

Impact Of Academic Ranking of Colleges on TNEA Counselling"-A Study Of Chennai, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur Region

M.P. Sivaram Kumar* K. Sangeetha** M. Manoranjitham** and M. Umadevi**

Abstract : Number of Engineering Colleges have increased many fold in most of the states in the recent past. Students and parents are unable to choose colleges for lack of scientific and reliable ranking procedure. Anna University Chennai (AU) has been publishing semester-wise rank list of colleges based on the over-all pass % in the examinations. Parents and students have started using this ranking as a basis for choosing college along with general perception put out by media and based on experience of other students. This study brings out inferences based on the analysis of AU Ranking vis-à-vis filling of seats in Single Window Counseling for Engineering Admissions organized by AU.

Keywords : Academic Ranking of engineering colleges, TNEA , study of TN colleges.

1. INTRODUCTION

Twenty years ago most of the engineering colleges are owned by the government and small number of government aided private engineering colleges which follows the same enrollment policy for admission. Growing demand of engineering graduates leads to liberalization of technical education from 2000, which significantly increase the number of engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu state as shown in Figure 1, with the highest number of colleges started during the year 2006-10.

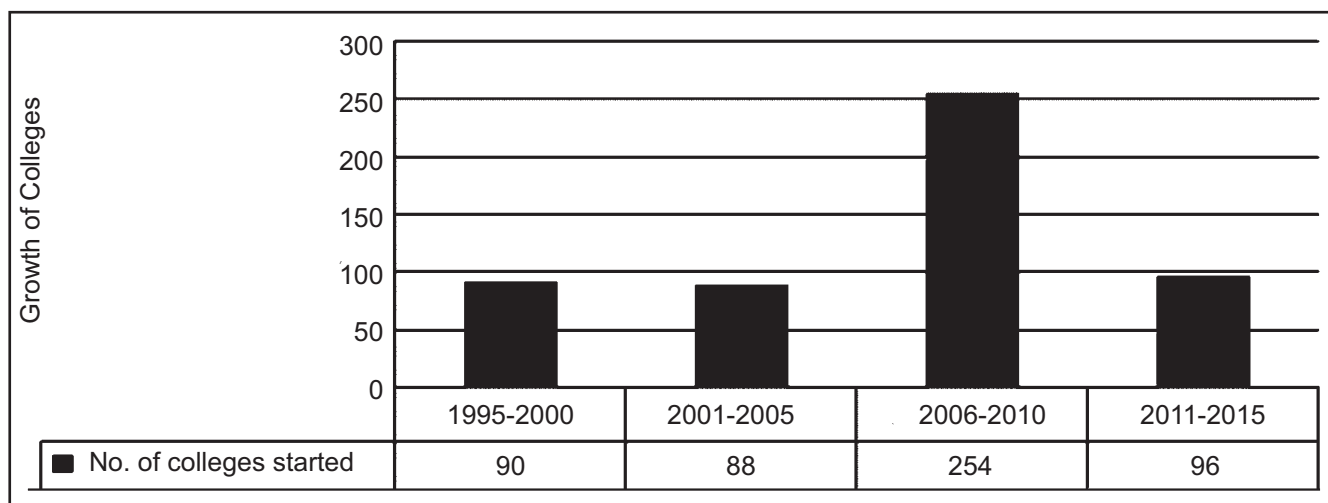


Figure 1: Establishment of Engineering Colleges since 1995

* Principal Department of Computer Science and Engineering Apollo Engineering College, Chennai 602105, Tamil Nadu, India, E-mail: sivaram_softengineer@yahoo.co.in

** Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering Apollo Engineering College, Chennai 602105, Tamil Nadu, India E-mail: sangeethakalyaniraman@gmail.com, m.manoranjitha@gmail.com, umamtech83@gmail.com

Today with numerous engineering colleges in our country (and Tamil Nadu, in particular), becomes not only the frightening but also confusing task both for the parents and their wards to choose a perfect college. Students choose the colleges based on the following criteria:

1. Infrastructure
2. Approved faculty
3. Results
4. Placements
5. Accreditation
6. Research & Publications
7. Student retention
8. Graduation rates
9. Public Opinion (Of course qualitative)

To ease the process of choosing the colleges, ranking is done by the Tamil Nadu Engineering Admissions(TNEA) based on pass percentages produced by colleges. Rankings provide an excellent starting point for the search of a good college. Last few years rankings have become popular in academic life to evaluate the institution as better or worse. Ranking of institutions will guide students and their parents, junior faculty and participants of continuous and executive education programmers, sponsors and politicians to evaluate the quality of different colleges. Ranking creates a platform for competition between colleges, which did not exist previously. Many colleges use the rankings as a marketing tool to communicate their performance and build their reputation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Michael Sauder and Ryon Lancaster[1] stated that ranking of institutions have significant effects on both the decisions of prospective students and the decisions institutions make in the admissions process. In [2] authors discussed how ranking affects the institution's decision making such as

A. Strategic Positioning and Planning

The most obvious example is that of an institution explicitly setting a goal of rising in the rankings and tying resource allocation, hiring, and other decisions to this goal.

