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## Assessment literacy of Indian educators at the tertiary-level: Insights on practices and perspectives

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#### Abstract

The present study analyzes the assessment literacy levels of tertiary level educators in Tamil Nadu, India. And to this end, 40 teachers at the tertiary-level from rural, urban, and semi-urban areas were selected and an Assessment Literacy Inventory was administered to them. Additionally, to corroborate the questionnaire results, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 teachers (from the 40 who filled out the questionnaire). The results show that teachers believe that assessments help in the teaching-learning process. However, teachers don't read articles and books related to assessment to develop their assessment literacy. The findings also highlight the fact that educational institutions do not conduct programs to enhance teachers' assessment literacy levels.

**Keywords:** Assessment education, assessment literacy, classroom assessment, language assessments, teachers' assessment literacy, language assessment literacy



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### Public Interest Statement

This study aims at analyzing the Assessment Literacy of Teachers in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. Assessment plays a crucial part in the teaching and learning process. To achieve teaching goals and learning objectives, teachers should also be assessment literate. Considering the inevitable nature of Assessment Literacy, this study aims to probe into the aspects of assessment like feedback, paper correction, question paper setting, and the perspectives of teachers towards assessments.

## 1. Introduction

Assessment is a ubiquitous component in the teaching-learning process. Assessments that are aimed at testing learning objectives and are designed based on clear plans tend to be very useful in the educational context. Yambi (2018) while discussing the importance of assessments writes, “Well-designed assessment strategies also play a critical role in educational decision-making and are a vital component of ongoing quality improvement processes at the lesson, course, and/or curriculum level” (2). Conducting effective assessments is one of the foremost responsibilities of a teacher: yet, there is little awareness in the field of assessment practices, processes, uses, and the ways to disseminate assessment results and so on. However, this awareness and knowledge is called “Assessment Literacy” by Stiggins. This term gained currency in recent times. Assessment illiteracy as researchers’ claim could have adverse effects on the students and stakeholders, in particular, and the whole process of teaching and learning, in general. Popham (2009) in his article, mentions that a teacher’s lack of knowledge in small and large-scale assessments “can cripple the quality of education” (4). This makes assessment literacy inevitable for teachers. Popham (2009) views assessment literacy “as a sine qua non for today’s competent educator” (4). Subsequently, there has been a plethora of research work undertaken in the arena of assessment literacy, its relevance and the need for developing assessment literacy amongst teachers. However, there have been very few studies from the Indian Subcontinent. This paper aims to analyze the extent to which teachers are assessment literate in an ESL context, in Tamil Nadu, India.

## 2. A Review of Literature

### 2.1 *The Concept of Assessment Literacy (AL)*

Richard Stiggins coined the term “Assessment Literacy”. The most significant duty of present day teachers is to assess students’ learning. For assessments to be useful and to add to educational development, Martinez and Lipson (1989) state that if teachers have to create assessments that are pedagogically sound, external research and development are necessitated. In line with this idea, let us look at some significant research findings appertaining to assessment literacy.

For teachers to be effective as assessors, it is important to have knowledge and skills. According to Popham (2015), assessment literacy subsumes an individual’s understanding of the concepts, methods and assessment process that can potentially influence the decisions made in an educational context.

A lot of researchers have stressed the importance of teacher assessment literacy (Stiggins, 1995, Mellati and Khademi, 2018). Mellati and Khademi (2018) believe that a teacher’s awareness with regard to assessments can play a momentous role in engineering an environment that is conducive to operating a more productive assessment design.

Assessment Illiteracy as researchers’ claim could have adverse effects of the students and stakeholders, in particular and the whole process of teaching and learning, in general. Yamtim and Wongwanich (2014) suggest that teachers must enlarge their abilities in terms of assessments. This implies that there is a persistent need for teachers to be well-apprieved of assessment practices that are potent in their classrooms. They also opine, “If teachers are unable to accurately assess students, they will not be able develop students’ quality in accordance with the goals of instruction” (3004).

W. James Popham (2015) writes, “Today’s prospective teachers, in order to do their jobs properly, desperately need to become assessment literate” (267). There is a plethora of research that believes that assessment literacy is mandatory for educators, students, and all other stakeholders. Xu and Brown (2017) in their article affirm the significance of AL saying that it is “placed at the heart of the success of educational assessment and even the overall quality of education” (134). This makes Assessment Literacy inevitable for teachers.

