

A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AS PERCEIVED BY B.ED. STUDENT-TEACHERS

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Abstract:

Equity in teacher training institutions is very essential for preparing prospective teachers who are sensitive to diversity and committed to inclusive educational practices. Equitable access to resources, academic support and learning opportunities enable the student teachers from varied socio-economic, cultural and geographical backgrounds to develop professional competence and confidence. Promoting equity in B.Ed. programs contributes to the creation of inclusive schools and strengthens the overall quality of the education system. The present study examines educational equity in the B.Ed. programs by the use of quantitative descriptive approach. The sample consisted of 112 B.Ed. students from aided and unaided colleges affiliated to Mumbai University, representing differences in gender, social category and institutional type. Data was collected through a structured rating scale and subjected to descriptive statistical analysis. The study highlights the need for strengthened inclusive practices in teacher education programs.

Key Words: *Educational Equity, Teacher Education, B.Ed. Programmes, Social Inclusion, Access and Opportunity, Gender Equality, Caste, Open and Reserved Category, Aided and Unaided institutions*

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Introduction :

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

— **Nelson Mandela**

Education has always been recognized as the most important transformative force which is capable of fostering social justice equality and national development. In the contemporary educational discourse the concept educational equity has recently gained significant prominence, emphasizing on fairness, inclusivity and equal opportunities for all learners irrespective of their gender, class, culture and socio-economic backgrounds.

Teacher education plays a pivotal role in the pursuit of educational equity as teachers are the key agents in shaping inclusive classrooms and democratic learning environments. Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Program

is a vital element in preparing the prospective teachers not only with pedagogical competencies but also the values of social justice, sensitivity and equity. Thus, ensuring equitable access, participation and outcomes within the B.Ed. program is very essential for strengthening the broader educational system.

In the Indian context, diversity exists in terms gender, caste, institutional structure and hence presents both opportunities and challenges for achieving educational equity. In spite of a variety of policy initiatives aimed at inclusive education, disparities continue to exist between the students belonging to the different social categories, aided and unaided institutions. These may positively or negatively influence the students' academic experiences, access to resources and the overall perception of fairness within the teacher education programs.

Against this backdrop, the present study titled ‘A Quantitative Analysis of Educational Equity as Perceived by B.Ed. Student-Teachers’ aims to examine the extent to which educational equity is experienced by B.Ed. students across selected demographic variables. By the use of quantitative methods and descriptive statistical techniques, this study aims to identify the patterns, trends and group-wise differences in perceptions of equity. The findings are expected to contribute meaningful insights for policy makers, teacher educators and institutions striving to promote inclusive and equitable practices in teacher education programmes.

Literature Review:

Tripathi H (2020) conducted a study of Kerala’s higher education status, access, equity and quality and found that more girls are enrolled in higher education compared to boys. Category wise classification showed that scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were enrolled to a very small extent as compared to students from Open category and Other Backward Classes.

Laherwal B (2024) studied ‘Educational Access Equity and Challenges Of Tribal Students a Case Study on Gurez Valley. The study conducted in the Himalayan valley showed that enrolment in primary classes shows gender equity but as students go for higher education girls are not given equal opportunities

Mittal A.(2025) conducted a Study on Workplace Diversity Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education Institutions Perception of Teaching Faculty With Special Reference to Engineering Colleges in Karnataka and found that there is a significant association between the perceptions of each of the dimensions of Workplace Diversity, Workplace Inclusion and Workplace Equity and the Overall Performance of the Organisation.

The above researches were mostly conducted with reference to gender equity. Hardly any studies have

been conducted in the field of educational equity in Teacher education, Exploring the perception of educational equity of student-teachers is vital because these perceptions shape their journey of Teacher Education which in turn will impact their journey as teachers.

Statement of the Problem:

The problem selected by the researcher is ‘A Quantitative Analysis of Educational Equity as Perceived by B.Ed. Student-Teachers’.