B. Staffing and Organization

Ranking outcomes may have significant status and employment consequences for administrators who are responsible for monitoring and improving their institution's performance [6].

C. Quality Assurance

Many people look to rankings for a measure of the academic quality of institutions. As a result of rankings, institutions may be motivated to improve the quality of their academic programs. Institutions report that lower than expected rankings are prompting new teaching and learning practices, and new academic programs.

D. Resource allocation and fund raising

Rankings can influence decision making in the development and fundraising realm. A high ranking can raise an institution's profile and make investment more appealing to industry sponsors.

E. Admissions and financial aid

An institution might focus on certain admission criteria over others, depending on which indicators will contribute to a high ranking. Institutions place greater emphasis on these scores as a determinant of admission than on other factors, such as high school grade point average[7].

Earlier researches on ranking of institutions are based on the following measures [3][4][8].

A. Retention (22.5 percent)

The higher the proportion of first-year students who return to campus for sophomore year and eventually graduate, the better a school is apt to be at offering the classes and services that students need to succeed.

B. Faculty resources (20 percent)

Research shows that the more satisfied students are about their contact with professors, the more they will learn and the more likely they are to graduate.

C. Faculty salary (35 percent)

The higher the salary of a faculty, higher will be their potential of teaching and research.

D. Student selectivity (12.5 percent)

An institution’s academic atmosphere is determined in part by the abilities and ambitions of the students.

E. Financial resources (10 percent)

Generous per-student spending indicates that a college can offer a wide variety of programs and services. Spending on sports, dorms and hospitals doesn’t count.

F. Graduation rate performance (7.5 percent)

This indicator of added value shows the effect of the college’s programs and policies on the graduation rate of students after controlling for spending and student characteristics.

G. Alumni giving rate (5 percent)

This reflects the average percentage of living alumni with bachelor’s degrees who gave to their Institution back, which is an indirect measure of student satisfaction.

In [5] authors listed the useful measures for ranking of institutions (Table 1).

Table 1
Measures for ranking of institutions

| <i>Measure</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Grant Funding | 41 |
| Faculty salaries | 36 |
| Research expenditures | 36 |
| Rankings | 23 |
| Patents | 18 |
| Research output | 18 |
| Graduation rates | 14 |
| Faculty reputation | 9 |

A recent survey says that “53 percent of people think that colleges are mainly for money, while only 43% see them as focused mainly on education. Now a day’s institutions are in arms race. Competition among institutions should be focused on things that really matter, such as improving teaching and learning, increasing educational value added, and enhancing student outcomes.

3. RESEARCH OUTCOMES

A study of the impact of TNEA ranking of colleges based on academic performance of colleges on the counseling was done to understand how seriously people view the ranking in selecting a particular college. The result of analysis for the sample of colleges considered in Chennai, Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram are projected as under.

Observation 1

Careful study of Top 50 ranking of colleges in the area of study over the past 6 semesters also has an interesting field to note that certain colleges are consistently maintaining their ranking in the top notch except one or two colleges which oscillate as illustrated in Figure 2.

