



Professionalism of Teachers in West Bengal Teacher Education Institutions: A Review

Gouranga Ghorai¹ & Dr. Ramjee Singh Yadav²

1. Research scholar, Department of Education, YBN University
2. Associate Professor, Department of Education, YBN University

Abstract: *Teacher professionalism is a central determinant of the quality of teacher education because teacher educators are responsible for preparing future generations of teachers. In West Bengal, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) operate within a diverse institutional landscape that includes government, government-aided, autonomous, private, and self-financed institutions. The changing expectations of teacher education have expanded the professional responsibilities of teacher educators beyond classroom teaching to include mentoring, practicum supervision, research, curriculum development, assessment, digital pedagogy, community engagement, reflective practice, and continuous professional development. The present review article examines the concept and dimensions of teacher professionalism in the context of TEIs in West Bengal. It reviews available empirical and policy literature concerning professional competence, professional ethics, professional commitment, teacher educator identity, institutional climate, motivation, job satisfaction, professional development, research orientation, and technological competency. Existing studies indicate that teacher educators' professional experiences are influenced by institutional management, working conditions, professional development opportunities, organizational climate, recognition, job security, workload, and career opportunities. Research in West Bengal has also identified relationships between teaching competence, professional development, motivation, and job satisfaction. The review identifies a significant need for more integrated research examining professionalism as a multidimensional construct rather than concentrating on isolated variables. It concludes that strengthening teacher professionalism in West Bengal requires continuous professional development, supportive institutional leadership, professional autonomy, research engagement, collaborative learning, digital competency, ethical practice, and systematic quality assurance.*

Keywords: *Teacher Professionalism, Teacher Educators, Teacher Competency, Teacher Education Institutions, Professional Development, West Bengal, Professional Identity, Organizational Climate.*

Introduction: Teacher education is an essential component of the educational system because it prepares individuals to undertake the complex responsibilities of teaching. The effectiveness of teacher education depends not only upon curriculum, infrastructure, regulatory standards, and student-teachers but also upon the professional quality of teacher educators.

Teacher educators occupy a distinctive position in education. They teach prospective teachers, supervise teaching practice, guide internships, assess student-teachers, conduct research, organize academic activities, and contribute to institutional development. They also act as professional role models. Student-teachers learn not only from what teacher educators teach but also from how they behave, communicate, assess, collaborate, and respond to professional responsibilities.

Consequently, teacher professionalism in TEIs is a particularly important area of educational research. Professionalism involves more than possessing academic qualifications. It encompasses professional knowledge, pedagogical competence, ethical conduct, commitment, reflective practice, professional autonomy, collaboration, research orientation, accountability, and lifelong learning.

The importance of professional teacher education has been reflected in India's regulatory framework. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) revised its Regulations and Norms and Standards in 2014, increasing the duration of B.Ed., B.P.Ed., and M.Ed. programmes to two years and emphasizing theory, practicum, and internship. The framework also incorporated ICT, yoga, gender, disability and inclusive education as integral components of teacher-education curricula.

These developments have significant implications for teacher educators. They are required to prepare student-teachers for increasingly complex educational environments. A teacher educator therefore needs competencies in pedagogy, assessment, technology, research, inclusion, communication, mentoring, and reflective practice.

West Bengal provides an important context for examining these issues. The state has a large and diverse network of teacher education institutions, including institutions under different management structures. Research has examined teacher educators' motivation, organizational climate, job satisfaction, teaching competence, and professional development, but there remains a need for an integrated understanding of teacher professionalism.

This review article therefore examines the available literature on professionalism of teachers in TEIs in West Bengal and identifies major themes, challenges, research gaps, and implications.

Objectives of the Study: The present review article has the following objectives:

1. To examine the concept and meaning of teacher professionalism.
2. To identify the major dimensions of professionalism among teacher educators.
3. To review research related to teacher professionalism in West Bengal TEIs.
4. To examine the relationship between professional competence and professional development.
5. To analyse institutional factors influencing teacher professionalism.
6. To identify major challenges faced by teacher educators.
7. To identify gaps in existing research.
8. To suggest strategies for strengthening teacher professionalism in West Bengal TEIs.

Meaning of Teacher Professionalism: Professionalism is a complex concept. In education, it generally refers to the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, ethical principles, and behaviours expected from members of the teaching profession.

Teacher professionalism may be understood through two related perspectives.

The first perspective emphasizes **individual professional competence**. According to this perspective, a professional teacher should possess adequate subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, assessment skills, communication abilities, and classroom-management competence.

