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Professional Development of Teacher Educators in Assam: A Study of Prevailing Issues and Challenges

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Abstract— Teacher educators occupy a pivotal but often overlooked position in the teacher education system: the quality of the teachers they train is shaped, in no small part, by their own continuing professional development. This study investigated the issues and challenges that constrain the professional development (PD) of teacher educators working in Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) in the Kamrup Metropolitan and Kamrup Rural districts of Assam, India. Using a descriptive survey design, data were gathered from a simple random sample of 100 teacher educators drawn from 14 CTEs affiliated to Gauhati University. A 64-item questionnaire, developed by the researcher and organised around eight dimensions- personal, opportunity-related, workload and time, infrastructural, instructional, institutional, financial and psychological- was administered, and responses were analysed using frequency and percentage. Across all eight dimensions, teacher educators reported substantial constraints, most notably a heavy teaching workload and inconvenient scheduling, a scarcity of PD activities designed specifically for teacher educators rather than for school teachers, and inadequate institutional, infrastructural, and financial support. Personal factors such as competing family responsibilities and psychological barriers such as stress and low self-confidence compounded these structural constraints. The findings suggest that improving teacher educators' professional development in Assam will require more than additional training opportunities: institutions need to allocate protected time, tailor programme content to subject specialization, strengthen ICT and library infrastructure, and put in place structured financial support and follow-up mechanisms. Implications for teacher education policy and institutional practice in Assam, and in comparable contexts, are discussed.

Keywords: Teacher Educators, Professional development, Issues and challenges, Colleges of Teacher Education, Assam

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher educators sit at an unusual junction in the education system: they are trainers whose own professional development directly shapes the quality of the teachers they prepare, yet policy attention to their professional learning has lagged well behind attention to school teachers (Snoek et al., 2011). Because teacher educators prepare future teachers, the competence of student teachers depends in part on the competence of those who train them, so any serious effort to improve teacher quality must eventually address the professional development (PD) of teacher educators themselves (Robinson & McMillan, 2006). Yet, as Smith (2003) observed, this remains one of the least examined areas of teacher education research, and much of what is known continues to be inferred from studies of school teachers rather than of teacher educators as a distinct occupational group.

In principle, teacher educators have access to a widening range of PD formats – refresher courses, orientation programmes, workshops, and increasingly, online and blended courses (Mohan, 2019). In practice, however, the mere existence of these opportunities says little about whether teacher educators can actually participate in them or benefit from them. Ertmer (1999) distinguished between first-order barriers, such as inadequate time, infrastructure, and funding, and second-order barriers, such as low confidence or an unsupportive institutional culture, and argued that both operate simultaneously in determining whether access to PD translates into use. Fullan (2007) made a related point: institutional readiness, more than the availability of PD content, usually decides whether an innovation is sustained. Studies of Indian teacher educators have examined their perceptions of PD (Kumar & Mohalik, 2017) and have reported a broadly similar set of constraints- heavy workload, lack of paid leave, and

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financial constraints (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013; Tyagi & Misra, 2021) - suggesting that these barriers are structural rather than incidental.

Assam presents a particular version of this problem. Teacher educators in the state work in Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) affiliated to Gauhati University, and the resources available to them vary considerably across this landscape. Deka (2014) documented gaps in modern teaching aids and in teachers educators' participation in PD activities in B.Ed. colleges in Assam, but that study predates the more recent policy emphasis, under the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP, 2020; Ministry of Education, 2020), on teacher educators continuously updating their pedagogical and technological competence. Whether the barriers identified over a decade ago persist, or have taken new forms, has not been examined systematically.

This paper reports findings from a larger study on the professional development of teacher educators in Assam, focusing specifically on the issues and challenges that teacher educators themselves report. It examines these challenges across eight dimensions- personal, opportunity-related, workload and time, infrastructural, institutional, financial, and psychological- with the aim of providing teacher education institutions and policymakers with an empirically grounded, dimension-wise account of where intervention is most needed.

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I.I. NEED AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The quality of any teacher education programme rests substantially on the competence and continued professional development of the teacher educators who deliver it. NEP 2020 makes this link explicit, and in doing so raises the stakes considerably for teacher educators currently in service: it requires every stand-alone Teacher Education Institution (TEI) to convert into a multidisciplinary institution by 2030, and it makes the four-year integrated B.Ed. the minimum entry qualification for teaching from the same year (Ministry of Education, 2020). The policy is explicit about why: it notes that a majority of the more than 10,000 stand-alone TEIs then functioning in the country were not engaged in serious teacher preparation at all, a finding it attributes to the Justice Verma Commission (2012, as cited in Ministry of Education, 2020). The 2030 deadline is therefore not a routine administrative reform but a corrective response to a system judged, at the highest policy level, to be substantially dysfunctional- and meeting it will require teacher educators themselves to acquire multidisciplinary teaching competence, research capability, and familiarity with the four-year integrated curriculum well before their institutions are required to transform or close (Ministry of Education, 2020).

