

# Student Engagement in Higher Education: With Special Reference to Teacher Education

Swati Pandey

Senior Research Fellow, Department of Education, Faculty of Education and Allied Sciences, M J P Rohilkhand University, Bareilly-243006

## Abstract

Teaching is a sophisticated, flexible, and intellectual performing act. Being a competent teacher requires ongoing skill development in order to be relevant in the classroom, making teaching an ever-evolving profession. Since studying and teaching go hand in hand, it is crucial for those aspiring teachers to make an investment in their professional growth. With more than 8 million teachers and around 1.5 million schools, India boasts the largest educational system in the world. In India, there are a lot of schools and teachers, yet there are still issues with the quality of education.

Thus, a vital part of higher education in India is teacher training. In the classroom, the caliber of the teachers has a direct bearing on the caliber of education. Thus, in order for them to perform their jobs well, teachers must receive the assistance and training that they require. For India's educational system to become more high-quality, teacher preparation is crucial. The utilization of new technologies and teaching approaches, together with an enhanced understanding of students' requirements, can all be facilitated by it for teachers. The degree to which students choose to commit to studying and the amount of time they spend on it determine how effective teaching and learning are not solely determined by obstacles, support, and facilitation. Students' commitment to this is known as student engagement.

This article firstly analysed the faculty members' perspective and views about student engagement in teacher training and learning. The second part of the article explore and measure the student engagement in curriculum of teacher training program and the third part of the article presents a conceptual framework that overcomes these problems, incorporating valuable elements from each of the perspectives, to enable a better shared understanding of student engagement to frame future research and improve student outcomes.

**Keywords:** Student Engagement, Teacher Training, Conceptual Framework and Teaching- Learning.

## Introduction

*Once a professor of philosophy at the University of Houston has explained the difference between high school teachers and university professors. He said "I'm your professor, not your teacher." He stressed that "Teachers are evaluated on the basis of learning outcomes, generally as measured by standardized tests. If you don't learn then your teacher is blamed."*

*He added "It is not part of my job to make you learn. At university, learning is your job- and yours alone. My job is to lead you to the fountain of knowledge. Whether you drink deeply or only goggle is entirely up to you".*

The significance of student engagement in higher education is aptly expressed in these remarks. India has one of the greatest higher education systems in the world, with over 56,000 institutions serving 40 million students and 15 lakh faculty. The rapidly evolving Indian higher education environment can be attributed to a number of causes, including shifting student expectations, increased international collaboration, a strong desire for worldwide recognition, and intense competition between the public and private sectors in the academic sector. It is widely acknowledged that a student's degree of engagement is one of the most important factors affecting the performance of any educational system and their success in life. Student involvement is defined as taking part in the learning process both actively and meaningfully.

The degree of a student's active participation in the learning process is assessed, and it is linked to a number of components of the learning environment, such as the classroom climate, the interactions between teachers and students, the motivation of the students, and the use of educational technology. In higher education in India, more than in any other educational level, student engagement is crucial. (Manivannan and Venkataraman, 2021). Academic competency, skill development, research, simulation, and career orientation are among the many components that make up higher education pedagogy. Teachers need to possess specific abilities in order to support the development of theoretical and empirical knowledge and prepare students for the future.

Higher education is influenced by three different factors. First of all, the learning environment, modes, content, and methodology are all undergoing drastic changes as a result of technological advancements. Second, the methods and experiences of teaching and learning are changing at an ever-increasing rate due to new curricular developments and pedagogical innovations. Combine the two with the ever-changing character of the 21st-century industry, with which business education must continuously adjust. The ongoing professional development of teachers is essential to higher education because of these combined effects. The main factor determining a student teacher's effectiveness as an educator is now their level of engagement in this course (Sinclair, Mary & Christenson, Sandra & Lehr, Camilla & Anderson, Amy. (2014),

An effective learning environment is built on student participation. The ability of pre-service teachers to engage pupils cognitively and raise academic achievement must be fostered if teacher educators are to prepare effective teachers. By outlining effective methods from one teacher preparation program, the writers of this paper emphasize the significance of student participation. The importance of student participation in the classroom being made evident, the frameworks for teacher educators to monitor and encourage student engagement being established, and the examination of what student engagement looks like from the viewpoint of pre-service teachers