The level of assessment literacy determines the effectiveness with which assessments are used in classrooms. A teacher with high levels of assessment literacy can use the right assessment tools and methods to test learning objectives, he/she can provide corrective feedback that is also descriptive. On the whole, teachers with high levels of assessment literacy can use assessments to their advantage and impact learning positively. Eddy White (2009) records, “A teacher’s level of assessment literacy directly affects student learning and course achievement” (4). Studies have also been reported on the drawbacks of Assessment illiteracy. Khadijeh and Amir (2015) perceive that a lack of assessment literacy can yield results that are inaccurate thereby rendering assessments null and void, leaving their purpose undone.

### 2.2 What does Assessment Literacy Entail?

Assessment literacy entails skills and knowledge that would help teachers use assessments positively to efficiently meet learning objectives. According to Davies (2008), assessment literacy includes both skills and knowledge. By skills, he refers to the ability to construct tests and knowledge is the amount of information one has on measurement and the description of language.

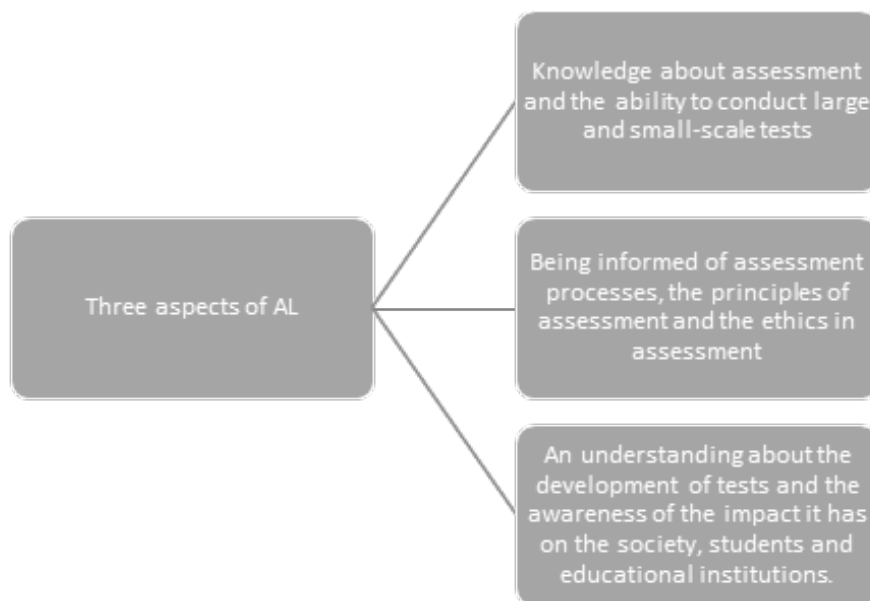


Figure 1: The Three Aspects of Assessment Literacy according to Fulcher (2012)

Figure 1 shows the three aspects of assessment literacy according to Fulcher (2012). Fulcher believed that firstly, knowledge and skills to carry out assessments are important. Secondly, teachers who are assessment literate need to be well informed on various practices, ethics, and codes that form part of a successful and valid assessment. Finally, he believes that teachers should know about the effect a particular test will have on the life of the learners and on society at large. Figure 2 depicts the five qualities that come under the purview of assessment literacy. These five qualities are based on Stiggins’ (1995) idea of what assessment literacy calls for.

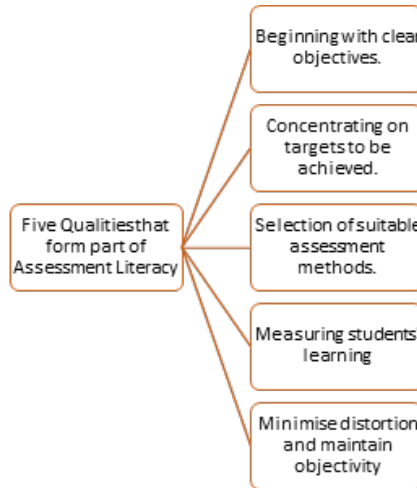


Figure 2: Based on the five standard qualities that form part of Assessment Literacy as given by Stiggins (1995)

Studies have also been reported on the drawbacks of Assessment illiteracy. Khadijeh and Amir (2015) perceive that the lack of assessment literacy amounts to inaccuracy in assessments and the ulterior motive behind an assessment gets defeated.