This requirement applies directly to Assam. The Colleges of Teacher Education sampled for the present study offer the B.Ed. programme, and any that are stand-alone institutions fall precisely in the category that NEP 2020 requires to transform by 2030. Yet, as the review of related literature indicates, teacher educators as a professional group have consistently received less institutional attention and fewer dedicated PD opportunities than school teachers (Smith, 2003; Snoek et al., 2011), and where opportunities do exist, teacher educators report that these are difficult to access or poorly suited to their needs (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013; Tyagi & Misra, 2021). Deka (2014) had earlier pointed to inadequate PD-related facilities in CTEs of Assam, but comprehensive, multi-dimensional evidence on the personal, institutional, infrastructural, instructional, financial, and psychological barriers that teacher educators in the state continue to face remains limited, and no study located for this review has revisited the question since the 2030 transition requirement was introduced.

Without such evidence, institutions preparing for this transition, university authorities, and policymakers have little empirical basis on which to design PD interventions that address the barriers teacher educators actually experience, rather than those merely assumed on their behalf. If the barriers examined in this study- whether workload, infrastructure, funding, programme design, or psychological strain- are left unaddressed, the same teacher educators on whom the 2030 transition depends will be asked to acquire demanding new multidisciplinary and research competencies under precisely the conditions that make sustained professional learning hardest to achieve. This gives the present study a practical urgency beyond its immediate academic contribution.

The present study is therefore needed and justified on three grounds: first, to provide systematic, dimension-wise evidence of the issues and challenges affecting teacher educators' professional development in Assam at a moment when national policy specifically requires their institutions, and by extension their own competencies, to change; second, to inform teacher education

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institutions and policymakers, including university and NCTE and affiliating universities, in designing more accessible, relevant, and sustained PD provisions for teacher educators as this transition proceeds; and third, to contribute to the comparatively limited body of Indian research that examines the professional development needs of teacher educators as a distinct professional group, rather than treating them as an extension of school teachers' PD systems.

I.II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the issues and challenges of professional development of teacher educators in Assam.

1. Review of Related Literature

A review of related literature places a study within existing knowledge and shows what remains unexplored. This review covers studies on the issues and challenges in the professional development of teacher educators in the international and national context, and closes by identifying the gap that the present study addresses.

Research on the PD of teacher educators is limited, and little is known worldwide about their preparation and PD (Namamba & Rao, 2017). Teacher educators have been described as "hidden professionals" whose PD needs are rarely addressed in policy (Livingston, 2014), as experiencing their own PD as a weak link in teacher education (Lewis, 2017), and as receiving PD that is an afterthought, built around systems designed for school teachers (Smith, 2003; Snoek et al., 2011). A survey across six countries found that teacher educators strongly desired further professional learning (Czerniawski et al., 2017), while a twelve-country survey found that dedicated PD support for them remains rare (Czerniawski et al., 2023).

Lack of time and heavy workload are among the most frequently reported challenges. Almost all teacher educators interviewed across ten countries reported a lack of time because of competing work tasks and family responsibilities (Van der Klink et al., 2017); overlapping teaching, administrative, and service duties strained teacher educators in Laos (Sengsoulintha, 2025); heavy workload, lack of time, and inadequate institutional support were identified as challenges to continuing professional development (CPD) (Smith, 2003); and a high workload affected participants in Ethiopia's Higher Diploma Programme for university instructors (Abo & Hussein, 2023).

Weak institutional support, poor communication, and the absence of PD systems have also been reported. Teacher educators preferred funding time, and research opportunities over conventional workshops, and identified poor communication among teacher educators, mentors, and schools as a challenge (Westrup & Jackson, 2009); Lesson Study was limited in Ethiopian Colleges of Teacher Education by traditional attitudes, gaps in knowledge and skills, lack of time, and a shortage of institutional support (Yadeta & Assefa, 2018); teacher educators in Pakistan had no formal, permanent PD system (Qureshi, 2016), and teacher educators in six other jurisdictions described professional learning that was largely self-initiated and often haphazard (MacPhail et al., 2019). In Ethiopia's Higher Diploma Programme, limited follow-up and the use of the same training material for different specializations were also reported (Abo & Hussein, 2023), and in Uganda, tutors' highly individual approach to their work helped explain why PD open educational resources (OER) did not have the intended impact (Buckler et al., 2021).

The role itself poses challenges. New teacher educators in England struggled to develop a pedagogy for teacher education and to become research active, and took two to three years to establish their identities (Murray & Male, 2005); the pressure to publish was discussed as making it difficult for teacher educators to find time for self-study or action research (Ping et al., 2021); Austrian teacher educators faced challenges in digital transformation at both the lecturer and institutional levels (Wagner et al., 2026); and stress and burnout among teacher educators remain under-researched despite evidence linking them to heavy workload and weak institutional support (Turner & Garvis, 2023).