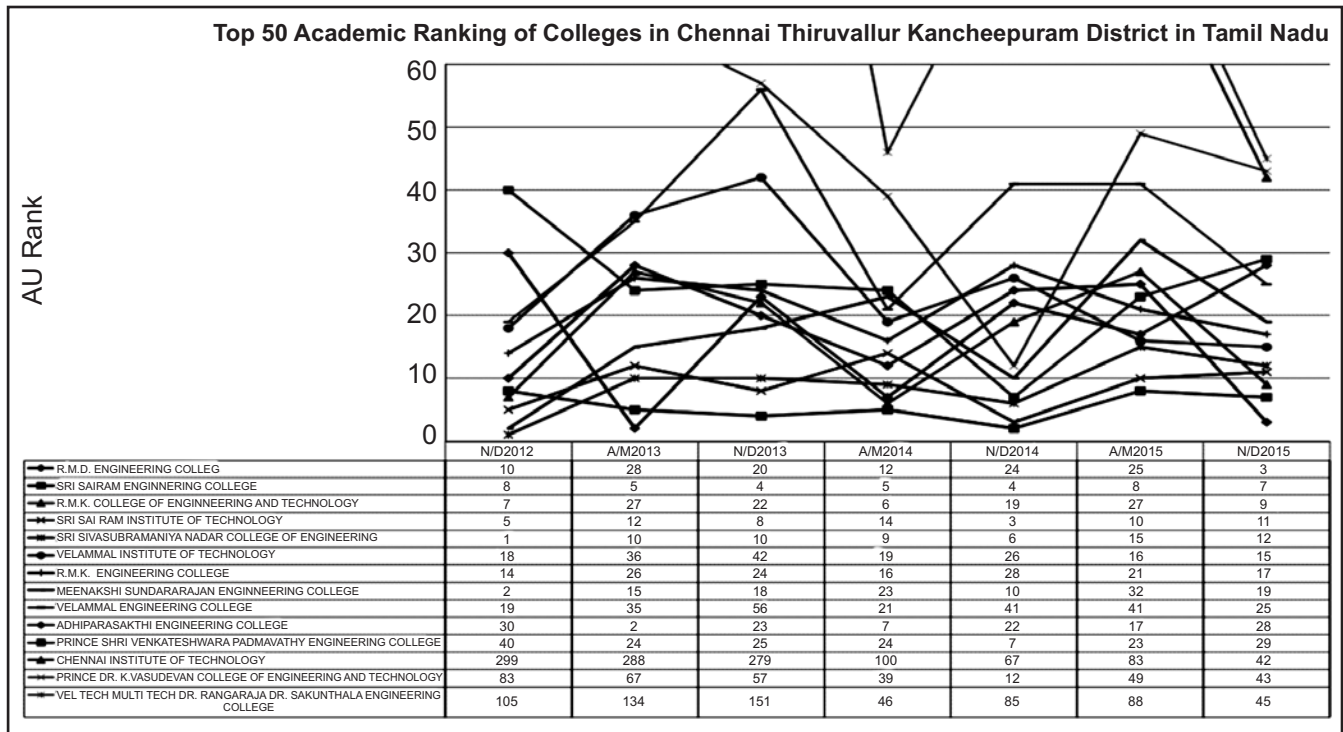


Figure 2: Top 50 Academic Ranking of colleges in Chennai, Thiruvallur and Kanchi

Observation 2

Out of 516 Affiliated colleges listed in ranking for Nov/Dec 2015, a few colleges may appear in the ranking with hardly less than 500 intake (may be a startup college or may be a college with least admission rate), but still, in ranking they have managed to be one among top 100 positions, for instance see Table 2 & 3 below. These colleges does not demonstrate consistency in performance.

Table 2

TN colleges in Top 100 with students strength less than 50% against approved intake for Nov/Dec 2015

| Nov/Dec 2015 Rank of College | Year of Est. | Approved Intake for all courses | No. of Students Appeared | Percentage of Pass |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 47 | 2009 | 2160 | 462 | 71.65 |
| 48 | 2013 | 480 | 221 | 71.49 |
| 71 | 2008 | 1440 | 457 | 67.18 |

Table 3

TN colleges in Top 100 with students strength less than 50% against approved intake for Apr/May 2015

| APR/MAY 2015 Rank of College | Year of Est. | Approved Intake for all courses | No. of Students Appeared | Percentage of Pass |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 5 | 2008 | 1080 | 476 | 93.07 |
| 26 | 2010 | 1280 | 459 | 84.53 |
| 34 | 2008 | 600 | 111 | 81.08 |
| 45 | 1999 | 1200 | 99 | 78.79 |

The ranking is relevant if the institution considered is a newly started or a college oriented towards a particular specialization of course. But, if the college has been started earlier, yet the strength is very thin, it is generally not a good method to take ranking as criteria of selecting such colleges.

Observation 3

A sampling study was done for 5 days starting from 9/7/16 to understand the correlation of admission fill rates and their respective consistent TNEA ranking. It was found that there is a high impact on the fill rate of seats for colleges of our study region as shown in Figure 3, whereas for other colleges over the ranking of 50 – 100, the rate of fill up of seats was comparatively slow. This graph below is projected for CSE department, but the same was true with other departments as well.