### **Literature review:**

Participants in the reflective teaching program demonstrated higher levels of science-teaching competence than those in the microteaching program; second, the reflective teaching program enhanced the science-teaching competence of highly self-regulatory student teachers; third, the microteaching program benefited low-regulatory student teachers; and fourth, there are interactions between teacher-training programs and self-regulation that have distinct effects on competence in teaching science at the elementary school level. (Sumantri et. Al., 2018). Even if they were attending classes online, students who felt more connected to their schools fared better in terms of mental health throughout the epidemic, according to a research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). What made all the difference for these

students was that they felt the institution was just as concerned about their education as it was about them personally?

(**Neelam, 2023**). The principal's ability to lead is crucial to creating a positive school environment that encourages high levels of student participation. Academic freedom is granted to both the principal and the instructors when the college administration is less involved in the academic operations of the institution. It determines a positive institutional climate and affects student engagement through that mechanism. The relationship between a principal and teacher, as well as the principal-management interaction, affect the institutional climate. The degree to which this bond is intense affects how engaged the students are. A positive institutional atmosphere is facilitated and student engagement is impacted by the school and B.Ed. College being housed in the same premises and managed by the same people. Enforcing norms and regulations strictly encourages students to participate in B.Ed. courses. Student involvement is increased when professors at the institution share and encourage one another. (**Sreelatha, K 2015**). In order to fulfill trainees' learning needs and promote quality development, educational institutions must engage trainees in a variety of ways through productive academic interactions (**Burua, 2015**).

### **Teacher education Program in India**

Teacher education has a multifaceted, multilayered structure. India's teacher education system has undergone numerous revisions that are comparable to those in other nations. India suffers from a lack of consistency and high-quality programs at various levels. If the preparation of teachers was limited to training, this would not be feasible. Since holistic teacher development is essential, teacher education requires greater attention than just training.

### **Types of Teacher Training in India**

India offers a wide range of teacher training options, ranging from extended certification programs to intensive workshops and seminars.

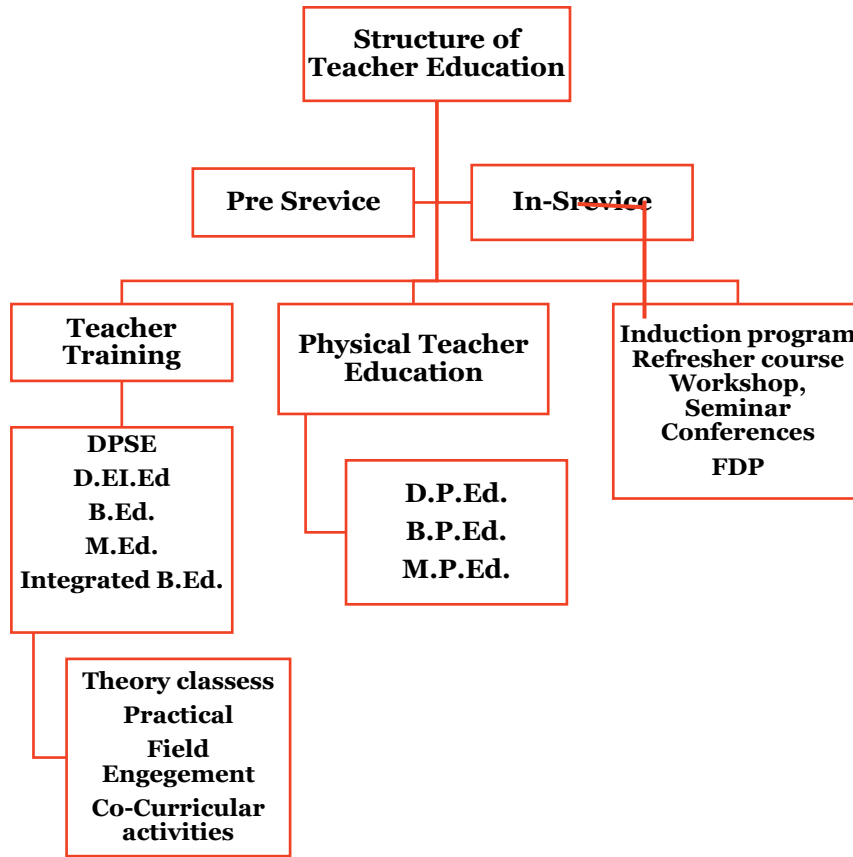
#### **1. Pre-Service Teacher Education:**