In India, CPD for teacher educators was found to be inadequate in quantity and quality, with common barriers including lack of paid leave, limited access to opportunities, workload, and financial constraints (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013); most teacher educators in Nagaland scored only at an average level of PD, which was linked to limited institutional opportunity rather than low motivation (Rao & Khimn, 2018); poor institutional recognition lowered both PD and job satisfaction (Kaur & Bhullar, 2017); teacher educators in Punjab reported moderate occupational stress (Nagra & Arora, 2013); and scheduling conflicts, financial constraints, infrastructural limitations, and the belief that CPD should take place only during working hours were reported as major challenges (Tyagi & Misra, 2021). In private B.Ed. colleges in West Bengal, weak institutional support, inadequate mentoring, and few research opportunities persisted (Pramanick, 2025).

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Evidence from Assam is limited. In B.Ed. colleges of Tinsukia district, although basic infrastructure and manpower were adequate, modern teaching aids and ICT facilities were not available, innovative training methods were lacking, and few teacher educators participated in seminars, refresher courses, and publication-related activities (Deka, 2014); and across Assam, limited ICT facilities and inadequate training restricted teacher educators' use of technology for their own PD (Baruah & Mohalik, 2022).

Therefore, these studies show that teacher educators face structural PD barriers across settings, from Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Pakistan to Laos and West Bengal. However, the two Assam studies (Deka, 2014; Baruah & Mohalik, 2022) examine facilities and ICT in isolation, and none of the studies reviewed examines personal, opportunity-related, workload, infrastructural, instructional, institutional, financial, and psychological barriers together across multiple Colleges of Teacher Education, particularly after NEP 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020). The present study addresses this gap.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

II.I. METHODS OF THE STUDY

In the present study, the descriptive survey method was adopted by the researcher, as it is well suited to systematically describing the prevailing issues and challenges affecting a defined population, as they exist.

II.II. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of the study comprised all teacher educators (217) working in the 14 Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) offering the B.Ed. programme in the Kamrup Metropolitan and Kamrup Rural districts of Assam, under the affiliation and jurisdiction of Gauhati University. For the purpose of the present analysis, a sample of 100 (N=100) teacher educators was selected through simple random sampling. A complete list of the 217 teacher educators across the 14 CTEs was prepared, and 100 names were drawn at random, with every teacher educator having an equal and independent chance of selection. The resulting distribution of the population and the achieved sample across the 14 CTEs is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Population and Sample across Colleges of Teacher Education

Sl. No.	Colleges of Teacher Education	District	Population	Sample (N=100)
1	Asom Sikshak Prasikshan Mahavidyalaya	Kamrup Metropolitan	15	7
2	College of Education, Christian Basti	Kamrup Metropolitan	19	9
3	Dakshin Guwahati B.Ed. College	Kamrup Metropolitan	18	8
4	Dr. Anita Baruah Sarma College of Education	Kamrup Metropolitan	8	4
5	Govt. Banikanta College of Teacher Education	Kamrup Metropolitan	13	6
6	National Institute for Teacher Education	Kamrup Metropolitan	25	12
7	Province College	Kamrup Metropolitan	12	6
8	West Guwahati College of Education	Kamrup Metropolitan	14	7
9	Baihata Chariali B.Ed. College	Kamrup Rural	16	7
10	College of Education, Boko	Kamrup Rural	16	7
11	KRD College of Education	Kamrup Rural	16	7
12	Pragjyotish B.Ed. College, Pacharia	Kamrup Rural	13	6
13	Rangia Teacher Training College	Kamrup Rural	16	7
14	Teachers' Training College, Mirza	Kamrup Rural	16	7
	Total		217	100

II.III. TOOLS USED IN THE STUDY

For the present study, a questionnaire was constructed by the researcher. The self-constructed tool comprised 64 closed-ended items distributed across eight dimensions: (a) Personal and Individual Issues, (b) Professional Development Opportunities, (c) Workload and Time-related Issues, (d) Infrastructure and Resource-related Challenges, (e) Programme Design and Instructional

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Challenges, (f) Institutional and Administrative Challenges, (g) Financial Challenges, and (h) Psychological and Motivational Challenges (8 items each), along with an open-ended item on suggestions for the overall improvement of professional development of teacher educators.

II.IV. STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED FOR ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Descriptive statistics, viz., frequency and percentage, were used to analyse and present the responses to the 64 closed-ended items of the questionnaire. For the single open-ended item, inductive content analysis was employed.

III. RESULTS

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the 100 sampled teacher educators, organised under the eight dimensions of issues and challenges corresponding to the objective of the study.