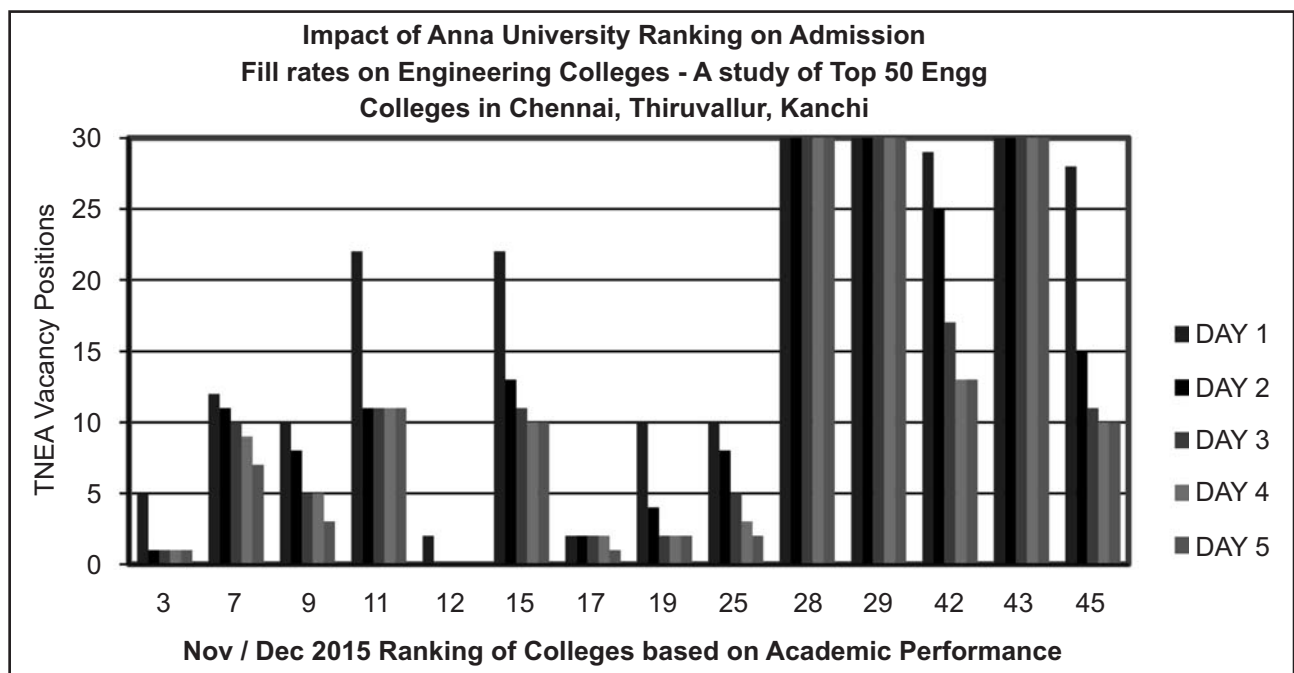


Figure 3: Impact of Anna University Ranking on Admission Fill rates on Engineering Colleges

Observation 4:

Major impacts of accreditation system in broad terms are to encourage quality improvement initiatives by Institutions and improves student enrollment both in terms of quality and quantity.

Out of 164 colleges listed as accredited by NBA for various departments[11], only 50 colleges in Tamil Nadu still hold NBA validity till and beyond 2016 (including those colleges which has applied for re-accreditation) [12], others being elapsed since 2009. In this list of 50, it is evident to note that, only about 16 colleges are placed in the top 100 Dec 2015 ranking of affiliated institutions like (3, 5,6,7,12,25,32,45,51, 61,63, 66, 67, 73, 82, 91 and 100).

Observation 5

It is observed that about 22% of colleges (115 out of 522) and 43.2% (223 out of 516) of colleges are under performing with less than 40% of students passing the examinations in Apr/May 2015 and Nov/Dec 2015 examinations respectively as shown in Figure . While admitting this is a serious and growing problem, teachers and students blame it on different things for poor results. Yet, what will be the future of students if they are not able to pass the exams in terms of their employability.

It is also alarming to note that about 106 colleges (out of 115 colleges with less than 40% pass % in Apr/May 2015 exams) have not improved their results beyond 40% in Nov/Dec 2015 exams as well. This demands to have a serious look at the quality of education provided in various engineering colleges to improve the level of employability of students.

