schools located in the rural as well as urban areas in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random Sampling technique. In this method, in addition to randomness, stratification introduces a secondary element of control as a means of increasing precision and representativeness.

(c) .Research Tool

The researchers used a well developed questionnaire consisting of 35 items on various quality parameters for collection of data from the respondents.

Administration of the tool

The tool was initially administered to 30 teachers working in 5 secondary schools located in Visakhapatnam city under Pilot study. The measures of reliability, validity and objectivity of the tool have been calculated. Further, the researchers conducted item analysis for the items included in the tool. Out of 35 items selected for the tool, the discriminating power of 30 items has been found positive and is negative in respect of 5 items. The items whose discriminating power is negative have been removed; and the final tool consists of 30 items, which are foolproof in all respects. The final tool has been administered to 300 teachers working in 50 Secondary Schools located in the

rural as well as urban areas in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh.

The data collected has been analyzed and interpreted using different statistical techniques such as Mean score values, Standard Deviations and t-ratios; and are presented in the following table.

Table showing t-values of different variables on the attitude of teachers towards factors affecting quality in secondary education

S. No.	Variable		N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Inference
1	Gender	Male	160	99.87	27.15	0.11*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		Female	140	100.21	26.40		
2	Age	Below 40 years	190	99.87	27.45	0.26*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		40 years & above	110	99.05	25.97		
3	Teaching Experience	Less than 10 yrs	180	91.17	24.80	3.38*	*Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		10 yrs. & above	120	101.67	26.49		

Findings of the Study

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data, the researchers have arrived at the following findings and drawn the conclusions.

There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education.

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education.
2. There is significant difference in the attitude of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education.

Teachers with an experience of 10 years and above have exhibited better attitude towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education as compared to those with an experience of less than 10 years.

Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that the gender and age of the teachers have no influence on their attitude towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education. However, the experience of teachers has a significant positive attitude towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education. Female teachers have exhibited better attitude towards the factors affecting quality in secondary education as compared to their male counterparts.

Educational Implications

- (i) The study would help the teachers understand the factors affecting the quality in secondary education.
- (ii) The present study helps the teachers take necessary steps to improve quality in secondary education.
- (iii) The study would help the students develop a better understanding of the school subjects when their teachers use innovative practices in teaching. The study would help the government and policy makers to take necessary steps for improving quality in secondary education.
- (iv) The study would help the Academic Organizations like NCERT, NCTE, SCERTs, IASEs and the State Departments of Education to take necessary steps to conduct in-service training to the teachers working in secondary schools on content and pedagogy with a view to improve their teaching competencies to improve quality in secondary education.

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