Objective: To identify the Issues and Challenges of Professional Development of Teacher Educators in Assam

III.I. PERSONAL AND INDIVIDUAL ISSUES

Table 2: Personal and Individual Issues (N=100)

Sl. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lack of motivation to participate in PD activities/courses/programmes	74	74%
2	Difficulty in balancing personal responsibilities with professional development (PD) commitments	96	96%
3	Mobility or travel-related difficulties preventing participation in PD activities/courses/programmes	88	88%
4	Personal health-related issues affecting participation in PD activities/courses/programmes	61	61%
5	Limited digital competencies making it difficult to apply professional learning effectively in teaching practice	66	66%
6	Family responsibilities limiting participation in PD activities/courses/programmes	82	82%
7	Personal commitments outside teaching responsibilities reducing participation in PD	77	77%
8	Stress or burnout reducing willingness to participate in PD activities/courses/programmes	85	85%

Table 2 shows the personal and individual issues of the professional development of teacher educators in Assam. A majority of the teacher educators (96%) reported difficulty in balancing personal responsibilities with professional development (PD) commitments. This was followed by mobility or travel-related difficulties (88%), stress or burnout (85%), family responsibilities (82%), personal commitments outside teaching responsibilities (77%), lack of motivation (74%), limited digital competencies (66%), and personal health-related issues (61%).

III.II. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Table 3: Professional Development Opportunities (N= 100)

Sl. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very few PD activities/courses/programmes organized exclusively for teacher educators	95	95%
2	Online PD opportunities limited or inaccessible	87	87%
3	Insufficient opportunities for national or international professional exposure	73	73%

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Sl. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
4	Available PD activities/courses/programmes fail to address professional learning needs	84	84%
5	Teacher educators often unaware of PD activities/courses/programmes available to them	64	64%
6	PD activities/courses/programmes rarely organized in locations convenient to attend	75	75%
7	PD activities/courses/programmes inadequately publicized or communicated to teacher educators	81	81%
8	PD activities/courses/programmes focus mainly on certain subject areas, neglecting others	69	69%

Table 3 shows the issues related to professional development opportunities. A majority of the teacher educators (95%) reported that very few PD activities/courses/programmes are organised exclusively for teacher educators. This was followed by online PD opportunities being limited or inaccessible (87%), available PD failing to address professional learning needs (84%), PD being inadequately publicized (81%), PD rarely organised in convenient locations (75%), insufficient opportunities for national or international exposure (73%), PD focusing mainly on certain subject areas and neglecting others (69%), and teacher educators being unaware of available PD (64%).

III.III. WORKLOAD AND TIME-RELATED ISSUES

Table 4: Workload and Time-related Issues (N=100)

Sl. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Conflicts between work schedule and PD activities/courses/programmes affecting participation	88	88%
2	Scheduling of PD activities/courses/programmes discouraging participation	95	95%
3	Belief that a specific time period should be allocated within official working hours for PD	91	91%
4	Insufficient time to participate in PD activities/courses/programmes	77	77%
5	Heavy teaching workload limiting participation in PD activities/courses/programmes	97	97%
6	Duration allocated for PD activities/courses/programmes generally inadequate	84	84%
7	Difficulty in balancing teaching responsibilities with PD activities/courses/programmes	93	93%
8	PD activities/courses/programmes frequently coinciding with examination duties or evaluation work	80	80%

Table 4 shows the workload and time-related issues of professional development of teacher educators in Assam. A majority of the teacher educators (97%) reported heavy teaching workload as limiting their participation in PD. This was followed by scheduling of PD discouraging participation (95%), difficulty in balancing teaching responsibilities with PD (93%), the belief that a specific time period should be allocated within working hours for PD (91%), conflicts between work schedule and PD (88%), inadequate duration allocated for PD (84%), PD coinciding with examination duties (80%), and insufficient time to participate in PD (77%).

III.IV. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCE-RELATED CHALLENGES

Table 5: Infrastructure and Resource-related Challenges (N=100)

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Sl. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Difficulty in participating in PD activities/courses/programmes due to inadequate computer facilities	88	88%
2	Inadequate library resources (books, journals, reference materials) to support PD	94	94%
3	Infrastructure and facilities inadequate for teacher educators with disabilities	74	74%
4	Lack of adequate access to electronic resources (e-journals, e-books, online databases)	92	92%
5	Inadequate ICT facilities (computers, projectors, printers, and related equipment) to support PD	90	90%
6	Limited access to learning materials and PD resources required for continuous learning	80	80%
7	Lack of modern teaching-learning resources such as smart classrooms and digital teaching aids	87	87%
8	Absence of a dedicated workspace (faculty room, personal cabin, or quiet study area) for PD	85	85%

Table 5 shows the infrastructure and resource-related challenges of professional development of teacher educators in Assam. A majority of the teacher educators (94%) reported inadequate library resources to support PD. This was followed by lack of adequate access to electronic resources (92%), inadequate ICT facilities (90%), difficulty participating in PD due to inadequate computer facilities (88%), lack of modern teaching-learning resources such as smart classrooms (87%), absence of a dedicated workspace (85%), limited access to learning materials and PD resources (80%), and infrastructure inadequate for teacher educators with disabilities (74%).