2.3 Empirical Studies on Assessment Literacy

This section enlists the most important findings from select empirical studies on assessment literacy from various parts of the world. For a better understanding, these studies have been arranged chronologically.

Table 1. A Report on Empirical Studies on Assessment Literacy

Study	Description	Findings
Volante and Fazio (2007)	A study to measure the assessment literacy of primary and junior teachers in Canada (n=69).	Candidates endorsed a need to develop a course on classroom assessment and evaluation.
Yamtin and Wongwanich (2014)	The study aimed at assessing the AL levels of primary school teachers. 19 teachers participated in filling the questionnaire and 8 took part in the focus group discussion.	Most of the teachers possess poor levels of AL. There should be a curriculum to train teachers develop their AL.
Beziat, Taa, Coleman and Bridget (2015)	A longitudinal study was undertaken to measure the knowledge of assessment strategies of 26 pre-service teachers (n=26).	Although a course on classroom assessment was prescribed and administered, the pre-service teachers lacked AL. However, teachers who took up the professional program of assessment literacy were found to have good knowledge in various assessment practices.
Kanjee and Mthembu (2015)	A study on the levels of AL of South African Foundational phase teachers.	Half the teachers are in the basic level of assessment literacy. Half the teachers are in the below basic level, while mere 10% of the teachers are proficient as far as AL is concerned.

Zolfghari and Ahmadi (2016)	A study to find out about the components of Assessment Literacy. Data was collected through interviews from English and non-English language Iranian High School teachers (n=32).	“All the interviewees believed that assessment literacy as an important issue is needed in the educational process” (11).
Yueting Xu and Gavin T.L.Brown (2017)	A survey on the AL of University English Teachers in China (n=891).	There is a dire need to consider standards and henceforth, assessment literacy should be a criterion for licensure to teach at the National level.
Mellati and Khademi (2018)	A study on 10 male EFL teachers and 75 students from Iran to explore the impact of AL on the writing outcomes of students.	Assessment literacy positively impacts the writing achievement of learners and it leads to better assessment practices.
Hamid Ashraf and Samaneh Zolfaghari (2018)	A study on the relationship between Assessment Literacy and Reflective Teaching. Data was collected from 120 Iranian EFL Teachers in different language institutions in Mashhad.	<p>Teachers who were assessment literate indulged more on reflecting the process of teaching.</p> <p>In turn, reflecting on the teaching process will enable better performance of teachers.</p> <p>If one intends to be a good assessor in terms of language abilities, one should not shy away from being updated on current trends and happenings.</p>
Albert Weideman (2019)	The article explores various assessment techniques that can be applied by language teachers in South Africa.	<p>Rather than shying away from experimenting with new forms of assessment, teachers should explore them.</p> <p>To interpret test score and to make the best out of them, teachers should learn to use at least one statistical tool without hesitation.</p>

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#### 2.4 Assessment Literacy in the Indian Context

Assessment literacy is an area that is less explored in developing and less developed countries. Juanjuan and Yusoff (2023) call for more empirical studies from developed countries in the future. The same is the case with India. Subsequently, let us look at some studies on assessment literacy from India. In a study to find assessment literacy levels of practitioners in Higher Education, Gaikwad, Wadegaonkar, Mitra and Chakravarthy (2023) confirm that 79% of teachers possess moderate levels of assessment literacy, while 6% of teachers exhibited low levels and 5% of teachers had high levels of assessment literacy. Mahapatra (2013a) discussed at length the outline of a workshop that was conducted in June 2012 at Hyderabad to “sensitize the teachers around translating assessment objectives to sound assessment tasks” (35). An interesting term is used by Mahapatra (2013b) in another article on assessment literacy. He calls assessment literacy ‘a panacea’ as inadequate levels of assessment literacy affect language testing. He believes that assessment literacy is the competence “to plan, design, conduct and evaluate assessment results for taking pedagogic decisions” (9).

### 3. Objectives of the Study

1. The present study aims at finding out if teachers in Tamil Nadu at the tertiary level are assessment literate and to what extent.
2. This study provides possible recommendations that will empower teachers at the tertiary level (in Tamil Nadu) improvise their assessment competency, knowledge and skills.

### 3.1 Research Question and Hypothesis of the Study

Research Question: Are teachers at the tertiary level in Tamil Nadu assessment literate enough to make good use of assessment?

H<sub>0</sub>: Teachers at the tertiary level are assessment literate enough to make good use of assessment.

