

# **Re-engineering Teacher Education**

## **Approaches and Challenges**



**Editors**

**Rev. Dr. D. Thomas Alexander SJ**

**Dr. A. Punitha Mary**



**AASAAN PUBLICATIONS**

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**St. Xavier's College of Education (Autonomous)**

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## PREFACE

Dear Teaching and Research Fraternity, Greetings from SXCE, Palayamkottai!

Oh, Teacher Education! Quo Vadis? (Latin phrase for 'Where are you going?'). Where are the teacher educators? Where should we be heading towards? Are we on the precise road? What should be triggered? What kind of teachers do we mold to face the challenges of today's world? These are a few questions being raised among the teachers, teacher educators, educationists, policymakers, elderly citizens, and stakeholders such as parents and well-wishers. In search of reflective answers, our college ventured into the organization of a national conference of teacher educators, focusing on 'Re-engineering Teacher Education: Approaches and Challenges' on February 2nd and 3rd, 2024. It was consciously made offline to avoid the undesirable academic sluggishness and disasters in online transactions. We aimed to provide a platform on which the above questions may be deliberated, and concrete action plans may be initiated.

Teacher education is a foundation laid for the sustainable growth and development of any nation. If education must prosper and function positively in a society, then improving teacher education is vital and indeed inevitable. Teacher education is expected to contribute towards developing a basic understanding of the principles and practice of teaching and learning. It is to produce well-qualified professionals who can adjust to the changing needs of the students and developmental prospects of modern society. In it, knowledge and skills are developed, thereby building teachers/people to become useful to themselves and to the society they live in.

Which means, the need for overhauling and revamping of the system at a regular interval is a must for innovative and relevant training of prospective teachers, and meaningful classroom teaching-learning activities. Therefore, the keyword 'Re-Engineering,' which means a 'systematic process of analysis, design, and implementation' (Akpan et al, 2016), assumes significant importance if teacher education is to be modernized. Needless to say, the reassessment of teachers, existing pedagogic tools and materials will have to undergo stringent scrutiny of its appropriateness in the classroom transaction. Or we must agree, at least to the understanding that the re-engineering will require the use of both traditional and technological tools and modes, building on and extending traditional social forms of teaching and learning.

The current challenges that teacher education faces today after the advent of LPG mainly are related to the lethargic and easy-going attitude of teacher-educators, less enthusiasm among prospective teachers, a disconnect between pre-service training and post-training classroom activity, slow process of evaluation and revamping of learning content, diminishing professional commitment, rare model ethical behavior, and slow adoption to the rapid change of technological and scientific discoveries and inventions in the educational system. Hence there is a need for stimulating the professional spirit among the teacher educators/teachers, retaining the spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers, enhancing teachers' commitment, training and motivating teachers for effective handling of classroom situations at different levels, and equipping them with modern Learning Management Systems (LMS). There is no one-size-fits-all solution; rather, each locality requires its own creativity, redesigning of content suiting local geographical conditions and needs, and adapting to the growing demands of society.

Thus, the two-day national conference on the above central point of re-engineering of teacher education enabled us to collectively, in person, ponder over various sub-themes and had the privilege of 43 papers being presented on the portal of St. Xavier's College of Education (Autonomous), Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. Indeed, it was a unique experience to listen to so many speakers, including a thought-provoking panel discussion among administrators, faculty, parents, and students on the existing scenario in teacher education.

We are grateful to all the speakers, paper presenters, and the participants for their wonderful sharing and contributions along with their enthusiastic participation. Thus, we are very proud to publish the collections of the best papers presented at the conference as e-proceedings with an ISBN number. We are sure, this will go a long way to trigger the minds of younger teacher educators and prospective teachers in its way; we hope the responsibility of bearing this torch to further the cause of quality teacher education will continue in the future. I would like to fondly remember the painstaking effort undertaken by Prof. Dr. A. Punitha Mary and other faculty of our college for magnificently organizing the event to the point of relevance, quality, and fruitfulness.

May God bless you.

Prof. Dr. D. Thomas Alexander SJ, Principal,  
SXCE, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli, TN.  
29.02.2024.