III.V. PROGRAMME DESIGN AND INSTRUCTIONAL CHALLENGES

Table 6: Programme Design and Instructional Challenges (N=100)

Sl. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	PD activities/courses/programmes fail to address emerging trends, digital technologies, or reforms (e.g. NEP 2020)	82	82%
2	PD activities/courses/programmes lack innovative teaching-learning strategies	91	91%
3	PD activities/courses/programmes too general and insufficiently tailored to subject specialization	90	90%
4	Content of PD activities/courses/programmes outdated or insufficiently updated	84	84%
5	Resource persons provide inadequate guidance, interaction, or support during PD	93	93%
6	PD activities/courses/programmes lack follow-up support, mentoring, or post-training guidance	89	89%
7	Resource persons have limited competency in using ICT and digital technologies during PD	79	79%
8	PD activities/courses/programmes lack appropriate assessment or evaluation of learning outcomes	76	76%

Table 6 shows the programme design and instructional challenges of professional development of teacher educators in Assam. A majority of the teacher educators (93%) reported that resource persons provide inadequate guidance during PD. This was followed by PD lacking innovative teaching-learning strategies (91%), PD being too general and not tailored to subject specialization (90%), PD lacking follow-up support or mentoring (89%), outdated content (84%), PD failing to address emerging

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trends such as NEP 2020 (82%), resource persons having limited ICT competency (79%), and PD lacking appropriate assessment of learning outcomes (76%).

III.VI. INSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHALLENGES

Table 7: Institutional and Administrative Challenges (N=100)

Sl. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Institution rarely organizes PD activities/courses/programmes for teacher educators	92	92%
2	Institution lacks a formal system for monitoring and following up after PD activities/courses/programmes	85	85%
3	Institution lacks a clear policy or plan for the continuous professional development of teacher educators	89	89%
4	Institution provides inadequate encouragement or motivation for participating in PD	78	78%
5	Institution provides limited opportunities for career advancement through PD	81	81%
6	Institution fails to recognize or appreciate participation and achievements in PD	87	87%
7	Institution provides inadequate library and academic resources to support continuous PD	83	83%
8	Institution fails to allocate sufficient time during working hours for PD	90	90%

Table 7 shows the institutional and administrative challenges of professional development of teacher educators in Assam. A majority of the teacher educators (92%) reported that their institution rarely organises PD exclusively for teacher educators. This was followed by institutions failing to allocate sufficient working-hour time for PD (90%), lacking a clear PD policy (89%), failing to recognise participation and achievements (87%), lacking a formal system for monitoring and follow-up (85%), providing inadequate library and academic resources (83%), providing limited career-advancement opportunities (81%), and providing inadequate encouragement for PD (78%).

III.VII. FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

Table 8: Financial Challenges (N=100)

Sl. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Institution fails to provide financial assistance for participating in PD	93	93%
2	Registration or participation fees for PD activities/courses/programmes too expensive	88	88%
3	Lack of financial incentives discouraging participation in PD	84	84%
4	Limited funding opportunities restricting participation in national or international PD	79	79%
5	Institution fails to provide travel allowance or reimbursement for attending PD	90	90%
6	Accommodation and other incidental expenses making participation difficult	86	86%
7	Financial constraints limiting participation in PD activities/courses/programmes	75	75%
8	Institution fails to reimburse the registration fees for PD activities/courses/programmes	91	91%

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Table 8 shows the financial challenges of professional development of teacher educators in Assam. A majority of the teacher educators (93%) reported that their institution fails to provide financial assistance for PD. This was followed by failure to reimburse registration fees (91%), failure to provide travel allowance (90%), registration fees being too expensive (88%), accommodation and other incidental expenses (86%), lack of financial incentives (84%), limited funding for national or international PD (79%), and financial constraints generally limiting participation (75%).

III.VIII. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MOTIVATIONAL CHALLENGES

Table 9: Psychological and Motivational Challenges (N= 100)

Sl. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Feeling anxious or hesitant about using new technologies during PD	79	79%
2	Reluctance to adopt new teaching methods or educational innovations introduced through PD	83	83%
3	Experiencing stress while balancing teaching responsibilities with participation in PD	92	92%
4	Lack of self-confidence discouraging active participation in PD	85	85%
5	Finding PD activities/courses/programmes uninteresting or insufficiently engaging	76	76%
6	Discouraged from participating in PD because it is not directly linked to promotion or career advancement	81	81%
7	Feeling overwhelmed by continuous changes in educational policies, curriculum reforms, and technology	88	88%
8	Lack of guidance or mentoring discouraging PD	90	90%

Table 9 shows the psychological and motivational challenges of professional development of teacher educators in Assam. A majority of the teacher educators (92%) reported experiencing stress while balancing teaching responsibilities with PD. This was followed by lack of guidance or mentoring (90%), feeling overwhelmed by continuous changes in educational policies, curriculum reforms, and technology (88%), lack of self-confidence (85%), reluctance to adopt new teaching methods (83%), PD not being linked to promotion or career advancement (81%), anxiety about using new technologies (79%), and PD being uninteresting or insufficiently engaging (76%).