H<sub>1</sub>: Teachers at the tertiary level are not assessment literate enough to make good use of assessment.

## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1 Research Design and Setting

This study is an Exploratory study that tries to investigate the levels of Assessment Literacy in teachers. It also aims at gaining an understanding of the attitudes of teachers and the practices they employ in the area of language assessments. The researcher collected data pertaining to the study from rural, semi-urban, and urban areas in Tamil Nadu (a state) in India.

### 4.2 Research Participants and Sampling

This paper is based on a research study that involves over 100 teachers and 200 students from over 75 colleges in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. However, for this paper, the researcher selected 40 teachers from 20 different Arts and Science colleges by way of Random Sampling. To maintain the universality of the sample, teachers with experience as less as 0 years (freshers) to teachers with experience as high as 25 years have been selected for the study. Additionally, none of the teachers were forced to be a part of the study. The researcher explained the purpose of collecting data beforehand. In this article, the names of the teachers and the names of the institutions will not be revealed to protect the privacy of the participants.

### 4.3 Data Collection Tools

#### 4.3.1 Questionnaire

Deluca, LaPointe-McEwan and Luhanga (2016) felt the need to develop a literacy inventory that would be in line with the present times. They also mention that the other instruments developed by researchers earlier have now become outdated. This warrants the need for developing a new assessment inventory more specifically in the ESL context. The researcher, therefore, resorted to understanding the assessment competence of teachers by way of a questionnaire prepared to take into view the Indian context and standards. Assessment Literacy Inventory was made by the researcher with the view of eliciting information about the assessment literacy of teachers at the tertiary level. Initially, the questionnaire was piloted to 10 teachers and based on the pilot study, changes were made in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was run through a Cronbach's Alpha test and the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was found to be as high as 0.8. Therefore, the questionnaire has reliability. The questionnaire consisted of 40 questions. For this study, 15 questions have been analyzed.

#### 4.3.2 Semi-structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview was undertaken by the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the assessment process, skills, and beliefs, the teachers espoused. The interview was based on a checklist that was prepared by the researcher. Questions concerning the assessment patterns that they follow, the marking scheme they follow, and the weightage given to LSRW skills were all tested. All teachers who responded to the questionnaire were not available for an interview and therefore, interviews with 20 teachers have been taken up for analysis in this research paper.

### 4.4 Data Analysis Tools

For an analysis of the questionnaire, the researcher has used descriptive analysis and MS- Excel. Since the questionnaire was closed-ended, most questions have been analyzed using mean and SD. Content analysis was found to be appropriate and was employed for an analysis of the interviews with educators.

The questionnaire consisted of 15 Likert Scale questions where the values range from 1 to 5. Since the distribution was non-uniform, the mean value intervals were redefined with equal ranges of 0.8 each. This adjustment in the range was done to ascertain a consistent interpretation of the data. The given table below shows, the revised range intervals for interpreting the mean values derived from the responses of teachers.

Table 2: The revised range of mean values

Likert Scale Interpretation	Frequency	Range of Mean Values
1	Never	1.0 - 1.80
2	Rarely	1.81 – 2.60
3	Sometimes	2.61 - 3.40
4	Often	3.41 – 4.20
5	Always	4.21 – 5.00

### 5. Results and Discussion

#### 5.1 An Analysis of the Data Obtained Through the Questionnaire

Data was collected from 40 teachers at the tertiary level in Arts and Science Colleges in India, more specifically Tamil Nadu. Given below are the first 7 questions that were part of the questionnaire.

1. You believe that assessment plays a crucial role in the teaching-learning process.
2. You consider marking of papers as too much workload.
3. You use a question bank from which you select questions.
4. You use technology to administer tests (use of computer-based tests.)
5. You formulate a rubric for evaluation.
6. You strictly follow the answer key given for evaluation.
7. You offer scope for creativity, even if their responses do not abide by the answer key, and also give credit for it in the marking.

This first set contained questions pertaining to the attitude of teachers towards assessments, the practices used in assessment, and paper correction. Figure 2 shows the responses of teachers to each question that was asked in the form of a bar chart.

