



## **The Crisis in B.Ed. Education: Exploring the Impact of Declining Student Enrolment on Teachers' Mental Health in India**

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### **ABSTRACT**

India's teacher education system is facing a significant transformation, marked by a sharp decline in student enrolment in Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programs across the country. While this trend is often viewed through the lens of institutional performance, student quality, and employability, a crucial stakeholder remains overlooked—B.Ed. teachers. The reduction in student numbers has led to growing uncertainty, job insecurity, and emotional distress among teacher educators. This article critically examines the reasons behind declining enrolment, the resulting structural and psychological challenges, and the subsequent toll on teachers' mental health. Using secondary data and psychological perspectives, the article proposes actionable strategies at both institutional and policy levels to safeguard the well-being of educators and sustain quality teacher education in India. Emphasis is placed on how unmet psychological needs and diminished professional autonomy are leading to widespread distress, burnout, and professional stagnation among B.Ed. faculty.

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### **1. Introduction**

The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program has long been regarded as a cornerstone of India's teacher preparation system, designed to equip aspiring educators with the pedagogical, psychological, and



practical skills necessary for effective classroom teaching. Historically, the B.Ed. qualification has served as a gateway to stable government teaching positions and has been a crucial credential for employment in both public and private educational institutions. The proliferation of B.Ed. colleges in the early 2000s—triggered by liberal regulatory approvals and rising demand for teaching jobs—signaled the growing importance of teacher education in national development.

However, in recent years, the B.Ed. ecosystem in India has encountered an alarming trend—a drastic and sustained decline in student enrolment. Reports from the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2022) reveal that more than half of the available B.Ed. seats across the country remain vacant, especially in private and unaided institutions. This decline is not isolated but rather symptomatic of deeper systemic shifts in higher education, employment markets, and societal perceptions of teaching as a profession.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced major structural reforms in teacher education, including the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which has reduced the attractiveness of the traditional two-year B.Ed. route. At the same time, a reduction in government teaching vacancies, delayed recruitment drives, and an increasingly competitive job market have discouraged students from opting for teacher training. Additionally, a growing disillusionment with the teaching profession—viewed by many as underpaid, overburdened, and low in social prestige—has further contributed to the enrolment crisis.

While significant academic and policy attention has been paid to student outcomes, curriculum design, institutional quality, and policy alignment, one key group remains marginalized in this discourse: the B.Ed. teachers themselves. These educators are not just curriculum deliverers—they are mentors, researchers, and academic guides whose roles extend beyond classroom instruction. The decline in student numbers has directly impacted their job stability, professional engagement, and emotional well-being.

In many cases, reduced enrolment has led to decreased funding, delayed salaries, staff downsizing, and even institutional closures—conditions that have caused severe mental distress among faculty members. Teachers report feelings of isolation, professional stagnation, financial anxiety, and loss of purpose. These issues are rarely documented and even less frequently addressed in policy frameworks or institutional planning.



This paper seeks to fill that critical gap by exploring the multidimensional impact of declining B.Ed. enrolment on teacher educators in India, with a particular focus on their mental health. By integrating data from secondary sources, insights from psychological theory, and contextual analysis, the paper offers a comprehensive understanding of this crisis and proposes both institutional and policy-level solutions.

## 2. Materials and Methods

**This study employs a qualitative, conceptual research design using thematic content analysis. Data were collected from:**

- Secondary sources including annual reports of NCTE (2022), academic journals, and news articles.
- Psychological theories: *Maslow's hierarchy of needs* and *Self-Determination Theory* (Deci & Ryan, 2000).
- Case studies and teacher testimonials sourced from published reports and educational roundtable summaries.

Thematic coding was used to identify patterns of emotional strain, institutional responses, and policy gaps, which were then classified under broader dimensions of mental health and workplace well-being.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Oversupply and Regulatory Challenges

India saw a liberal expansion of B.Ed. institutions post-2000s, resulting in over 17,000 teacher education colleges by 2019. This oversupply—often driven by profit motives—ignored regional teacher demand. Recent regulatory crackdowns have forced many substandard colleges to shut down, but not without leaving teachers in limbo.

### 3.2 Declining Demand and Policy Shifts

**Key reasons for falling enrolment include:**

- The introduction of NEP 2020's four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), making the traditional two-year B.Ed. less attractive.



- Fewer government teaching vacancies.
- Perception of teaching as a low-paying and low-status profession.
- Many institutions now operate with severely underfilled classrooms—some with fewer than 20 students—putting the viability of faculty positions at risk.

### **3.3 Impact on Teachers' Mental Health**

#### **Job Insecurity and Financial Strain**

Fee-dependent private colleges have responded by cutting faculty, delaying salaries, or employing on contract. Teachers, especially those early in their careers, are bearing the brunt of these decisions.

#### **Emotional and Psychological Distress**

Sparse classrooms and reduced interaction are damaging professional identities. Teachers report:

- Depression
- Irritability
- Burnout
- Sleep disturbances
- Career-related anxiety

#### **Lack of Professional Growth**

With reduced funding, many institutions have halted research support, seminars, or training programs, stunting faculty development.

#### **Workload Paradox**

Ironically, lower enrolment hasn't always meant lower work. In many institutions, remaining faculty are asked to cover multiple roles, increasing pressure despite fewer students.

## **4. Discussion**

**The current crisis can be understood through key psychological theories:**



## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

### Teachers are being deprived of:

- Safety needs: Job and income insecurity.
- Esteem needs: Reduced respect and recognition.
- Self-actualization: Lack of opportunities for research, training, and innovation.

## Self-Determination Theory

### As per Deci & Ryan (2000), well-being hinges on:

- **Autonomy:** Undermined by institutional instability.
- **Competence:** Diminished due to professional stagnation.
- **Relatedness:** Weakened by loss of peer networks and academic community.

The mental health of B.Ed. faculty is a casualty of systemic neglect, yet they are central to the development of India's future teachers.

## 5. Recommendations

### 5.1 Institutional Interventions

- **Mental Health Support Cells:** Establish trained counseling units for faculty.
- **Transparent Communication:** Share institutional plans openly to reduce anxiety.
- **Peer Networks:** Encourage faculty clubs or forums to boost collegiality.
- **Professional Reskilling:** Offer workshops in EdTech, content development, and alternative teaching careers.

### 5.2 Policy-Level Reforms

- **Demand-Based Institutional Mapping:** Rationalize teacher training supply as per actual teaching demand.
- **Faculty Welfare Provisions:** Include teacher wellness in NCTE/UGC guidelines.



- Career Diversification: Broaden B.Ed. pathways to include careers in EdTech, NGO sectors, and curriculum design.
- Bridge Funding Mechanisms: Government grants to stabilize institutions during lean years.

## 6. Conclusion

The decline in B.Ed. student enrolment is not just an academic or administrative issue—it is a human crisis affecting the minds and morale of thousands of educators. The mental health of B.Ed. faculty must be prioritized if India hopes to improve its teacher quality and educational outcomes. Only through a combination of institutional empathy, professional development, and policy foresight can we safeguard both teacher well-being and the sustainability of teacher education.

## 7. Acknowledgements

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