The second perspective emphasizes professional identity and responsibility. From this perspective, professionalism includes commitment to learners, ethical behaviour, professional autonomy, collaboration, reflection, accountability, and continuous learning.

For teacher educators, professionalism is even broader because they are responsible for preparing future teachers.

A professionally competent teacher educator should therefore be able to:

- Teach educational theory effectively.
- Demonstrate appropriate pedagogical practices.
- Supervise teaching practice.
- Mentor student-teachers.
- Use appropriate assessment methods.
- Conduct educational research.
- Participate in professional development.
- Use digital resources effectively.
- Promote inclusive education.
- Demonstrate professional ethics.
- Collaborate with colleagues.
- Reflect upon and improve professional practice.

Teacher Educator as a Professional: Teacher educators have a dual professional identity. They are educators themselves, but they also prepare others to become educators.

This dual role creates distinctive professional expectations.

A teacher educator is expected to demonstrate the practices that student-teachers are expected to acquire. For example, if student-teachers are expected to use learner-centred pedagogy, teacher educators should demonstrate learner-centred approaches in their own classrooms.

Similarly, if student-teachers are expected to become reflective practitioners, teacher educators should model reflection.

Teacher educators therefore function as professional role models.

Their professional responsibilities can be grouped into several areas:

- **Teaching:** Teacher educators are responsible for teaching theoretical and practical components of teacher education programmes.
- **Mentoring:** They guide student-teachers in developing professional identity, teaching skills, and confidence.

- **Practicum Supervision:** They observe and provide feedback on student-teachers' teaching practice.
- **Research:** Research enables teacher educators to contribute to knowledge and examine educational problems critically.
- **Curriculum Development:** Teacher educators may contribute to curriculum planning, instructional materials, assessment, and programme development.

Institutional Responsibilities: They participate in committees, examinations, academic planning, quality assurance, seminars, workshops, and other institutional activities.

Major Dimensions of Professionalism

Professional Competence: Professional competence is one of the central dimensions of professionalism. It includes subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, assessment literacy, communication skills, classroom management, technological knowledge, and understanding of learner diversity. Recent research in West Bengal provides direct evidence of the importance of this dimension. Sarkar and Bhattacharyya's 2026 study examined 300 teacher educators from government and private B.Ed. colleges and investigated teaching competence in relation to job satisfaction.

Professional Ethics

Ethics is an essential element of professionalism.

Teacher educators have responsibilities concerning:

- Fair assessment
- Respect for students
- Academic honesty
- Confidentiality
- Non-discrimination
- Professional integrity
- Responsible use of institutional resources
- Appropriate professional relationships

Because teacher educators serve as role models, unethical behaviour can negatively influence student-teachers' understanding of professional conduct.

Professional Commitment: Professional commitment involves dedication to the teaching profession, learners, institutional goals, and continuous improvement.

A professionally committed teacher educator is likely to devote attention to lesson preparation, student support, mentoring, research, and institutional activities.

Commitment is influenced by working conditions. Research on teacher educators in West Bengal has repeatedly examined job satisfaction, motivation, and institutional factors, suggesting that professional behaviour cannot be completely separated from teachers' organizational experiences.

Professional Development: Professionalism requires continuous professional learning.

The NCTE framework has increased the professional scope of teacher education by emphasizing practicum, internship, ICT, inclusion, and other contemporary areas. NNCTE

Teacher educators therefore need opportunities to update their knowledge and skills.

Professional development may include:

- Workshops
- Seminars
- Conferences
- Refresher programmes
- Faculty-development programmes
- Research projects
- Publications
- Online learning
- Peer observation
- Collaborative lesson planning
- Professional learning communities

Professional development should be continuous and connected with actual professional needs.

Reflective Practice

Reflection is central to professional growth.

Teacher educators should regularly examine questions such as:

- Was the teaching strategy effective?
- Did student-teachers understand the concept?
- Which learners were excluded from participation?
- Was the assessment appropriate?
- What could be improved?
- How can theory and practice be better connected?

Reflection enables professional knowledge to develop through experience.

Research Orientation

Teacher educators should be encouraged to engage in educational research.

Research can strengthen professionalism by enabling teachers to:

- Investigate educational problems.
- Evaluate teaching strategies.
- Examine student learning.
- Develop evidence-based practices.
- Contribute to professional literature.

Research also strengthens teacher educators' academic identity.

Collaboration: Professionalism is not an individual activity.

Teacher educators can improve their practice through collaboration with colleagues, school teachers, student-teachers, researchers, universities, and professional organizations.

Collaborative activities may include joint research, seminars, peer observation, curriculum planning, and development of teaching materials.