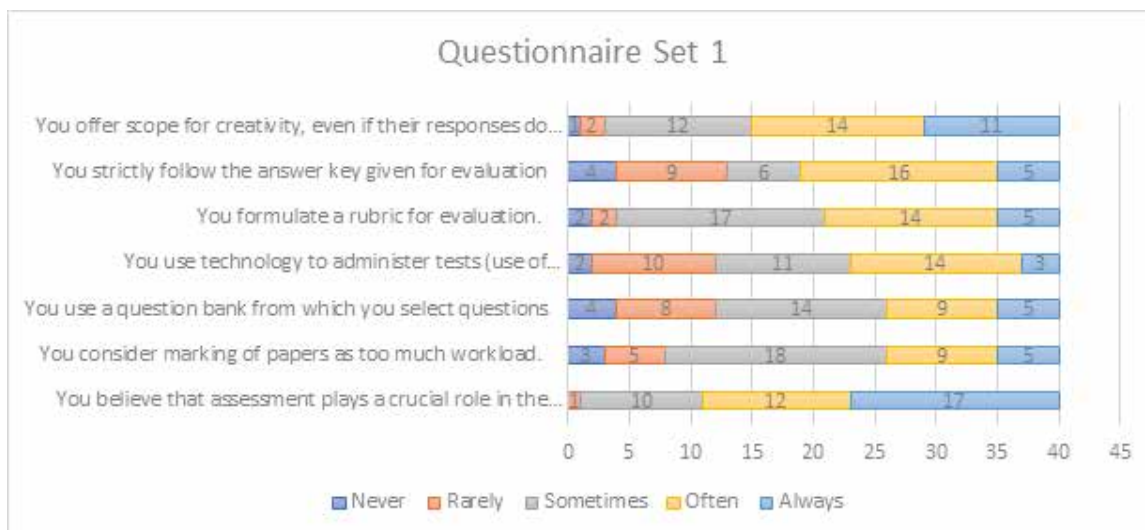


Figure 3. Pictorial Representation of the Responses of Teachers to Questionnaire (Set 2)

To derive results from the questionnaire, we need to look at the mean and interpret them based on the revised range values in Table 1. Accordingly, the table below discusses the mean values and the corresponding interpretation of these values based on the range. The table also gives the percentage of responses under each of the frequencies in the questionnaire, namely, never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always.

Table 3: The result of the first seven questions in the Assessment Literacy Inventory

No.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	0%	2%	25%	30%	43%	4.125	0.87	Often
2.	7%	12%	45%	23%	13%	3.2	1.04	Sometimes
3.	10%	20%	35%	22%	13%	3.075	1.14	Sometimes
4.	5%	25%	27%	53%	8%	3.15	1.04	Sometimes
5.	5%	5%	42%	35%	13%	3.45	1.04	Often
6.	10%	22%	15%	40%	13%	3.225	1.16	Sometimes
7.	2%	5%	30%	35%	28%	3.8	0.97	Often

Questions 1 and 2 were asked to evaluate the beliefs and attitudes of teachers towards language assessments. From the above table, it is evident that nearly 73% of the teachers unanimously believed that assessments play a significant role in the teaching-learning process. The mean of 4.125 indicates that teachers shared the same perspective that assessments often help in education. Additionally, the SD of 0.87 shows that the responses aren't highly polarized. It is evident that teachers at times feel evaluating papers as workload (Mean = 3.2) and the standard deviation (SD) of 1.04 indicates homogeneity in the responses to some extent. Concerning the use of a question bank to set the question paper, a majority of the teachers did not use this practice too often (Mean = 3.07). The standard deviation value of 1.14 indicates a concurrence in teachers' opinions in this regard. The mean value for question 4 is 3.15, correspondingly, it can be inferred that teachers prefer to use computer-based tests at times. The SD (1.04) also indicates that teachers were in accord.

As far as the formulation of a rubric is concerned, the mean of 3.45 denotes that teachers use rubrics for evaluation occasionally. The relatively low standard deviation (SD = 1.04) shows a convergence in this practice of teachers. Questions 6 and 7 were asked to verify the use of an answer key for evaluation. The mean (3.225) denotes that teachers do not use the answer key while evaluating a paper. The SD value (SD = 1.16) also proves that there is not much difference in the practice of assessments carried out by teachers. Nearly 63% of teachers responded positively to letting students be creative in their answer scripts. Even if the answers deviated from the answer keys, teachers awarded marks for their creativity. The mean corresponding to their responses (Mean = 3.8) shows that teachers often allow the free play of creativity in tests. The standard deviation (SD = 0.97) is an indication that this is convergent thinking and practice among teachers.