Suggestions for the Overall Improvement of Professional Development of Teacher Educators

In response to the open-ended item on suggestions for the overall improvement of professional development of teacher educators, responses were coded and categorized using inductive content analysis. The results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Suggestions for the Overall Improvement of Professional Development of Teacher Educators (N=100)

Category	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Regular, planned PD calendar	Call for a predictable annual PD calendar instead of ad hoc events	42	42%
Structured follow-up	Mandatory post-training check-ins to ensure classroom application	34	34%
Dedicated funding	Ring-fenced budget for teacher educator PD, distinct from general faculty funds	26	26%
Workload adjustment	Temporary workload relief during PD participation	21	21%
Participatory PD design	Involving teacher educators in designing PD content	13	13%

Interpretation

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Table 10 shows that 42% of the teacher educators suggested a regular, planned PD calendar in place of ad hoc events. Structured follow-up, through mandatory post-training check-ins to ensure classroom application, was suggested by 34%, and dedicated, ring-fenced funding for teacher educator PD by 26%. Temporary workload relief during PD participation was proposed by 21%, and participatory PD design, in which teacher educators help shape PD content, by 13%. The percentages add up to more than 100% because respondents could offer more than one suggestion. Four of the five suggestions concern how PD is scheduled, followed up, funded, and given time, and only one concerns who shapes its content.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings show that teacher educators suggested a regular, planned PD calendar in place of ad hoc events. This agrees with research that identifies sustained duration, meaning adequate time to learn, practise, implement, and reflect, as a feature of effective PD (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001). A planned annual calendar is one way of making such sustained provision possible.

The results indicate that teacher educators suggested structured follow-up, with post-training check-ins to ensure classroom application. Training on its own rarely leads to lasting transfer unless coaching and support follow it (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Kraft et al., 2018), and Popova et al. (2022) found that most at-scale PD programmes offer less follow-up once teachers return to their classrooms than the evidence suggests is effective.

With regard to dedicated funding, teacher educators called for a ring-fenced budget for teacher educator PD. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) recommend professional development standards to guide the design, evaluation, and funding of PD, along with opportunities for professional learning and collaboration.

The data further reveal that teacher educators suggested temporary workload relief during PD participation. Effective PD gives teachers adequate time to learn and apply new strategies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), and school-level conditions interact with teachers' own orientations and the PD activity itself to shape what teachers learn (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

Participatory PD design, in which teacher educators help shape PD content, was suggested by teacher educators. PD works through the interaction of the teacher, the school, and the learning activity (Opfer & Pedder, 2011), which suggests that PD that fits teachers' own needs and contexts is more likely to be taken up.

Therefore, these findings show that teacher educators want PD that is planned, followed up, funded, and given time, and that reflects their own needs. This suggests that improving the PD of teacher educators calls for changes in scheduling, follow-up, funding, workload, and design together, not in one of these alone (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

V. MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

i. Teacher educators in Assam face a wide range of personal, opportunity-related, workload and time-related, infrastructural, instructional, institutional, financial, and psychological challenges in their professional development.
ii. Under personal and individual issues, a majority (96%) reported difficulty in balancing personal responsibilities with PD commitments, followed by mobility or travel-related difficulties (88%), stress or burnout (85%), and family responsibilities (82%).
iii. Under professional development opportunities, a majority (95%) reported that very few PD activities are organised exclusively for teacher educators, followed by online PD being limited or inaccessible (87%) and available PD failing to address professional learning needs (84%).
iv. Under workload and time-related issues, a majority (97%) reported heavy teaching workload as limiting participation, followed by inconvenient scheduling (95%) and difficulty in balancing teaching with PD (93%).
v. Under infrastructure and resource-related challenges, a majority (94%) reported inadequate library resources, followed by limited access to electronic resources (92%) and inadequate ICT facilities (90%).
vi. Under programme design and instructional challenges, a majority (93%) reported inadequate guidance from resource persons, followed by a lack of innovative teaching-learning strategies (91%) and PD being too general and insufficiently tailored to subject specialization (90%).

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vii. Under institutional and administrative challenges, a majority (92%) reported that institutions rarely organise PD exclusively for teacher educators, followed by failure to allocate sufficient working-hour time for PD (90%) and absence of a clear institutional PD policy (89%).

viii. Under financial challenges, a majority (93%) reported that institutions fail to provide financial assistance, followed by failure to reimburse registration fees (91%) and failure to provide travel allowance (90%).

ix. Under psychological and motivational challenges, a majority (92%) reported experiencing stress while balancing teaching with PD, followed by lack of guidance or mentoring (90%) and feeling overwhelmed by continuous policy, curriculum, and technological change (88%).

x. For overall improvement, 42% of the teacher educators suggested a regular, planned PD calendar, followed by structured follow-up (34%), dedicated funding (26%), workload adjustment (21%), and participatory PD design (13%). Respondents could give more than one suggestion, and four of the five suggestions concern how PD is scheduled, followed up, funded, and given time, while only one concerns who shapes its content.

