

STUDENTS PERCEIVED VALUE TOWARDS QUALITY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

The quality of education of any distance learning programme is maintained by various ways, such as: quality of study material, internal and external evaluation, and student support methods and so on. The above aspects should be available in aspects to the Post graduate degree students. In this research Ex Post Facto research with field survey is used. It was carried out all over Tamil Nadu. The students who have enrolled for Distance post graduate Programme through Study Centres of Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU), Anna malai University and Alagappa University were taken into consideration for collecting data. The total sample size was 600 respondents who were selected equally from all locations. The primary data were collected through questionnaire cum interview schedule method. The questionnaire is well structured and tested for reliability, testability and analytical ability. This study concludes that distance education programmes. With such a huge network spanning across the country, and the growth being exponential in a comparatively short period of time, there is a growing concern for the quality in education being imparted through such institutions. This study has confirmed that most of the students are highly satisfied towards the management education by the distance education mode expect few facts, there are students not satisfied with the PCP time schedule, syllabus covered by the course material and stipulated time for the payments of course fees. This study has identified some of the dissatisfying factors and suggested various ways and means to overcome those problems. Based on this research it may presume that there would be greater satisfaction towards most of the tested variables.

Keywords: Distance education, post graduate program, PCP centre, TNOU and Students satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education in India has expanded many folds since independence. The number of universities has increased from 20 in 1947 to 378, colleges from 500 to 18064, teaching staff from a meagre 15,00 to nearly 4.80 lakhs and students population in higher education from 1 lakh in 1950 to over 112 lakhs in 2005. Many fold expansion in institutional capacity of higher education has enhanced enrolment ratio from less than 1% in 1950 to about 10% in 2007.

Distance education acts as a social catalyst in developing countries and supports the objectivist model of knowledge transmission. Peters has observed three important features of distance education: first, the use of multimedia; second, the mass education of students at a distance; and third, the industrialization of teaching process. The distance mode of learning is considered as a necessity due to inability of the conventional university set up to cater to the need of higher education of the masses in developing and over populated countries like India. While talking of accessibility, it needs to be emphasized that accessibility for the sake of accessibility would not only add to the nation's financial burden but would also result in waste of human resources unless we are able to ensure that what is made accessible is 'quality education' and an education which is relevant. Simply producing graduates after graduates and adding to the queue in front of the employment exchanges is to add to the frustration of youth leading to a culture of cynicism. According to a study, out of 4, 95,000 engineering graduates produced annually only 8 – 10 per cent is employable. In this context the study is necessitated to understand the prospects of Distance Education Programmes and effectiveness of the same.

DISTANCE EDUCATION IN INDIA

Distance education gets overwhelming response in India, the universities introduced many new distance-education job oriented courses according to the changing times and students requirements. However, in this process, the actual motive of providing quality education to all took the backseat as the main focus of universities slowly shifted to making more and more money. Currently in India, the Distance Education departments are generating the maximum revenue for their universities, in many cases more than even the professional and self financing courses. The correspondence courses institutions are offering more than 400 programmes in India, about 50 percent of which are professional in nature. The enrolment in these institutions was of the order of 9, 00,000 in the year 1999, which forms 11.64 percent of the total enrolment in higher education in the country. An important point to be noted here is that the growth rate of enrolment in correspondence and distance education mode has been higher than that of higher education in general (Source-UGC Reports).

PROBLEM FOCUSES

To make optimum use of scarce resources, spread of knowledge is essential. A number of initiatives have been taken recently in India to make Post graduate education not only cost effective but available to all. Post graduate Degrees through Distance education gets overwhelming response in India, the universities introduced many new distance-education job oriented Post graduate degree courses according to the changing times and students requirements.

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Currently in India, the Distance Education departments are generating the maximum revenue for their universities, in many cases more than even the professional and self financing courses.

The quality of education of any distance learning programme is maintained by various ways, such as: quality of study material, internal and external evaluation, and student support methods and so on.