Here is the list of the second set of questions in the questionnaire.

8. You use computers and technology in the process of correcting and assigning marks.
9. You make sure that the evaluation is free from bias and is as objective as possible.
10. You use assessment results in decision-making (the selection of teaching methods, materials, and so on).
11. You communicate assessment results with parents and stakeholders.
12. You read books and research articles related to classroom assessment.
13. You use insights from reading to modify your assessments.
14. You received pre-service and in-service training in the field of assessment.
15. You are provided with professional development programs in your institution to improve assessment.



The bar chart in Figure 3 illustrates the responses of teachers to each of these afore-mentioned questions along with the frequencies.

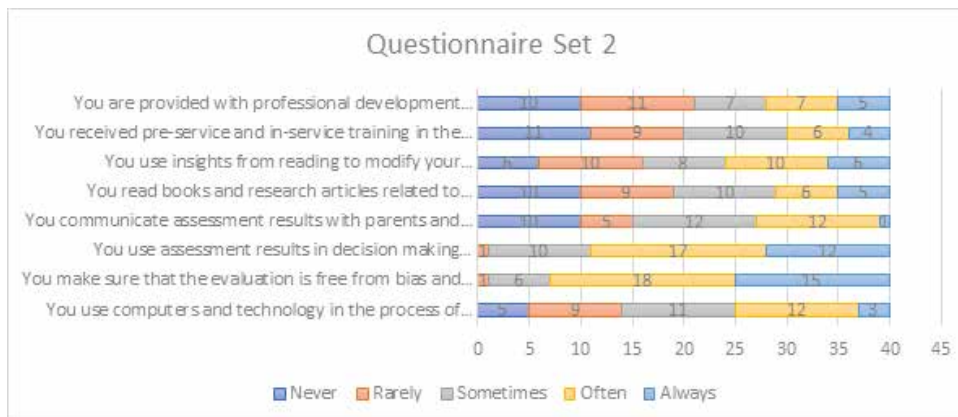


Figure 4. Pictorial Representation of the Responses of Teachers to Questionnaire (Set 2)

The table below shows the responses of the participants for each question along with the percentage under each descriptor. The table also gives the mean and standard deviation. The last column gives an interpretation based on the range of mean values as discussed in Table 1.

Table 4: The result of the questions 8 to 15 in the Assessment Literacy Inventory

No	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	SD	Interpretation
8.	8%	12%	22%	28%	30%	2.975	1.15	Sometimes
9.	0%	2%	15%	45%	38%	4.175	0.85	Often
10.	0%	2%	25%	43%	30%	4	0.81	Often
11.	25%	12%	30%	30%	3%	2.725	1.20	Sometimes
12.	25%	22%	25%	25%	15%	2.675	1.33	Sometimes
13.	15%	25%	20%	25%	15%	3	1.32	Sometimes
14.	27%	23%	25%	15%	10%	2.575	1.32	Rarely
15.	25%	27%	17%	18%	13%	2.125	1.32	Rarely

With a mean value as low as 2.975, it is obvious that a vast majority of the teachers do not use computers and technologies in their process of evaluation frequently. Additionally, the SD of 1.15 indicates that most responses are in harmony and seem to agree with the minimal usage of computers to make assessments possible. Over 83% of the population affirmed that they strive to make their evaluation impartial and objective. The mean value of 4.175 shows that most teachers often try to keep up the principle of objectivity while evaluating answer scripts. The low standard deviation (SD = 0.85) confirms that there was no significant heterogeneity. Questions 10 and 11 pertained to the effective use of feedback and washback. For question 10, the mean value of 4 denoted that most often teachers make use of test results to modify the instructional methods and materials that they use. The low standard deviation (SD = 0.81) corroborated the same.

At the tertiary level, unlike school level, parents and teachers are not in constant touch. Most teachers validated this when they responded by saying that only at times do teachers communicate assessment results with parents and stakeholders (Mean = 2.725) and there was little difference in their opinion (SD = 1.20). Questions 12 and 13 are associated with the reading of materials related to assessments. From the responses, it was evident that teachers do not read books and research articles related to language assessments (Mean = 2.675). The standard deviation implied that most teachers seemed to concur with this notion (SD = 1.33). However, if teachers read they tend to apply those insights to modify their assessments sporadically (Mean

= 3). The responses were in unison to some extent (SD = 1.32).