Operational Definitions:

Educational Equity: Educational equity is the extent of fairness and inclusiveness experienced by the B. Ed. students with respect to access to academic resources, institutional learning opportunities and assessment practices w.r.t. their gender, caste, types of institution as measured through a five point Likert questionnaire.

Aims of the Study:

The broad aim of this study is to Assess the Perceived Educational Equity in the B.Ed. Programmes of the B.Ed. colleges affiliated to Mumbai University through Quantitative Analysis.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine educational equity in the B.Ed. programmes with respect to **gender**.
2. To analyze the educational equity among B.Ed. students belonging to **open and reserved categories**.
3. To compare educational equity practices in **aided and unaided B.Ed. institutions**.

Hypothesis of the Study:

Ho1: There is no significant gender difference in the educational equity in the B.Ed Programme as perceived by student-teachers pursuing the programme.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the educational equity in the B.Ed Programme as perceived by student-teachers on basis of categories viz Open and Reserved.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the educational equity in the B.Ed Programme as perceived by student-teachers on basis of the type of institution viz aided and unaided.

Design of the Study:

Methodology: The method used by the researchers in this study is a quantitative descriptive survey method to assess the perceived educational equity in the B.Ed. programs. In this study the researchers have tried to assess the perceived educational equity in the B.Ed. programmes through quantitative analysis.

Sample: The sample for this study consists of 112 prospective teachers from different B.Ed. colleges affiliated to Mumbai University. Purposive sampling technique has been used by the researcher.

Tool: A self - developed structured rating scale was used as a tool for data collection. The rating scale consisted of 30 positive statements to be rated on a five point Likert-type scale, making the data suitable for quantitative analysis.

Scope of the study:

This study is limited to assessing the educational equity among the B.Ed. students. It mainly focuses on

demographic variables such as gender, social category (open or reserved), and the type of institution (aided and unaided). This study examines the students' percept of educational equity using quantitative descriptive methods.

Delimitations of the Study:

1. This study is confined only to students enrolled in the B.Ed. programme.
2. It is limited to the Aided and Unaided Colleges of Education affiliated to Mumbai University.
3. This study considers only the selected demographic variables such as gender, social category and type of institution.
4. The data is solely collected on the basis of the self reported responses obtained through a structured questionnaire.
5. This study only uses the quantitative descriptive approach and does not include qualitative methods such as interviews or observations.
6. The findings are limited to the sample selected and may not be generalized beyond the context of this study.

Analysis and Interpretation:

Testing of Hypothesis: The statistical techniques used to test this hypothesis is 't' test

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant gender difference in the educational equity in the B.Ed Programme as perceived by student-teachers pursuing the programme.

The following table shows the relevant statistics of gender difference in Educational Equity assessment in B.Ed. programme.

Table 1: Relevant Statistics of the Educational Equity of Male and Female In B.Ed. Programme

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	Table Value		't' value	l.o.s.
					0.05	0.01		
Edu. equity	Male	16	122.5	10.61	1.98	2.62	0.799	NS
	Female	96	126.16	16.84				

df = N - 2 = 110

From Table D, for df 110

Tabulated t = 1.98 at 0.05 level and 2.62 at 0.01 level.

Interpretation of 't' : - The obtained value of 't' for the difference of means of Educational Equity as perceived by Male and Female students in B.Ed. programme is 0.799 which is less than table value 1.98 . Thus 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence null hypothesis is accepted.

Finding 1:

There is no significant difference in perceived Educational Equity in B.Ed. programme when students are classified on the basis of their gender.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the educational equity in the B.Ed Programme as perceived by student-teachers on basis of categories viz Open and Reserved.

The following table shows the relevant statistics of Educational Equity on the basis of category in B.Ed. programme.

Table 2: Relevant Statistics of the Educational Equity in B.Ed. Programme on the Basis of Category.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	Table Value		't' value	I.o.s.
					0.05	0.01		
Edu. Equity	Open	68	128.85	18.62	1.98	2.62	2.82	0.05
	Reserve	44	120.66	9.36				

$$df = N - 2 = 110$$

From Table D, for df 110

Tabulated t = 1.98 at 0.05 level and 2.62 at 0.01 level.