Among the highest levels of agreement in the study was on professional development opportunities, where 95% of teacher educators reported that very few PD activities are organised exclusively for their role. This directly supports the "hidden professionals" status discussed earlier (Lewis, 2017; Livingston, 2014; Smith, 2003; Snoek et al., 2011), and the fact that the same pattern was reported in surveys of teacher educators in six countries (Czerniawski et al., 2017) and twelve countries (Czerniawski et al., 2023), in a study of teacher educators in Laos (Sengsoulintha, 2025), and in Pakistan, where teacher educators had no formal, permanent PD system (Qureshi, 2016), suggests it is not specific to Assam but a wider feature of how teacher education systems treat teacher educators.

Workload and institutional support were the next most consistently reported concerns. Heavy teaching workload (97%) was the most widely reported barrier in the present study, inconvenient scheduling (95%) was among the most widely reported, and a similarly high proportion of teacher educators reported that their institution rarely organises PD for them (92%) or fails to allocate working-hour time for it (90%). This pattern matches earlier findings on Indian teacher educators (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013; Tyagi & Misra, 2021) and on teacher educators elsewhere, where a lack of time was reported by almost all participants (Van der Klink et al., 2017) and a high workload constrained participation in PD (Abo & Hussein, 2023). It also closely mirrors Pramanick's (2025) more recent findings among teacher educators in private B.Ed. colleges in West Bengal, where workload management and institutional support were also reported as barriers, suggesting that these barriers are not confined to Assam.

Infrastructure (94%) and programme design (93%) were reported almost as consistently. The shortage of library, electronic, and ICT resources is consistent with the lack of modern teaching aids and ICT facilities reported by Deka (2014) and the limited ICT facilities reported by Baruah and Mohalik (2022). Ertmer (1999) distinguished external, first-order barriers, such as inadequate infrastructure, from internal, second-order barriers, such as low confidence; the present data suggest that first-order barriers remain largely unresolved for teacher educators in the sampled districts, which may help explain why second-order, psychological barriers were also widely reported (92% reported stress, 85% reported low self-confidence). This is consistent with Turner and Garvis's (2023) finding that teacher educator stress and burnout are under-researched despite converging evidence linking them to heavy workload and weak institutional support. Similarly, the finding that PD content is seen as generic and lacking follow-up support aligns with the limited follow-up and the use of the same training material for different specializations reported in Ethiopia's Higher Diploma Programme (Abo & Hussein, 2023), and with evidence that teacher educators' learning preferences differ by experience and role (Dengerink et al., 2015).

Financial barriers (93%) were reported about as widely as institutional ones, indicating that funding constraints are not a secondary concern but sit alongside workload and institutional support as a primary barrier. This agrees with studies of Indian teacher educators, who reported financial constraints and the lack of paid leave among their major challenges to continuing professional development (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013; Tyagi & Misra, 2021), and with Westrup's (2009) finding that teacher educators preferred practical support such as funding, time, and research opportunities over conventional workshops and seminars. Not every study, however, places funding first. Almost all teacher educators interviewed across ten countries named a lack of time as a barrier (Van der Klink et al., 2017); overlapping teaching, administrative, and service duties were the main source of strain in Laos (Sengsoulintha, 2025), and in the B.Ed. colleges of Tinsukia district, where basic infrastructure and manpower were adequate, limited interest in continuous PD and a lack of innovative training methods were reported (Deka, 2014). Funding alone also does not ensure good PD, since most government-funded, at-scale PD programmes across 14 countries

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still differed sharply from programmes shown to be effective (Popova et al., 2022). The present findings fit between these positions: financial support matters to teacher educators in Assam, but it is likely to work together with time and programme design, not on its own.

The suggestions in Table 10 also line up with the barriers reported earlier in the study. The call for a regular PD calendar (42%) answers the finding that institutions rarely organise PD for teacher educators (92%) and lack a clear PD policy (89%), and the call for structured follow-up (34%) answers the finding that PD lacks follow-up support or mentoring (89%). The request for dedicated funding (26%) matches the lack of institutional financial assistance (93%), fee reimbursement (91%), and travel allowance (90%), and the request for workload relief (21%) matches the heavy teaching workload (97%) and inconvenient scheduling (95%) that were among the most widely reported barriers in the study. The call for participatory PD design (13%) corresponds to the concern that PD is too general to suit teachers' subject specialization (90%). The suggestions therefore describe the same problems from the opposite side: what teacher educators ask for is largely what they say is missing.