For questions 14 and 15, most teachers responded with option 2 (Mean = 2.575). This means that most teachers rarely received pre-service and in-service training in assessments. From the responses to question 15, we understand that educational institutions rarely provide professional development programs to improve their assessment skills (Mean = 2.125). The SD for both these questions is 1.32. This shows that there was a spread in the responses to some extent, but there is no significant difference in their viewpoints.

### *5.2 An Analysis of the Data Obtained Through the Interview*

#### **Question 1: Do you have a rubric that you strictly adhere to for evaluation?**

Most teachers agreed that they do not use a rubric for evaluation. At times a rubric is formulated. However, this is not strictly adhered to. Five out of 20 teachers confirmed that grammar forms a part of the rubric and they reduce marks in case of grammar mistakes. One teacher from a college in a rural area agreed that students would be given marks if they merely try attempting a question. This indicates that a rubric is not given importance at the Tertiary level. This is in line with Wolf and Stevens (2007). “While schoolteachers and their students have long seen the value of assessment rubrics, our experience in working with faculty is that rubrics have been largely ignored in higher education contexts” (Wolf & Stevens, 3).

#### **Question 2: Do you give equal weightage to LSRW skills?**

Most teachers from rural and semi-urban areas responded candidly that assessments primarily focus on testing the writing skills of their students. A teacher from Namakkal commented, “Things start and end with writing”. On the other hand, few teachers from urban areas prioritize speaking skills and allot some percentage of marks to their speaking skills as well. Four out of 20 teachers assess speaking skills using Group Discussion, Seminar, and JAM sessions. As far as listening skills are concerned, they are predominantly neglected. 15 out of 20 teachers who were interviewed confirmed that they don’t have language labs to teach or assess listening skills. Reading skills are tested only by way of the reading comprehension exercises that are given in tests at times.

#### **Question 3: How does the feedback mechanism work? How is feedback given after evaluation?**

Most teachers were found not to give feedback to their students. An Assistant Professor from Sattur mentioned, “I don’t give feedback to all because of the lack of seriousness among students. I give feedback to students who ask me with interest”. Another teacher from Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) said that the corrected answer scripts carried remarks of the teacher and that was all that the students got as feedback. “If I have small comments to make, I do it in the paper itself. Otherwise, I mention common feedback to students in class”, said another teacher from Karur. An Associate Professor from a private college in Karur said that she gives an imposition to students who make spelling mistakes. “Even if slow learners get lower marks, I encourage them to do better”, she added.

#### **Question 4: Do you use a question bank from which questions are selected for an exam?**

There was no use of a question bank in urban colleges. Upon conversation with semi-urban and rural teachers, it was evident that guides were used in class from which questions appeared in the exams as well. A teacher remarked, “We don’t use a textbook. We teach and kids learn from the guides”. This is done most often to increase the marks scored as teachers are accountable for the grades of their students. Such practices are detrimental and as Shepard (1989) points out, “The more we focus on raising test scores, the more instruction is distorted, and the less credible are the scores themselves” (9).

#### **Question 5: What suggestions for change do you have in the present assessment system?**

All teachers invariably demanded changes in the present assessment system. A teacher from Coimbatore remarked, “Theory does not help students much. Testing should be activity-based and that will help. Most

teachers suggested that speaking in English is a skill that would be needed throughout their lives and therefore, importance should be given to mastering speaking. A teacher from Pollachi stated, “Instead of pen and paper tests, speaking abilities should be tested”. Rote memorization is another inhibitor to language learning. One teacher working in a state-run college in Karur opined, “The present assessment pattern is not suitable to check the students’ competence level. They only mug up and get marks”. A teacher from Hosur reflected that “Testing should be similar to school. A rigid system only will help”.

## 6. Findings of the Study

In a developing country like India, the information that teachers get about assessment practices, processes, and methods comes largely from FDPs, conferences, and seminars. However, it is quite clear that the content or knowledge gained is theoretical and not practical. This leads to an incongruence between theory and praxis. Hence, teachers must receive hands-on training to improve their assessment literacy levels. The disparity in theory and praxis is evident in the discrepancy in the responses of teachers to the questionnaire and the responses they gave during the semi-structured interview. Teachers agreed that they offer feedback to students after evaluation. However, in the interview, teachers complained about the lack of time and large classrooms as impediments to providing feedback to all students. This indicates that efforts should be made to align the competence of teachers to assess in line with their classroom practices (Hull & Vigh, 2024)

Approximately 50% of teachers confirmed that they formulate a rubric for assessment. This confirms the findings of Crusan, Plakans, and Gebril (2016). Concerning the use of technology in assessments, it is clear that teachers do not make full use of technology. This is in line with Stiggins (1985) who believed that teachers and administrators need training in using technology to assess. Technology coupled with the necessary skills to make adequate use of it will prove to be a game-changer in language assessments. Martinez and Lipson (1989) also believed that “Assessment supported by advanced technology can be better used to serve the interests of learners and teachers in various ways” (73).