7. Organizational Climate and Professionalism

Professionalism is strongly influenced by institutional climate.

Organizational climate includes teachers' perceptions of:

- Leadership
- Communication
- Participation
- Rules
- Relationships
- Recognition
- Professional autonomy
- Working conditions
- Institutional support

Research conducted in West Bengal examined organizational climate in teacher education institutions and teacher educators' motivation to work. The study involved 221 teacher educators from 36 B.Ed. colleges and considered differences related to gender, type of management, and locality.

This line of research is important because it demonstrates that professionalism cannot be treated solely as an individual characteristic. The institutional environment can either facilitate or restrict professional behaviour.

A supportive institutional climate may encourage teachers to:

- Experiment with teaching methods.
- Participate in professional development.

- Conduct research.
- Collaborate with colleagues.
- Accept responsibility.
- Develop institutional commitment.

An unsupportive environment may produce professional frustration and reduced motivation.

8. Job Satisfaction as a Dimension of Professional Life: Although job satisfaction is conceptually different from professionalism, it is closely related to teachers' professional experiences.

Research in West Bengal has examined job satisfaction among teacher educators in government-aided, private, self-financed, and other types of B.Ed. colleges.

Barman's study of 150 teacher educators from government-aided and self-financed/private unaided B.Ed. colleges identified personal, job-related, and institutional factors affecting satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Das and Biswas also examined job satisfaction among teacher educators in different types of B.Ed. colleges in West Bengal and considered factors including working conditions, salary, relationships with colleagues, recognition, workload, job security, professional development, and promotion opportunities.

Thakur's study of 100 teacher educators from 20 private teacher-training colleges associated with the University of Gour Banga and University of Kalyani found considerable dissatisfaction in the sample and reported no significant gender difference or significant difference between the two university affiliations.

These studies demonstrate that teachers' professional experiences are affected by employment and institutional conditions.

Professional Competence and Job Satisfaction: An important emerging area of research concerns the relationship between competence and job satisfaction.

Sarkar and Bhattacharyya's 2026 study directly examined this relationship among 300 teacher educators in government and private B.Ed. colleges in West Bengal. The study used a Teaching Competence Scale and a Job Satisfaction in Teaching Profession Scale and applied statistical techniques including t-tests and Pearson correlation.

The study is important for professionalism research because competence can be viewed as one of the core dimensions of professional identity.

A teacher who feels competent may experience greater professional confidence. Conversely, supportive working conditions and job satisfaction may encourage teachers to invest in professional development and improve their competence.

Thus, professionalism and satisfaction may have a reciprocal relationship.

Motivation and Professionalism: Motivation is another important element of professionalism. A motivated teacher educator is more likely to participate actively in teaching, research, mentoring, and institutional activities.

The West Bengal literature on organizational climate and teacher educators' motivation suggests that institutional conditions may influence work-related behaviour.

Major Challenges to Professionalism

The literature and policy context suggest several challenges.

- **Limited Professional Development**

- Professional development may not always be continuous, accessible, or sufficiently connected with teachers' needs.

- **Workload**

- Teaching, administrative, assessment, documentation, practicum supervision, and institutional duties may create significant workload.

- **Research Constraints**

- Teachers may face limitations in funding, time, mentorship, research infrastructure, and publication opportunities.

- **Employment Conditions**

- Employment conditions may affect motivation and long-term professional commitment, particularly in some private and self-financed institutions.

- **Limited Autonomy**

- Excessive administrative control can reduce teachers' opportunities to exercise professional judgment.

- **Unequal Institutional Resources**

- Differences between urban and rural institutions may affect professional opportunities.

- **Technology Gaps**

- Teachers require continuing support to develop digital competencies.

- **Weak Professional Networks**

- Professional isolation can limit sharing of ideas and collaborative learning.

Research Gaps: The review reveals several important research gaps.

