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ROLE OF DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES IN STRENGTHENING ELEMENTARY TEACHER EDUCATION: A STUDY OF DIETs.

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Abstract:

This paper examines the role of the Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education through the functioning of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in Karnataka. The study is descriptive in nature and follows the normative survey method. A total of 18 faculty members working in the Department of Humanities across DIETs representing the Bangalore, Mysore, Belgaum and Gulbarga educational divisions were selected by purposive sampling for the study. Data were analyzed using the independent 't'-test with respect to sex, educational qualification, locality of the institute, and teaching-cum-research experience of the faculty. The results indicate that the role of the Department of Humanities did not differ significantly by locality or experience, but differed significantly with respect to sex and educational qualification, with female faculty and faculty holding qualifications above the prescribed minimum reporting more favorable perceptions of the department's functioning. Implications for faculty development in DIET humanities departments are discussed.

Key Words: Elementary Teacher Education, DIET, Department of Humanities, DIET Functioning.

I. INTRODUCTION:

In the system of education, elementary education occupies the most important place, as it is meant to serve the first-level educational needs of the young population of the country. Teachers serving at this stage often receive comparatively low-quality training and feel isolated from professional support structures, a situation that tends to be more acute in rural areas (Azim Premji Foundation, 2010).

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) and the accompanying Programme of Action (1986) proposed the establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) to provide for the pre-service and in-service training needs of elementary school teachers and other functionaries at the district level, and to decentralize educational planning and supervision to the district level (DIET Guidelines, 1989). Each DIET functions through several academic departments, one of which is the Department of Humanities. This department is entrusted with strengthening the social-science and humanities-teaching competencies of elementary school teachers through training programmes, material development, and academic resource support.

Faculty perceptions of DIET departments have been shown to vary systematically with demographic characteristics in prior work. Rajanna and Haseen Taj (2018) found a significant relationship between elementary teachers' perception of DIET role performance and variables such as gender and teaching experience across five districts of Karnataka. In a related vein, Longchar (2019), examining the effectiveness of DIETs in Nagaland, reported a markedly higher representation and more active engagement of women among teacher educators and trainees, a pattern that may plausibly extend to how female and male faculty engage with and evaluate individual departments such as Humanities. Mohammad (2016), in a critical study of professionalism among teacher educators of DIETs in Delhi, similarly linked variation in professional engagement to individual faculty characteristics rather than to institutional factors alone.

The Department of Humanities plays a significant role in shaping how elementary teachers approach the teaching of history, geography, civics, and social awareness. The present study investigates how DIET faculty perceive the functioning of this department, and whether that perception varies with faculty characteristics such as sex, qualification, locality, or experience.

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

The topic selected for the present investigation is “**Role of Department of Humanities in Strengthening Elementary Teacher Education: A Study of DIETs.**”

1.2 Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out the significant differences in the role of the Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education with respect to sex, educational qualification, locality, and teaching-cum-research experience of DIET faculty.
2. To offer suggestions for the more effective functioning of the Department of Humanities in DIETs based on the perceptions of faculty working in the department.

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study:

1. There is no significant difference in the Role of Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education perceived by male and female faculties working in DIETs.
2. There is no significant difference in the Role of Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education perceived by faculties working in DIETs having prescribed and over prescribed qualification.
3. There is no significant difference in the Role of Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education perceived by faculties working in urban and rural DIETs.
4. There is no significant difference in the Role of Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education perceived by faculties working in DIETs having less and more experience on research work.

II. METHODOLOGY:

2.1 Research Method:

The investigator employed the **survey method**, a method of collecting and analyzing data obtained from a representative sample of respondents through a structured and detailed questionnaire.

2.2 Population and Sample:

Three DIETs from each of the four educational divisions of Karnataka - Bangalore, Mysore, Belgaum and Gulbarga - were selected by **purposive sampling for the present study**. From these DIETs, a total of 18 faculty members working in the Department of Humanities were drawn as the sample, comprising 6 males and 12 female faculty.

2.3 Tool Used for Data Collection:

The DIET Functioning Description Tool, developed by the researcher, was used to measure the role of the Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education. The tool was constructed as per the DIET Guidelines (1989) and covers the important functional aspects of the department. Responses were obtained on a four-point scale (Poor, Satisfactory, Good, Excellent), with a higher score indicating more satisfactory functioning. The content and concurrent validity of the tool were established through expert judgement, including review by officials of the Department of State Educational Research and Training (DSERT), Karnataka.

2.4 Statistical Techniques:

The collected data were analyzed using the **independent 't'-test**. The level of significance was fixed at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of confidence.

III. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

The data are analyzed by computing the mean, standard deviation, and 't'-test for each variable, presented below along with graphical representation.

Table-1: 't' test results - Role of Department of Humanities by Sex

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Sex	Male	6	59.181	4.750	2.46*
	Female	12	64.714	3.946	

Table-1 shows the number, mean, standard deviation and 't' value of the role of the Department of Humanities perceived by male and female faculties working in DIETs. The obtained 't' value of 2.46 is greater than the table value of 2.12 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is significant. Hence, the stated null hypothesis is rejected and an alternative hypothesis is accepted: there is a significant difference in the role of the Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education perceived by male and female faculties working in DIETs. The mean scores of female faculties are higher than their counterpart.