The above aspects should be available in aspects to the Post graduate degree students. Hence this study has been undertaken to understand the effectiveness of Programmes offered by the universities through distance mode by evaluating the opinion of beneficiaries in Tamil Nadu.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research Ex Post Facto research with field survey is used. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; he can only report what has happened or what is happening. Most *ex post facto research* projects are used for descriptive studies.

The present study was carried out all over Tamil Nadu. The students who have enrolled for Distance education programmes through the study centres in Trichy. The Population is comparatively large in size. Hence the study was undertaken with suitable sampling technique. The sampling is done by Multistage Sampling Technique. In the first stage the study centres have been selected by Simple Random Sampling. In the second stage the respondents have been selected by Non Probability Convenient

Sampling Technique

In *simple random technique*, each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected as subject. When population elements are selected for inclusion in the sample based on the ease of access, it can be called *convenience sampling*. The total sample size was 600 respondents who were selected equally from all locations as given in the table. The following table provides the distribution of sample size.

Table: 1
Sample Size

Area	Sample Units
Rural	187
Semi Urban	204
Urban	209
Total	600

Objectives of the Research

- To examine the overall effectiveness of PG Programme through distance mode in Tamil Nadu
- To evaluate the teaching methodology and its effectiveness
- To study and analyse the feedback on Personal Contact Programmes (PCPs), Course material, assignment and examination systems

Analysis and Interpretation

Assessment of Effectiveness of PG Programme through Distance Education

An attempt has been made to study the effectiveness of PG programme through distance education, after converting the qualitative information of the into a quantitative one the average score were obtained from the respondents on various dimensions like Teaching Methodology, University Administrative system, PCP Classes, Course Material, Assignment system, Examination system & Study center and the obtained results are presented in Table: 2.

Table: 2
Dimension wise Satisfaction level among respondents

Dimensions	Range		Mean	SD	Mean %
	Min	Max			
Teaching Methodology	41	55	45.92	2.77	61.22
University Administrative system	27	40	32.52	2.42	65.03
PCP Classes	11	21	15.63	1.90	62.51
Course Material	15	24	19.30	2.64	64.34
Assignment system	13	23	18.52	2.43	61.72
Examination system	12	18	13.54	1.72	54.16
Study center	15	22	18.60	1.26	62.00

Area wise distribution of mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage of shows that among the seven areas, the highest mean score (32.52 ± 2.42) which is 65.03 % is obtained for the area "University Administrative system" whereas, the lowest mean score (13.54 ± 1.72) which is 54.16 % was obtained for 'Examination system'. The mean score on 'Teaching Methodology' was (45.92 ± 2.77) which is 61.22 %. Further the mean score on PCP Classes was (15.63 ± 1.90) which is 62.51 % of total score, the mean score on Course Material was (19.30 ± 2.64) which is 64.34% of total score, the mean score on Assignment system was (18.52 ± 2.43) which is 61.72% of total score, and he mean score on Study center was (18.60 ± 1.26) which is 62 % of total score.

Test for Mean Score Analysis (Average Score Analysis)

The significant difference between the mean scores regarding the effectiveness of PG programme relating to Teaching Methodology, University Administrative system, PCP Classes, Course Material, Assignment system, Examination system & Study center with respect to University studying using the inferential statistics of Analysis of variance (ANOVA) after verifying the normality assumption by Q-Q Plot technique. The test for mean score analysis of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test procedure is used to compares mean scores of more than two groups. The procedure assumes that the variances of the groups are equal and it was tested with Levene's test statistics and is used to test the significant difference between the mean score among the three different universities namely Tamilnadu Open University, Anna Malai University & Alagappa University.