- **Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed):** This two-year curriculum is meant to get teachers ready for teaching in primary schools (grades 1–8).
- **Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.):** A one-year curriculum (or two years in some situations) that trains graduates to become secondary school teachers (grades 9–12).
- **Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed):** A four-year integrated program that prepares teachers for elementary-level education.
- **4 Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in a multidisciplinary environment:** According to the new NEP2020 school structure, the curriculum attempts to prepare instructors for the Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary phases. It will guarantee that exceptional pupils pursue careers as teachers. The needs of the twenty-first century are met by this course.
- **Bachelor of Physical Education (B.P.Ed):** After graduating, students can seek jobs as school teachers, health, yoga, aerobics, sports event organizers, leisure club instructors, and gym trainers thanks to a two-year teacher training program.

#### **2. In-Service Teacher Education:**

- **Teacher Training Programs:** In-service training programs, both short- and long-term, are offered to practicing instructors to keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

- **Online and Distance Education:** Through online courses and distant learning, some universities provide in-service teacher education programs.



**Figure: 1.1: Structure of Teacher Education in India**

### Research objectives

- To know the teachers Perspective towards student engagement in teaching training institutes.
- To Study the factors that lead the student engagement in teaching training institutes.
- To study the challenges of student engagement in teaching training institutes.

### Research Questions

- What is the teacher educators Perspective towards student engagement in teaching training institutes?
- What are the factors that lead the student engagement in teaching training institutes?
- What are the challenges of student engagement in teaching training institutes?

### Operational Definition

#### Teacher Education:

According to this study, teacher education refers to a curriculum that prepares teachers to work with students in pre-primary through higher education. Teacher educators are the experts who work with aspiring teachers to train them (or, in some cases, teacher trainers).

#### Student Engagement:

In this research student engagement is determined by three dimensions:

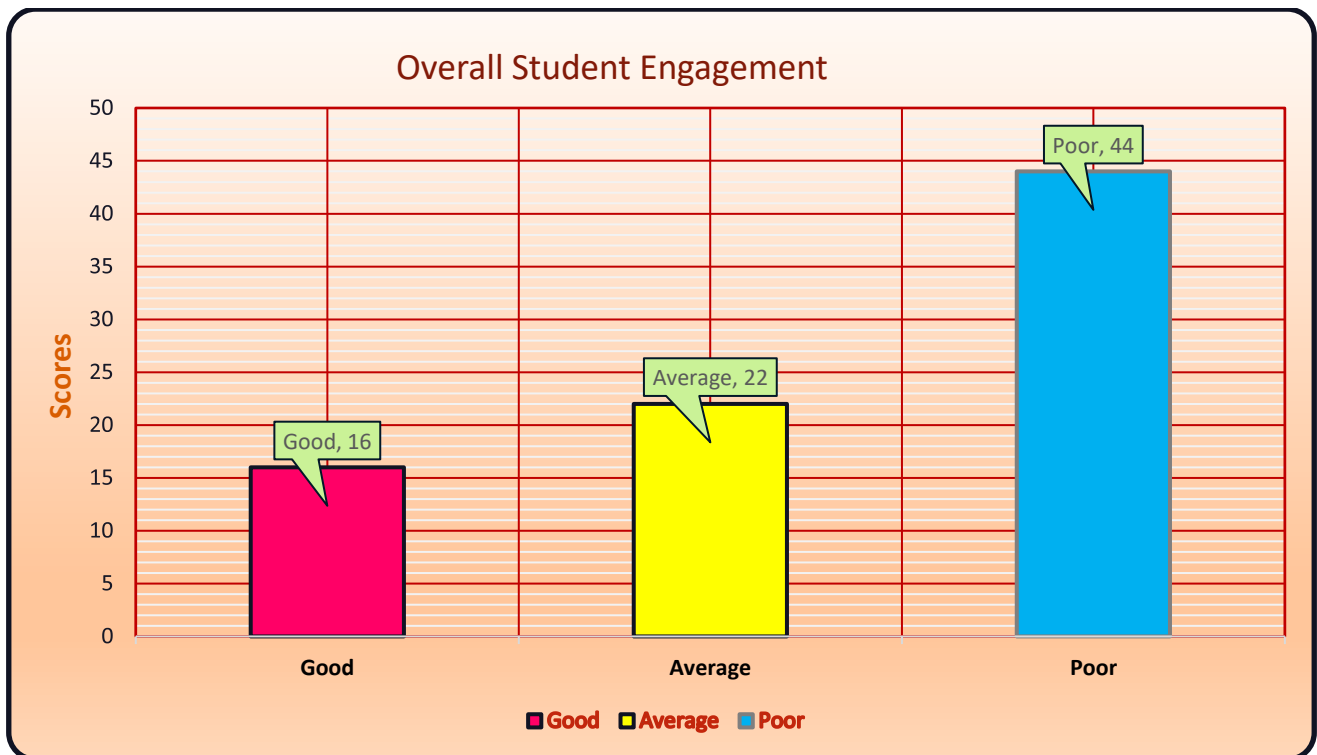
- **Behavioral /Emotional engagement:** focusing on participation in academic, social, and co-curricular activities and the extent and nature of positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school.
- **Institutional engagement:** focusing on facilities and infrastructure provided by the institution.
- **Academic engagement:** focusing on students’ level of investment in learning.