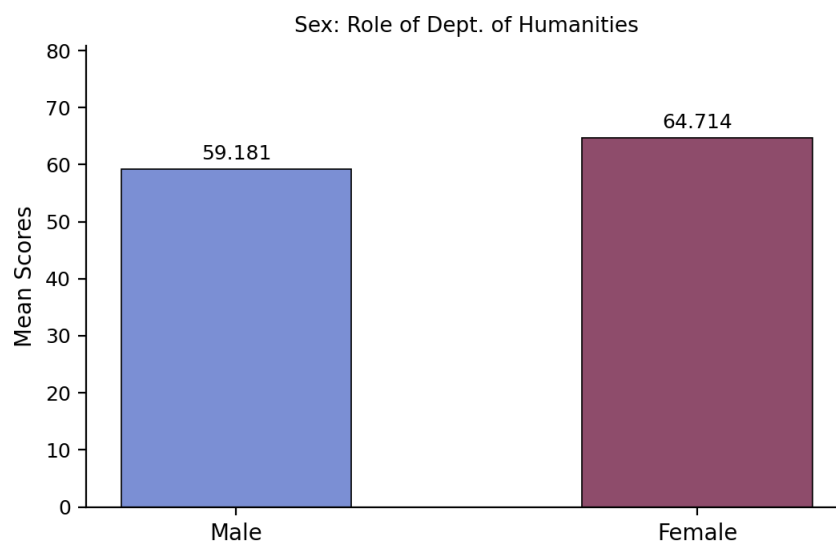


Fig.1: Bar graph showing comparison of mean scores of role of Department of Humanities perceived by male and female faculties working in DIETs.

Table-2: 't' test results - Role of Department of Humanities by Educational Qualification

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Educational Qualification	Prescribed	12	60.166	4.745	2.62*
	Over Prescribed	6	66.132	4.445	

Table-2 reflects the number, mean, standard deviation and 't' value of the role of the Department of Humanities perceived by faculties having prescribed and over prescribed qualification. The obtained 't' value of 2.62 is greater than the table value of 2.12 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is significant. Hence, the stated null hypothesis is rejected and an alternative hypothesis is accepted: there is a significant difference in the role of the Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education perceived by faculties having prescribed and over prescribed qualification. The mean scores of faculties with over prescribed qualification are higher than their counterpart.

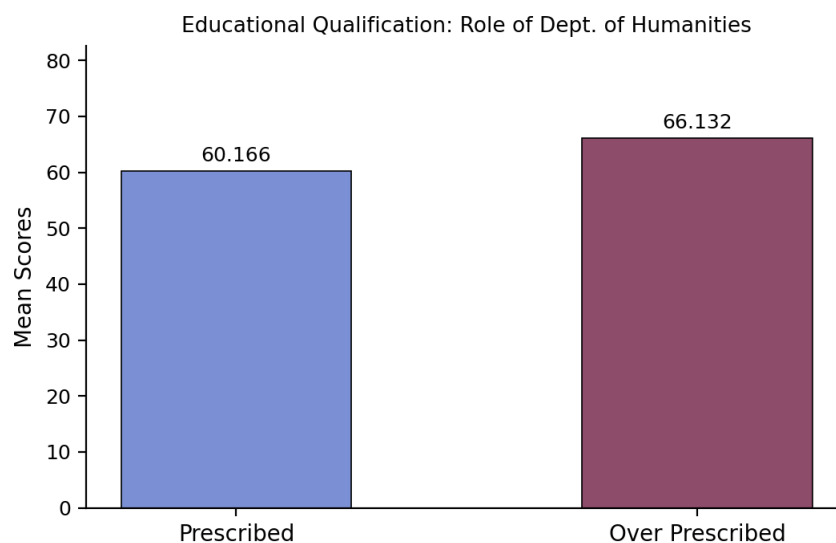


Fig.2: Bar graph showing comparison of mean scores of role of Department of Humanities perceived by faculties having prescribed and over prescribed qualification.

Table-3: 't' test results - Role of Department of Humanities by Locality

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Locality	Urban	14	59.785	4.742	0.74NS
	Rural	4	61.500	3.872	

Table-3 opines the number, mean, standard deviation and 't' value of the role of the Department of Humanities perceived by faculties working in urban and rural DIETs. The obtained 't' value of 0.74 is less than the table value of 2.12 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is not significant. Hence, the stated null hypothesis is accepted: there is no significant difference in the role of the Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education perceived by faculties working in urban and rural DIETs.