University wise comparison of mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage regarding teaching methodology shows that the highest mean score (46.88 ± 3.16) 62.5 % of the total score was obtained for Tamilnadu Open University. Lowest mean score (44.47 ± 1.62) 59.29 % was obtained for Anna Malai University. The mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage of Alagappa University is found as (45.84 ± 2.55) 61.12% of the total score. Since the P value is less than 0.01 hence there is highly significant difference in the mean scores regarding Teaching Methodology is found with respect to universities. University wise comparison of mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage regarding University Administrative system shows that the highest mean score (33.90 ± 2.21) 67.81 % of the total score was obtained for Alagappa University

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** Significant at 1 %

Lowest mean score (30.42 ± 1.99) 60.84 % was obtained for Anna Malai University. The mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage of Tamilnadu Open University is found as (32.09 ± 1.76) 64.19% of the total score. Since the P value is less than 0.01 hence there is highly significant difference in the mean scores regarding University Administrative system is found with respect to universities. University wise comparison of mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage regarding PCP Classes shows that the highest mean score (16.65 ± 1.57) 66.59 % of the total score was obtained for Anna Malai University. Lowest mean score (14.46 ± 2.12) 57.85% was obtained for Tamilnadu Open University. The mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage of Alagappa University is found as (16.09 ± 1.27) 64.36 % of the total score.

Since the P value is less than 0.01 hence there is highly significant difference in the mean scores regarding PCP Classes is found with respect to universities. University wise comparison of mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage regarding Course Material shows that the highest mean score (19.38 ± 2.70) 64.60 % of the total score was obtained for Tamilnadu Open University. Lowest mean score (19.06 ± 2.88) 63.54 % was obtained for Anna Malai University.

The mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage of Alagappa University is found as (19.36 ± 2.45) 64.52 % of the total score.

Since the P value is greater than 0.05 hence there is no significant difference in the mean scores regarding Course Material is found with respect to universities. University wise comparison of mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage regarding Assignment system shows that the highest mean score (19.13 ± 1.84) 63.78 % of the total score was obtained for Anna Malai University. Lowest mean score (17.88 ± 2.68) 59.59 % was obtained for Alagappa University. The mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage of Tamilnadu Open University is found as (18.92 ± 2.25) 63.07% of the total score. Since the P value is less than 0.01 hence there is highly significant difference in the mean scores regarding Assignment system is found with respect to universities.

University wise comparison of mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage regarding Examination system shows that the highest mean score (15.53 ± 2.16) 62.13 % of the total score was obtained for Anna Malai University. Lowest mean score (12.72 ± 1.03) 50.88 % was obtained for Tamilnadu Open University. The mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage of Alagappa University is found as (13.23 ± 1.05) 52.93% of the total score.

Since the P value is less than 0.01 hence there is highly significant difference in the mean scores regarding Examination system is found with respect to universities.

University wise comparison of mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage regarding Study center shows that the highest mean score (18.74 ± 1.21) 62.45% of the total score was obtained for Alagappa University. Lowest mean score (18.42 ± 1.45) 61.41 % was obtained for Anna Malai University. The mean, Standard Deviation and mean percentage of Tamilnadu Open University is found as (18.54 ± 1.17) 61.81 % of the total score.

Since the P value is less than 0.05 hence there is significant difference in the mean scores regarding Study center is found with respect to universities.

CONCLUSION

Today India has, one the largest DE systems in the world. Presently there are 355 universities of these 127 are dual mode universities offering both classroom based education and distance education. Besides there are 14 open universities exclusively offering programmes through the distance mode.

Thus nearly 40% of the universities in India are offering DE programmes. With such a huge network spanning across the country, and the growth being exponential in a comparatively short period of time, there is a growing concern for the quality in education being imparted through such institutions. It has become essential to re-examine the entire structure, content, purpose and pattern of post graduate Education through Distance Mode.

Hence this research is focused to study the pattern, system and quality of Post graduate Education provided by selected institutions through distance mode. This study has confirmed that most of the students are highly satisfied towards the post graduate education by the distance education mode except few facts, there are students not satisfied with the PCP time schedule, syllabus covered by the course material and stipulated time for the payments of course fees. This study has identified some of the dissatisfying factors and suggested various ways and means to overcome those problems. Based on this research it may presume that there would be grater satisfaction towards most of the tested variables.

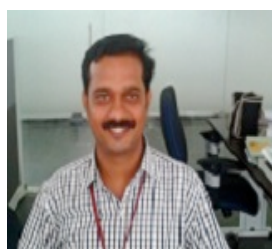
BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the AUTHORS



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