The data clearly shows that the stakeholders are excluded from the process of teaching and learning. Parents are seldom aware of the progress that their children make at the tertiary level. This is true in the case of most parents in India. At the school level, parents are summoned at regular intervals by the schools to inform them of their ward’s performance. However, this does not happen at the tertiary level. Therefore, it is evident that parents should be actively involved in the teaching-learning process.

Reading on the part of the teachers also was not found to be adequate. Reading about language assessments will help gain insights. In turn, these insights could be employed to assess their learners. However, there have been research studies on books on assessment and their role in developing assessment literacy. One such study by Zolfghari and Ahmadi (2016) found that textbooks on assessments aren’t of much use. They found out that books rarely help while conducting exams in real-world scenarios.

On the contrary to the study of researchers Crusan et al, (2016), most teachers reported that they did not receive training or learn about language assessments as students. However, the effectiveness of pre-service and in-service training also needs to be gauged. Despite completing courses in Classroom assessment, pre-service teachers were found to lack assessment literacy (Beziat & Coleman, 2015). Inbar-Lourie (2013) also stressed the need to integrate Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) into the curriculum of teacher training programs. By integrating language assessment courses, teachers can become better testers as well.

A wide chasm exists between the beliefs and the praxis that takes place in the Indian classroom, about assessments. From the data collected, it is evident that a majority of the teachers believe that assessments are needed and inevitable. However, when asked about the workload associated with assessments is way too high so much so that there is an inordinate delay in evaluating and returning the papers to the students on time. One teacher also remarked with a frown, “Paper correction and evaluating is the only thing that I don’t like in this profession. It is very tiring to evaluate seventy students in each class”. By the time teachers evaluate the papers, the students will have forgotten their responses. All efforts of the teacher to give corrective feedback also become futile. This delay, owing to large classrooms in India plays a crucial

role in the process of teaching and evaluation.

Assessment literacy is not entirely absent in today's educators, however, it needs to be developed for assessments to act as catalysts and not inhibitors. In congruence with the idea of Gebril, Boraie, and Arrigoni (2018), developing assessment literacy is a group task that requires the group effort of educational institutions, parents, and the media.

### **7. Recommendations for Further Study**

Student Assessment Literacy is an important component needed for assessments to become better. A study on the assessment literacy of students would help the world of education understand what learners expect from teachers. It would also help understand the nuances of the teaching-learning process from an insider's perspective. Of course, it is important for students as well to be aware of how assessments are done and their importance so that they don't regard them as futile and stressful tasks. In addition, a course in assessment with an applicatory text is necessary to ensure a more complete understanding of assessment to beginning teachers. Such a course can be created keeping in mind the context in which assessments would take place. A study on assessment literacy of stakeholders would also hold good.

### **8. Conclusion**

The assessment literacy level of teachers in India was found to be moderate. Moreover, there was a difference in the theoretical knowledge that they had and the practices and assessment methods they used in their classrooms. It is, therefore, imperative to direct the actions of teachers, colleges, and educational institutions towards developing the levels of assessment literacy. If and only if, teachers have the skills and knowledge of assessments they can use them efficiently. Additionally, efforts should be made towards applying the knowledge gained on language assessments in real-life situations. The lack of the ability to translate knowledge to practices could be detrimental to language classrooms, as the knowledge gained needs to be applied and not neglected.

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**Disclaimer Statement**

This work is not part of the thesis to be submitted by the researcher.

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**Authorship and Level of Contribution**

Corresponding author (First Author): S. Amrutha Varshini did the ideation, data collection, and data analysis and wrote the research paper based on the major findings of the study. Dr. Shrimathy Venkatalakshmi is the author's doctoral supervisor. She reviewed and revised the paper and guided the researcher throughout the phase of writing with her profound insights and astute suggestions and remarks.

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