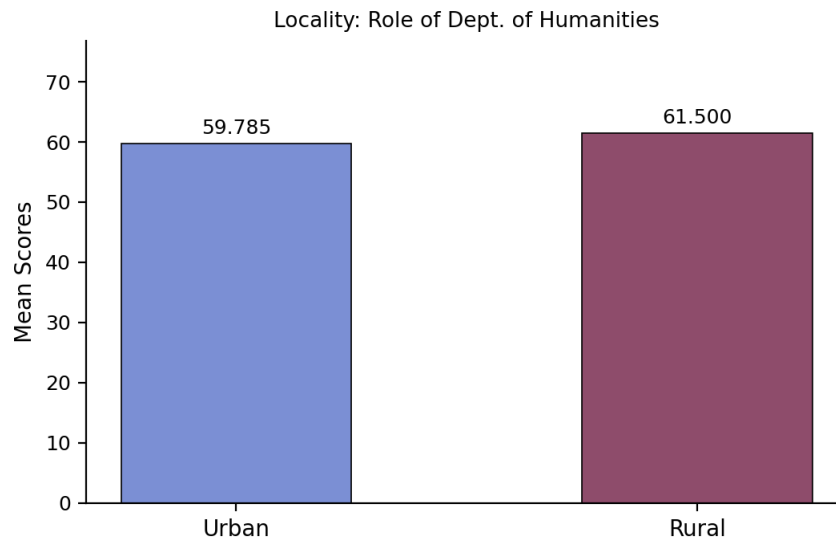


Fig.3: Bar graph showing comparison of mean scores of role of Department of Humanities perceived by faculties working in urban and rural DIETs.

Table-4: 't' test results - Role of Department of Humanities by Experience

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Experience	Less experience	9	60.888	3.586	0.67NS
	More experience	9	59.444	5.410	

Table-4 illustrates the number, mean, standard deviation and 't' value of the role of the Department of Humanities perceived by faculties having less and more experience on research work. The obtained 't' value of 0.67 is less than the table value of 2.12 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is not significant. Hence, the stated null hypothesis is accepted: there is no significant difference in the role of the Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education perceived by faculties having less and more experience on research work.

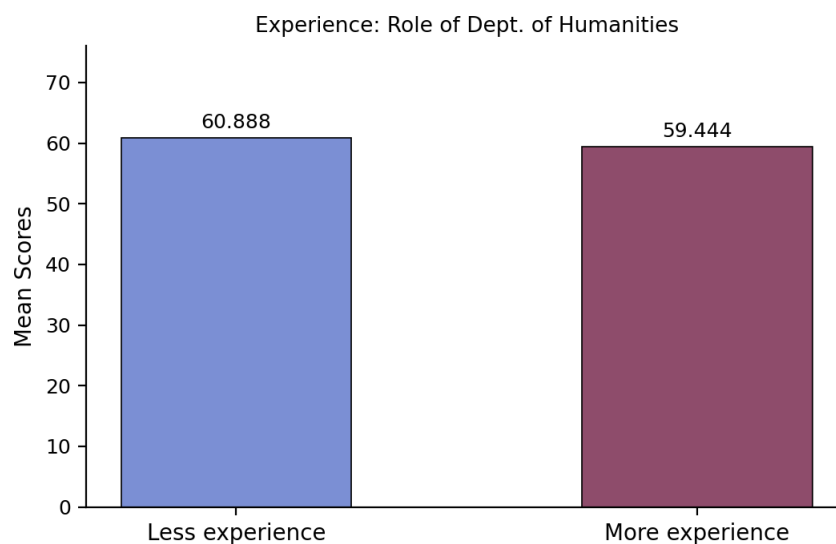


Fig.4: Bar graph showing comparison of mean scores of role of Department of Humanities perceived by faculties having less and more experience on research work.

IV. DISCUSSION:

The Department of Humanities shows a pattern distinct from both the Department of Languages and the Department of Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Biological Sciences: sex and educational qualification are the significant differentiators here, while locality and experience are not. The significantly higher scores reported by female faculty are consistent with the broader observation of Longchar (2019) that women form a substantially higher proportion of teacher educators and trainees in DIET-type institutions and tend to be more actively engaged in institutional activities, and with Rajanna and Haseen Taj (2018), who reported gender as a significant correlate of DIET role-performance perception in Karnataka.

As with the Department of Languages, higher qualification is associated with a more favorable perception of departmental functioning, reinforcing the broader pattern that qualification-linked professional engagement - consistent with Mohammad's (2016) finding that professionalism among DIET teacher educators varies with individual faculty characteristics - rather than institutional locality or years of service, tends to shape how humanities and language faculty specifically view their departments. This is a pattern that did not hold for the science department, where locality and experience mattered more, suggesting that the drivers of departmental satisfaction may themselves be discipline-specific rather than uniform across DIET departments.

V. CONCLUSION:

The 't' test revealed that there is a significant difference in the role of the Department of Humanities in strengthening elementary teacher education between male and female faculties, and between faculties having prescribed and over prescribed qualification, with female faculties and over prescribed faculties reporting more favorable perceptions in each case respectively. The 't' test further revealed that there is no significant difference in the role of the Department of Humanities between faculties working in urban and rural DIETs, or between faculties having less and more experience.

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