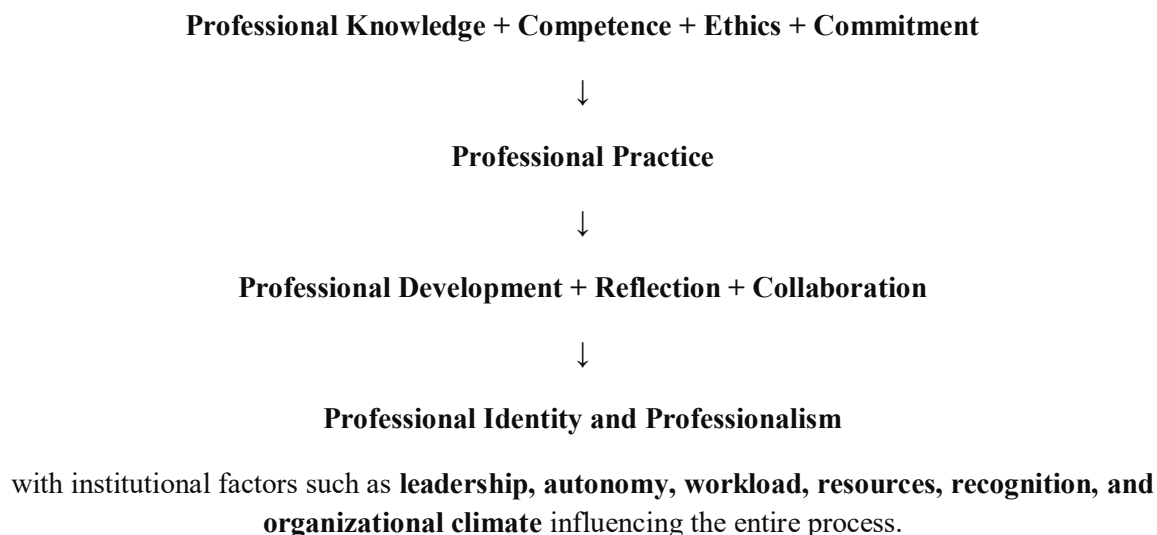
- **Lack of an Integrated Professionalism Model:** Existing studies frequently focus on individual variables such as job satisfaction, motivation, organizational climate, or teaching competence. There is a need for studies that examine professionalism as an integrated construct.

- **Limited Exclusive Research on Private TEIs:** Although private institutions appear in several studies, fewer studies focus exclusively on professionalism in private TEIs across West Bengal.

- **Need for Recent Empirical Evidence:** Some foundational studies were conducted several years ago. The educational environment has changed substantially through digitalization, regulatory reforms, and new professional expectations.

- **Proposed Conceptual Framework:** Based on the reviewed literature, teacher professionalism in West Bengal TEIs can be conceptualized through four broad dimensions.

A conceptual relationship may be represented as:



Implications for Teacher Education Institutions

The review has several implications for TEIs in West Bengal.

First, teacher professionalism should be treated as a central institutional-quality indicator.

Second, professional development should be integrated into institutional planning rather than treated as an occasional activity.

Third, teacher educators should be encouraged to become reflective practitioners and researchers.

Fourth, institutional leaders should create environments where teachers can express professional opinions and participate in academic decision-making.

Fifth, quality assurance should focus on actual professional practice rather than merely documentary compliance.

Finally, private TEIs should recognize that professional quality depends substantially on the conditions in which teacher educators work.

Conclusion: Teacher professionalism is fundamental to the quality of teacher education in West Bengal. Teacher educators occupy a particularly important position because they prepare future teachers and model the professional behaviour expected within the teaching profession.

The reviewed literature indicates that professionalism consists of multiple interconnected dimensions, including professional knowledge, teaching competence, ethics, commitment, reflection, research, collaboration, professional development, and institutional responsibility.

Research in West Bengal provides evidence that teacher educators' professional experiences are influenced by organizational climate, motivation, job satisfaction, professional development, teaching competence, institutional management, and employment conditions. Studies have included both public and private TEIs, with findings demonstrating the importance of institutional context.

The regulatory framework established by NCTE has also expanded expectations of teacher education by emphasizing professional rigour, practicum, internship, ICT, inclusion, and quality assurance.

The major implication is that professionalism cannot be developed through qualifications alone. A qualified teacher educator may still require opportunities for continuous professional development, research, collaboration, mentoring, and reflective practice.

Similarly, professional behaviour cannot be separated from institutional conditions. Leadership, autonomy, workload, recognition, resources, career opportunities, and organizational climate can facilitate or constrain professional growth.

For West Bengal TEIs, particularly private and self-financed institutions, strengthening professionalism therefore requires a comprehensive approach. Institutions should invest in faculty development, research, digital competency, mentoring, professional learning communities, ethical standards, supportive leadership, and fair working conditions.

Future research should develop validated multidimensional measures of teacher professionalism and examine their relationship with teaching competence, professional development, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and institutional climate. Comparative and mixed-method studies involving different types of TEIs would provide particularly valuable evidence.

Ultimately, professional teacher education requires professional teacher educators. Strengthening the professionalism of educators in West Bengal TEIs can contribute to better teacher preparation, stronger professional identities among student-teachers, and improved educational quality across the state.

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