Studies of teacher educators support several of these requests. In the absence of formal systems, teacher educators in Pakistan relied on peer and self-learning (Qureshi, 2016), and teacher educators in six jurisdictions described professional learning that was largely self-initiated and often haphazard (MacPhail et al., 2019), which supports the call for a planned calendar. Teacher educators who were asked what support they preferred named funding, time, and research opportunities (Westrup & Jackson, 2009), which supports the calls for dedicated funding and workload relief. Other findings qualify these requests. Because Westrup's (2009) teacher educators preferred practical support to conventional workshops and seminars, a calendar made up only of events may not meet their needs, and it would need to include time, funding, and research opportunities as well. The low share asking for participatory PD design (13%) may seem at odds with the view that PD works through the interaction of the teacher, the school, and the learning activity (Opfer & Pedder, 2011), but teacher educators already direct much of their own learning, and intrinsic motivation and personal needs, rather than institutional mandates, were their main reasons for engaging in PD (Van der Klink et al., 2017), so they may take a say in design for granted rather than ask for it. Follow-up and workload relief also depend on each other: Lesson Study in Ethiopian colleges was limited by a lack of time and of institutional support (Yadeta & Assefa, 2018), which suggests that mandatory follow-up will work only if teacher educators are given the time and support to carry it out. Because these barriers overlap, acting on the suggestions together, rather than one at a time, is more likely to improve the PD of teacher educators in Assam than any single change.

VI. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

i. Teacher education institutions need to treat teacher educators as a distinct professional group with PD needs of their own, rather than subsuming these needs under general faculty development schemes.
ii. Dedicated, separate time within official working hours for PD is likely to have a disproportionately large effect on participation, given how consistently workload and scheduling barriers were reported.
iii. Strengthening library, ICT, and connectivity infrastructure in CTEs is a precondition for the effective delivery of technology-enabled PD, and cannot be substituted for by improved PD content alone.
iv. PD content needs to be tailored to subject specialization rather than delivered as generic, one-size-fits-all sessions, with resource persons equipped to give discipline-specific guidance during and after PD activities.
v. Institutional policy on PD- including funding, leave, recognition, and career-linked incentives- needs to be made explicit and consistently applied, rather than left to informal or ad hoc arrangements.
vi. Follow-up, mentoring, and coaching mechanisms after PD events are needed to convert exposure to new ideas into sustained classroom and institutional practice.

VII. CONCLUSION

The present study set out to identify the issues and challenges faced by teacher educators in Colleges of Teacher Education in the Kamrup Metropolitan and Kamrup Rural districts of Assam with respect to their professional development. Based on the responses of 100 teacher educators, the study found that personal, opportunity-related, workload and time-related, infrastructural, instructional, institutional, financial, and psychological barriers together constrain teacher educators' participation in, and benefit from, professional development. Heavy workload and inconvenient scheduling, the scarcity of PD activities designed specifically for teacher educators, inadequate institutional policy and recognition, and insufficient financial and infrastructural support emerged as the most pressing concerns. Addressing these challenges through dedicated time, better-planned and more relevant

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programmes, stronger infrastructural and financial support, and structured follow-up is essential if the professional development of teacher educators in Assam is to be made more effective, equitable, and sustainable.

Beyond its immediate findings, this study has implications for the wider teacher education system in Assam, and, by extension, for school education in the state. Teacher educators are the link between education policy and classroom practice: the pedagogical competence, subject knowledge, and professional confidence they bring into B.Ed. classrooms directly shape how well the next generation of school teachers is prepared (Robinson & McMillan, 2006). When teacher educators themselves are overworked, under-resourced, and professionally isolated, as the present findings suggest, the effects do not stop with them. They are carried forward into the classrooms of the teachers they train, and from there into the schools those teachers go on to staff. Strengthening teacher educators' professional development is therefore not only a matter of improving conditions for a specific professional group, but a precondition for improving the quality of teacher preparation, and ultimately of school education, across Assam.

The findings also carry a specific, time-bound urgency. As discussed earlier, NEP 2020 requires stand-alone Teacher Education Institutions to convert into multidisciplinary institutions by 2030, and makes the four-year integrated B.Ed. the minimum entry qualification for teaching from the same year (Ministry of Education, 2020). This transition will ask of teacher educators precisely the kind of continuous professional growth that the present study shows they currently face substantial barriers in pursuing: limited protected time, weak infrastructure, thin institutional support, and inadequate funding constrain their capacity to build new competencies even under present conditions, let alone the expanded multidisciplinary and research roles the policy envisions. Institutions, university authorities, and state policymakers that treat teacher-educator PD as a planning priority now, rather than only as the 2030 deadline approaches, stand to make the coming transition considerably smoother; those that do not risk entering it with a faculty body that is already stretched thin.

For individual Colleges of Teacher Education, the dimension-wise evidence presented here offers a practical starting point for self-assessment: institutions can use the eight dimensions examined- personal, opportunity-related, workload and time, infrastructural, instructional, institutional, financial, and psychological- to identify where their own support for teacher educators is weakest, rather than relying on generic, one-size-fits-all faculty development policies. For researchers, the study adds to the limited evidence base on teacher educators as a distinct professional group in India, and offers an approach that could be extended to other states and institutional contexts. In these ways, the present study aims to contribute not only to academic understanding of teacher educators' professional development, but to the practical work of strengthening teacher education as Assam, and India more broadly, moves toward the goals set out in NEP 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020).

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