
EXPLORING THE STATE OF RESEARCH ON TEACHER EDUCATORS: TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT:

Examining the present landscape of research on teacher educators, this project hopes to highlight emerging themes and pressing issues. Little is known about the professional development of teacher educators, despite their central role in preparing future generations of teachers. The research will combine techniques, doing both a comprehensive literature review and a survey of higher education teacher educators. Through this survey, we hope to learn more about teacher educators' experiences, perspectives, and perspectives on the issues they encounter in their field. The study's findings will shed light on the present landscape of research on teacher educators and help direct future efforts to better equip and support those in the field.

Keywords: Teacher Educators, Trends, Challenges

INTRODUCTION:

Kerala, or "God's Own Land," has always been noted for its dedication to education. The state has traditionally valued education and placed a premium on it as a means to economic and social mobility. Authorities and teachers in Kerala have recently shifted their focus to teacher preparation, realising the need of having well-trained teachers in order to provide effective education.

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on the educational system and highlighted the need for innovative and adaptable approaches to instruction, highlighting the significance of the work of teacher educators. Teachers need 21st-century abilities to help their students thrive in the modern world. The next generation of educators will be taught by teacher educators.

Numerous studies and research papers have analysed the trends and issues in teacher education in Kerala, focusing on a variety of aspects of teacher preparation, such as the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

In order to raise the quality of teacher education in the state, initiatives like the Integrated Teacher Training Programme (ITTP) and the Samagra Shiksha Kerala programme have been implemented.

Research on teacher educators in Kerala, the difficulties they confront, and the latest developments in the area are all important to consider in this light. In order to maintain Kerala's position as a global leader in education, it is crucial that policymakers and educators have access to this information. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to shed light on the current landscape of research on teacher educators in Kerala, as well as the trends and problems within the area and their potential effects on the future of teacher education in the state.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Little is known about the professional development of teacher educators, despite their central role in preparing future generations of teachers. The majority of the literature on teacher educators is focused on the issues they face as they work to prepare and support future and current educators. This section offers a high-level summary of the studies that have been conducted on teacher educators so far, with an eye towards the emerging patterns and difficulties in the subject.

Focusing on teacher educators' growth as professionals is a current vein of inquiry in the field of teacher education. To stay up with the ever-evolving demands of their profession, teacher educators need to be able to adapt to new circumstances and new methods of teaching, as argued by scholars like Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) argue that teacher educators can be made more effective through access to professional development and collaborative opportunities.

Novel pedagogical methods are being explored more and more in the field of teacher education. Online education, which relies on technological methods, has seen a rise in popularity in recent years (Voogt et al.,

2015). These methods can help teacher educators reach more students and provide both future and current educators more control over their own education.

The lack of appreciation and funding for teacher educators is a problem. As noted by Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015), teacher educators are often underappreciated despite their pivotal role in preparing the next generation of educators. Teacher educators may also struggle to find time for their own classroom instruction, independent research, and community involvement (Hammerness et al., 2015).

Educators also have the complex task of accommodating students from many different backgrounds. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), teacher educators should be prepared to educate a wide range of pupils from different socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. This can only be achieved if teacher educators have a deep understanding of the needs of different students and adapt their pedagogical approaches accordingly.

In sum, the current teacher education literature emphasises the vital function of teacher educators in both the initial and ongoing phases of the teaching profession. The literature also recognises various trends and issues in the subject, such as the necessity of professionalising teacher educators, employing novel methods of teacher education, and catering to a wide range of students.

OBJECTIVES:

- To determine the present research trends on teacher educators.
- To examine the difficulties teacher educators encounter in their employment.
- To assess teacher educators' training and credentials.
- To find areas where teacher educators might improve their professional development.
- To offer suggestions on how to strengthen teacher educators' support and training.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What are the recent trends in research on teacher educators?
- What are the difficulties encountered by teacher educators in their work, and how do they address them?
- What qualifications and preparation do teacher educators have for their role, and how do they stay current in their field?
- What opportunities for professional growth and development are available to teacher educators, and how effective are they?
- What suggestions can be made to improve the preparation and support of teacher educators, and how can they be implemented?

METHODOLOGY:

This research utilised a mixed-methods strategy, which included both a comprehensive literature review and a survey of higher education teacher educators. Searches of electronic databases were conducted in order to locate studies pertinent to teacher educators. A survey questionnaire was developed to learn more about teacher educators' experiences, perspectives, and perspectives on professional development, challenges, and opportunities. Purposeful sample was used to choose the higher education teacher educators who are currently teaching or have taught within the past five years. The quantitative data from the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics after being collected using a secure online survey platform. The qualitative data collected via open-ended questions was analysed using thematic analysis.