### Methodology:

The present study is descriptive in style. The population of the study comprises all the B.Ed. / M.Ed. And D.El.Ed. Students and faculty members from M.J.P. Rohilkhand University and affiliated colleges, 300 student teachers were randomly selected as a sample and a questionnaire constructed by the investigator was given to them. A separate questionnaire constructed for faculty members was also given to 82 teachers who were selected through a random sampling method. After tabulation of data, frequencies and percentages were calculated. Data were analysed and interpreted accordingly.

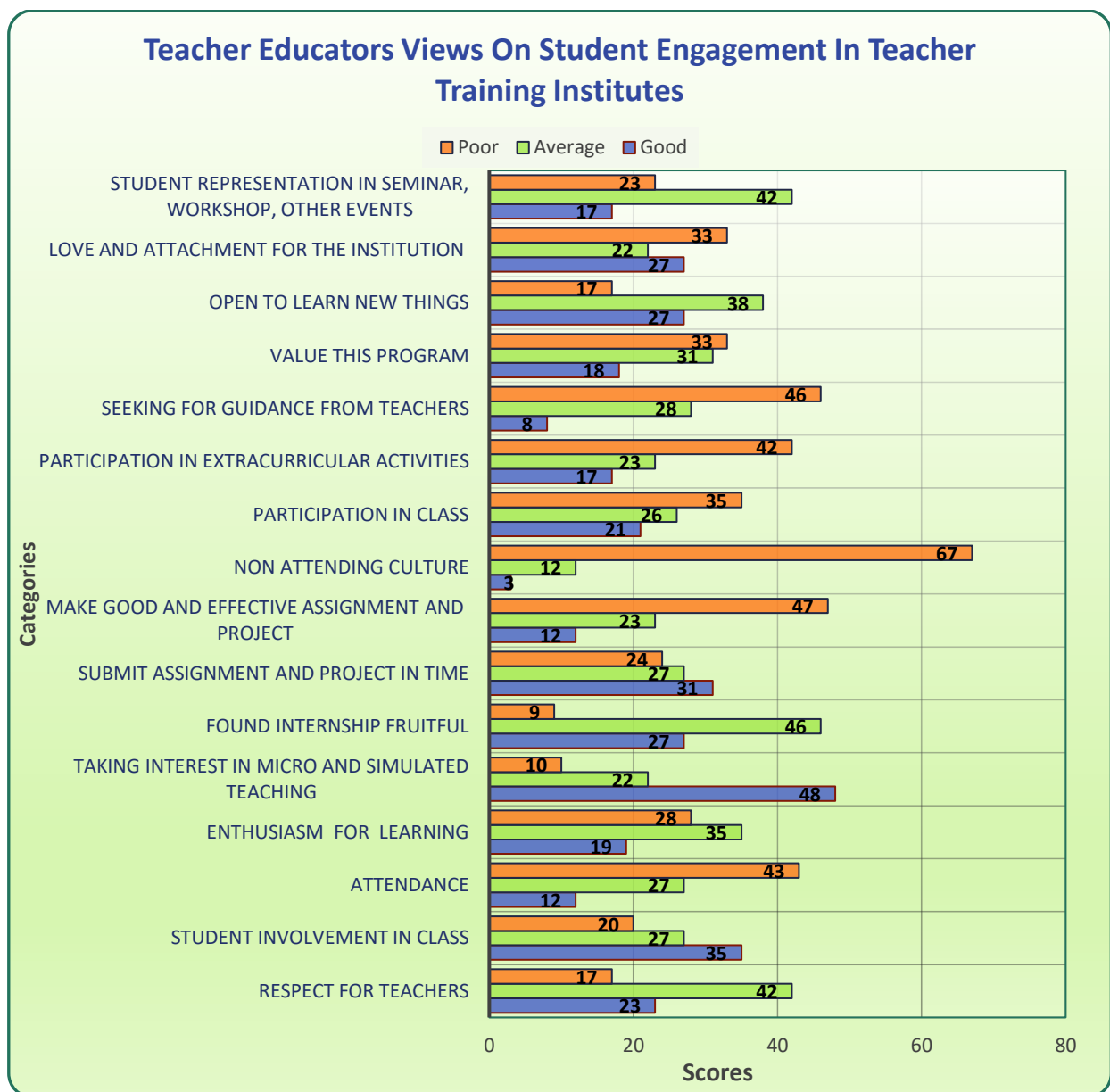
### Data Analysis and Interpretation:

• **What is the teacher educators’ outlooks on student engagement in teaching training institutes?**  
 The teacher educators' opinions on the general level of student participation in teaching training institutions are displayed in Figure 1.1. Teachers from various public and private educational establishments share a similar sense of proximity. Of the 82 teacher educators surveyed, 44% believe that student teachers at teacher training institutes are not very engaged in their courses. Teachers reported that just 16% of students were engaged to a high degree. In teacher training institutions, 22% of teachers reported average levels of Student engagement.



**Figure: 1.2: Overall Student Engagement in teacher training Institute**

Subsequently, we discovered a few dimensions associated with student participation in teacher preparation programs. Figure 1.3, exhibits that teacher educators discovered low levels of student participation in the following areas: attendance (43%), producing well-written assignments and projects (47%), and nonattendance culture (67%). Attendance in class (35%), involvement in extracurricular activities (42%), and asking teachers for advice (46%), Teachers reported average levels of engagement in the following dimensions: respect for teachers (35%), enthusiasm for learning (42%), Openness to learning new things (38%), value this program (33%), love and attachment for the institution (33%). Found internship to be beneficial (46%), The only areas where faculty members reported strong student engagement were taking an interest in micro and simulated teaching (48%), student involvement in class (35%), and submitting assignments and projects on time (31%).



**Figure: 1.3: Teacher Educators Views on Student Engagement in Teacher Training Institutes**



- What are the factors that leads the student engagement in teaching training institutes?

**Table 1.1: Institutional factors that leads the student engagement in teaching training institutes**

Sr. No.	Institutional Factor	Yes		No	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1	Advocate this institute to others	132	44	168	56
2	Your institution has good Canteen facility	128	42.66	172	57.34
3	Clean Washrooms / drinking water facilities	86	28.66	214	71.34
4	Competent and updated faculty	112	37.34	188	62.66
5	Your institutions has facilities of Government exam preparations	51	17	249	83
6	Your institutions provides you Information and guidance Related to Training and Placement	36	12	264	88
7	Innovative and creative environment	102	34	198	66
8	Invited lectures, seminars, conferences, talks, Workshops industrial tours etc.)	226	75.34	74	24.66
9	Providing Computer knowledge	78	26	222	74
10	Teacher training has relevant and well organized Course curricula	152	50.66	158	52.66
11	Relevant internship / training	124	41.34	176	58.66
12	Sufficient and latest computers in ICT labs	98	32.66	202	67.34
13	Teacher take regular classes	143	47.66	157	52.34
14	Technology based Teaching Learning	48	16	252	84
15	Well organized and updated Library facilities	129	43	171	57
16	Well organized fully functional lab like psychology ,yoga, art and craft, sports etc.	10	3.334	299	99.66