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## **NURTURING MENTAL HEALTH AMONG PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS FOR HOLISTIC EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

*The mental health of prospective teachers is a critical yet often underemphasized factor in the cultivation of productive, creative, and compassionate educational environments. As educators stand at the forefront of shaping the next generation, their well-being directly influences their ability to engage students effectively. This article explores the significance of mental health for prospective teachers, the unique stressors they face, and the strategies for promoting resilience and well-being as they embark on their formative journey within the teaching profession. Equipping prospective teachers with mental health resources not only optimizes their personal health and career longevity but also ensures a more supportive learning atmosphere for their future students.*

*Key Words: Mental Health, prospective teachers*

### **Introduction**

The profession of teaching, with its ability to touch lives and mould futures, is undoubtedly one of the most influential forces in any society. Prospective teachers stand on the precipice of this impactful career, bringing with them aspirations to inspire and educate. However, the journey to becoming an educator can entail an array of stressors with implications for one's mental health. As we delve deeper into the layers of mental health concerns for these professionals-in-training, it becomes evident that fostering their psychological well-being is not only paramount for their success but also crucial for the quality of education that they will deliver.

### **Mental Health in the Teaching Profession: Challenges and Implications**

Teaching, by its very nature, involves a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and social challenges. For prospective teachers, the transition from student to educator can be fraught with new responsibilities, performance pressures, and the anticipation of guiding

diverse classrooms. These challenges often compound into stress, anxiety, burnout, and other mental health issues which, if left unaddressed, can hamper their effectiveness in the classroom and their personal lives.

Prospective teachers must navigate the rigorous demands of teacher education programs, the expectations to maintain high academic performance, and the practical aspects of classroom management and lesson planning. Moreover, the anticipation of standardized assessments and job placement uncertainties contribute to the psychological strain.

### **The Path to Well-Being: Strategies and Support Systems**

To address these concerns, a multipronged approach aimed at bolstering the mental health of prospective teachers is necessary. This involves awareness, preventive measures, and support strategies.

1. ***Awareness and Education:*** Integrating courses on mental health, self-care, and stress management into teacher education programs is essential. Prospective teachers should be equipped with theoretical knowledge and practical tools to identify and address mental health concerns in themselves and their future students.
2. ***Mentorship:*** Establishing strong mentorship programs can provide prospective teachers with guidance, emotional support, and professional insights from experienced educators. This relationship can be a robust support network consisting of peers, counsellors, and mental health professionals can create a community for sharing experiences and strategies for coping with the stresses of the profession.
3. ***Mindfulness and Self-Care:*** Encouraging practices such as mindfulness, meditation, and regular physical activity can help in managing stress and fostering a sense of well-being. Prospective teachers should be guided in developing a self-care routine that fits their lifestyle.
4. ***Advocacy and Policy Change:*** There is a need for systemic change to provide better support for teacher mental health. This could include improved job security, manageable workloads, and increased professional development opportunities to ensure a positive start to their teaching career.

### **Enacting Policy and Institutional Support**

One essential strategy to improve the mental health of prospective teachers is through policy changes and institutional support provided by educational institutions. Universities and

colleges should foster an environment where open discussions about mental well-being are normalized, and specific resources are designated to address the unique needs of these developing educators. Policies should ensure access to mental health services like counselling and therapy as part of their training programs.

### **Work-Life Balance**

Prospective teachers need to be taught the importance of work-life balance from the outset of their careers. They should be encouraged to set boundaries and to recognize the signs of work-related stress early on. By prioritizing balance, they will be better placed to manage the demands of their profession and maintain personal well-being effectively.

### **Hands-on Experiences and Realistic Expectations**

The gap between theory and actual classroom experience can be a source of significant stress for prospective teachers. Providing them with more hands-on, practical experiences throughout their education can help bridge this gap and better prepare them for the realities of teaching. Additionally, teacher training should include managing expectations and cultivating a positive and realistic outlook on the challenges of the teaching profession.

### **Continuous Professional Development**

The provision of regular professional development opportunities can help prospective teachers feel competent and confident in their role. Ongoing education can also serve as a support system where teachers can learn from one another and share coping strategies for managing stress and maintaining mental health.

### **Fostering a Supportive School Culture**

Prospective teachers will benefit from a school culture that prioritizes mental health and well-being. This can be manifested through buddy systems, regular staff wellness activities, and a culture that encourages taking mental health days when needed. Schools and training institutes can play a proactive role in creating a culture where seeking mental health support is seen as a sign of strength, not weakness.

### **Utilizing Technology**

The use of technology, such as mental health apps and online support groups, can supplement the mental health resources available to prospective teachers. Virtual platforms can provide a space for sharing experiences and learning from others, as well as a potential tool for confidential support and access to mental health professionals.

## Conclusion

The well-being of prospective teachers is a vital component of the educational ecosystem. Their mental health influences not only their own quality of life but also the quality of education they can provide. It is, therefore, a collective responsibility to ensure that these future educators receive the mindfulness, support, and resources necessary to thrive both professionally and personally. By prioritizing the mental health of our prospective teachers, we invest in the health and effectiveness of the educational system, paving the way for a more enlightened and supportive future for all.

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