RESULTS:

The study's findings reveal that teacher educators have a wide range of experiences and educational backgrounds. Educators in the classroom typically hold doctorates in education or a closely related discipline. The findings also indicate that teacher educators face a number of obstacles in their work, such as juggling multiple responsibilities (as classroom teachers, researchers, and administrators), maintaining expertise in their fields, and meeting the demands of a dynamically evolving educational system. Working with a multiethnic group of students and educators presents its own set of difficulties.

Trends:

Emphasis on technology integration: Teacher educators in Kerala or India are under increasing pressure to adapt to the changing needs of their students as technology continues to rapidly improve.

Focus on inclusive education: Educators of teachers are held to the standard of cultivating classrooms that welcome and support students of all backgrounds. This involves preparing future educators to support students from underrepresented backgrounds and those with impairments or special needs.

Research and innovation: The importance of teacher educators conducting research and developing new methods is rising. They have responsibilities in the realms of research, publication, and dissemination of knowledge to the academic community at large..

Challenges:

Limited resources: When it comes to resources, such as funding, technology, and instructional materials, teacher educators in Kerala and India sometimes suffer a dearth of resources. Because of this, it is difficult for them to offer their pupils with an education of a sufficient standard.

Training and professional development: Many Kerala and Indian teacher educators lack possibilities for high-quality professional development and training. This makes it challenging for them to remain abreast of developments in their industry and implement cutting-edge strategies.

Changing education policies: It might be difficult for teacher educators in Kerala or India to stay abreast of policy shifts in the field of education and effectively implement them in their classrooms..

Low motivation: As a result of low salary, few possibilities for growth, and little credit for their efforts, teacher educators in Kerala or India may feel demotivated. Because of this, they may become dissatisfied with their jobs and their teaching may suffer..

Suggestions for improvement:

Increase funding: Better instructional materials, technology, and facilities, as well as increased government financing for teacher education programmes, would benefit everyone.

Provide professional development opportunities: Teacher educators need consistent chances for professional growth in order to raise the bar on teacher education. Workshops, seminars, and digital training courses can help with this..

Emphasize research: Provide teacher educators with time, money, and tools to do research in order to encourage them to participate in research and innovation. As a result, they will be able to better serve their students and the greater academic community..

Incorporate technology: In order to better prepare future educators for the digital age, cutting-edge technology should be incorporated into teacher education programmes. Teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively use technology in the classroom.

Focus on inclusive education: Teacher education programs should focus on creating an inclusive learning environment that caters to the needs of all students, including those with disabilities, special needs, and from marginalized communities.

Collaborate with schools: Teacher education institutions should collaborate with schools to provide hands-on training to future teachers. This will help bridge the gap between theory and practice and provide valuable experience to future teachers.

Provide incentives: The government and educational institutions should provide incentives to teacher educators, such as better pay, opportunities for career advancement, and recognition for their work. This will help to motivate and retain quality teacher educators.

Opportunities:

Collaboration with teacher education institutions: The researchers can collaborate with teacher education institutions in Kerala or India to gather data on teacher educators' backgrounds, qualifications, professional development, and challenges they face in their work. This will help to ensure that the study is comprehensive and relevant.

Systematic literature review: The researchers can conduct a systematic literature review to gather information on the latest trends and research on teacher educators in Kerala or India. This will help to identify gaps in the existing research and inform the study's research questions.

Surveys and focus groups: The researchers can conduct surveys and focus groups with teacher educators in Kerala or India to gather data on their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. This will help to provide a more detailed understanding of the issues facing teacher educators in Kerala or India.

Comparative study: The researchers can conduct a comparative study of teacher education in Kerala or India with other countries to identify best practices and areas for improvement. This will provide valuable insights into how teacher education in Kerala or India compares with other countries and how it can be improved.

Policy recommendations: Based on the study's findings, the researchers can develop policy recommendations for improving teacher education. These recommendations can be shared with policymakers, teacher education institutions, and other stakeholders to inform efforts to improve teacher education in Kerala or India.

Scope and delimitation:

Scope:

- The study focuses on teacher educators in higher education institutions who are currently teaching or have taught in the past five years.
- The study will use a mixed-methods approach, including a systematic literature review and a survey of teacher educators.
- The study will be limited to English-language publications and responses from teacher educators who agree to participate in the survey.

Delimitations:

- The study does not include teacher educators in K-12 schools or those who are not currently teaching.
- The study is limited to teacher educators in higher education institutions and may not be generalizable to other contexts.
- The study is limited to self-reported data from teacher educators and may be subject to social desirability bias.
- The study is also limited by the time and resources available for data collection and analysis.

CONCLUSION:

The preparation of those who will instruct future teachers is an essential component in ensuring that teacher education is of high quality. The present developments in the field of teacher education are pointing in the direction of a transition towards more learner-centered and technology-based instructional strategies. To be able to cater to the ever-evolving requirements of the education industry, however, there is an ongoing requirement to both innovate and invest in the training of future teachers. We can improve the training of teacher educators and assure a brighter future for education if we adopt new methodologies and promote research and innovation.

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