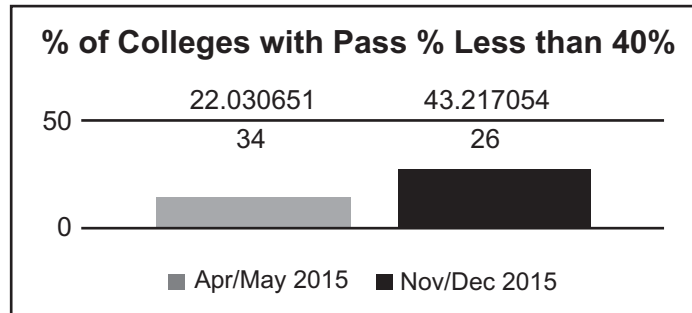


Figure 4: % of TN Engineering colleges with less than 40% of Pass %

Of these 106 colleges which are continually producing a pass % of less than 40 for continuous 2 semesters , a study was done to check if it has any impact on its admissions and it was found that the rate of admissions were evidently very poor (Less than 50% of approved intake) for about 76/106 continuously under-performing colleges as shown in Figure 5. If this could be seriously viewed , certain support may be extended from Anna University to strengthen these colleges to sustain in near future.

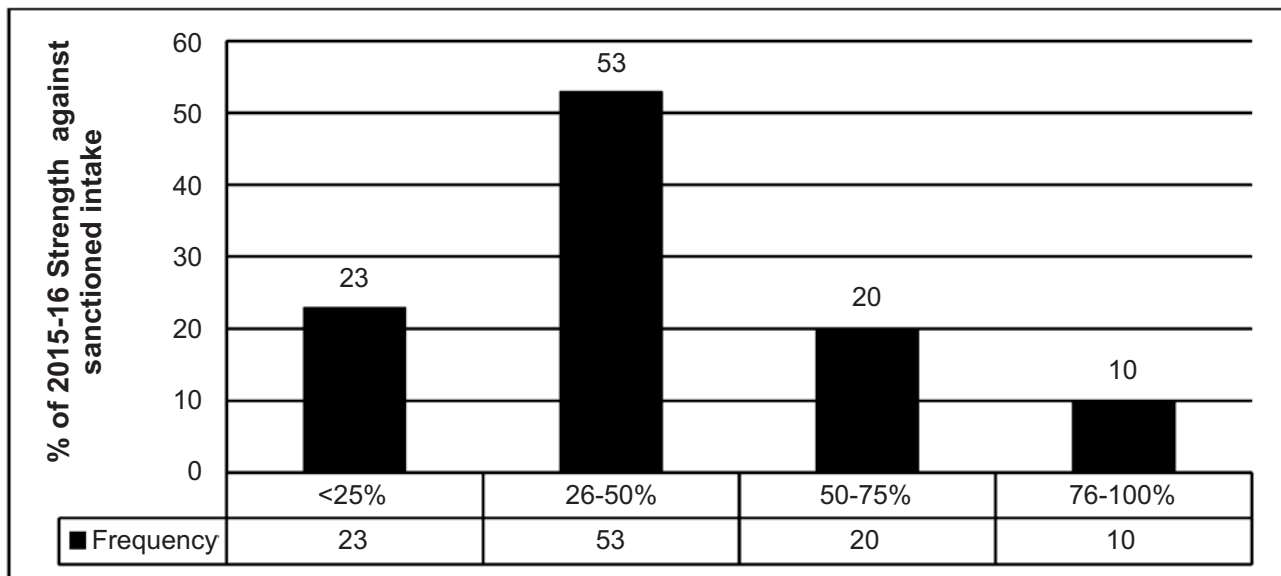


Figure 5: Study of 2015-16 college strength as against approved intake of contionuously non-performing colleges

4. CONCLUSION

When about more than a lakh seats go surrendered, it is obvious not to consider colleges which produce a very least pass % of students, because the ecosystem of employable engineers has a pre-requisite that they must pass their examinations without backlogs as a primitive criteria. Thus the TNEA counseling has given a best guideline for selecting a college based on pass percentage as one of the student/parent criteria.

In due course, if the colleges which under-produce results do not focus on improving it, then the stake of admissions will undoubtedly go shrinking in years to come. A strong correlation was found between AU Ranking and seating filling rate for the first 50 Colleges. This study concludes that factors used in NBA Accreditation criteria can be considered for ranking of colleges. i.e. Anna University could as well evaluate its affiliated colleges on other quantifiable metrics like availability of required infrastructure and resources, approved faculty as per norms, placements, accreditation, research & publications, student retention and graduation rates, then colleges will gear up to improve teaching and learning practices which may lead to serious improvement in quality of education.

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