Interpretation of 't' : - The obtained value of 't' for the Educational equity in B.Ed. programme of Open and Reserve category is 2.82 which is greater than table value 1.98 . Thus 't' is significant at 0.05 level. Hence null hypothesis is rejected.

Finding 2: -

There is a significant difference in Educational Equity in the B.Ed. programme on the basis of their category.

As the mean of perceived educational equity by students of Open category is more than that of students of Reserved category, it can be said that Open category students seem to benefit more in terms of educational equity as compared to those from reserved category.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the educational equity in the B.Ed Programme as perceived by student-teachers on basis of the type of institution viz aided and unaided.

The following table shows the relevant statistics of Educational Equity on the basis of types of institution in B.Ed. programme.

Table 3: Relevant Statistics of the Educational Equity In B.Ed. Programme on the Basis of Types of Institution

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	Table Value		't' value	I.o.s.
					0.05	0.01		
Edu. Equity	Aided	42	121.69	10.18	1.98	2.62	2.072	0.05
	Unaided	70	128	18.46				

$$df = N - 2 = 110$$

From Table D, for df 110

Tabulated t = 1.98 at 0.05 level and 2.62 at 0.01 level.

Interpretation of ‘t’ : - The obtained value of ‘t’ for the difference of means of perceived Educational equity in B.Ed. programme of Aided and Unaided is 2.072 which is greater than table value 1.98 . Thus ‘t’ is significant at 0.05 level. Hence null hypothesis is rejected.

Finding 3: -

There is a significant difference in perceived Educational Equity in the B.Ed. programme when students are classified on the basis of types of institution.

As the mean of Unaided institutions is more than Aided institutions, it appears that students from Unaided institution are benefitted more in terms of educational equity as compared to students from Aided institutions.

Discussion:

The study found that gender did not have any bearing on the perceived educational equity. This implies that male and female students both have equal opportunities and there are facilities to ensure that gender does not become an impediment in their education. This finding differs from the findings reported by Laherwal (2024) which points out that gender equity is not seen in higher education. However, while Laherwal reports quantitative findings the present study goes beyond gender disparity in enrolment and looks at how males and females experience educational equity. One plausible explanation why gender based equity is experienced by student-teachers could be that the B.Ed syllabus has courses that emphasize gender equity. Through these topics, student teachers are more aware of educational equity and hence avail of opportunities that foster equity.

The findings show that open category students seem to experience more educational equity as compared to those from reserved category. This finding resonates with Varghese, Sabharwal and Malish (2018) who state that “many factors cumulatively lead to disadvantages for SC and ST students in accessing opportunities for higher education, including, hailing from low socio-economic backgrounds, being first-generation learners, and, residing in rural areas that suffer from poor

learning infrastructure.” More exploration is required to see what can be done to bridge this gap. Colleges have Equal Opportunity Cells which can offer more programmes to promote educational equity.

The students from unaided colleges had a higher perception of the educational equity. It needs to be explored if the socio-economic background of students of aided and unaided institutions varies significantly and whether this contributes to the perceived educational equity experienced by students. The infrastructural facilities offered in aided and unaided institutions are likely to differ as these depend on financial resources. It is necessary to explore this aspect to see if available facilities have caused the difference in perceived educational equity. The researcher did not find any specific studies reporting equity in relation to aided or self financed status of colleges and this adds to the uniqueness of the present study.

The findings of this study are examined in the light of other researches. Miglani and Pandya (2021) who explored college students' perspectives of social equality and equity in Indian higher education system opine that higher education must prioritize equal distribution of educational opportunities to all members of society, particularly for those students who are living in rural parts of the country.

Conclusion:

This research study highlights that educational equity in the B.Ed. programmes differ across demographic variables. While gender does not influence equity significantly, differences based on social category and the type of institution are very evident. The findings accentuate the need for the strengthening of the inclusive practices and policy measures to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all the prospective teachers.

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