The above mention table 1.1 (of institutional factors) portrait that around (56%) student did want to advocate their current institution to other students, similarly, (57.34%) student think that their institution did not have good Canteen facility, (71.34%) Clean Washrooms / drinking water facilities, (62.66%) Competent and updated faculty, (83%) facilities of Government exam preparations, (88%) Information and guidance related to Training and Placement, (66%) Innovative and creative environment, (74%) students agreed that their institute did not provide Computer knowledge. Along with that only half number of students (50.66%) think that Teacher training has relevant and well organized Course curricula, (41.36%) think that internship / training is relevant for them, (75.34%) students agreed that in their institution expert lectures, seminars, conferences, talks, Workshops industrial tours were organised etc.), whereas only (32.66%) student agreed that in their institution they have Sufficient and latest computers in ICT labs, (47.66%) Teacher take regular classes, (16%) think that their institute provides Technology based Teaching Learning, (43%) Well organized and updated Library facilities, (3.33%) Well organized fully functional lab like psychology, yoga, art and craft, sports etc.

**Table 1.2: Emotional/behavioural factors that leads the student engagement in teaching training institutes.**

Sr. No.	Emotional/behavioural Factor	Yes		No	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1	Do you have good Interaction with faculty	178	59.34	122	40.66
2	Do you have good interaction with staff	197	65.67	103	34.33
3	Do you actively participate in classroom activities?	136	45.34	164	54.66
4	Do you interestingly participate In variety of co-curricular activities	167	55.67	133	44.33
5	Good Interpersonal relationship with peer group	278	92.67	22	7.333
6	Sense of belonging with this institute	139	46.34	161	53.66
7	Use of Contemporary teaching methods (case study, Simulation, tutorials etc.)	109	36.34	191	63.66
8	Do you feel this training will benefits you in future	187	62.34	113	37.66
9	Do you have inner motivation for this Course	161	53.66	139	46.34
10	Do You regularly attend the lecture	191	63.66	109	36.34
	Do you regular in the institution	201	67	99	33
11	Recommend this course to other students	142	47.33	158	52.67
12	A sense of belonging within teachers	116	38.66	184	61.34
13	Do you feel that teaching learning process is intellectually stimulating for you	92	30.66	208	69.34
14	Emotional and social support from teachers	147	49	153	51
15	Do you feel this training makes any positive changes in your personality?	139	46.33	161	53.67
16	Admission in this course is your choice	112	37.33	188	62.67

The analysis of table 1.2, emotional/ behaviour factors indicates that the percentage of students who have good Interaction with faculty members were (59.34%) and good interaction with staff (65.67%). Whereas only (45.34%) students were actively participates in classroom activities and (55.67%) participates in variety of co-curricular activities. Majority of student (92.67%) agreed that they have Good Interpersonal relationship with peer group. Only (46.34%) feels a sense of belonging with this institute. (38.66%) has a sense of belonging within teachers. Similarly, only (36.34%) students agreed that Contemporary teaching methods (case study, Simulation, tutorials etc.) were used for the teaching, (62.34%) students feels that this training will benefits them in future, only (53.66%) have inner motivation for this Course. (63.66%) students regularly attend the lecture and (67%) regular in the institution. Still only (47.33%) students recommend this course to other students. (30.66%) students feels that teaching learning process



is intellectually stimulating them. Only (49%) agreed that they get Emotional and social support from teachers and (46.33%) feels this training makes any positive changes in your personality. Interestingly only (37.33%) students take admission in this course by their own choice whereas, (62.67%) student did not want to became teacher they take admission in this course by force or by destiny.

**Table 1.3: Academic factors that leads the student engagement in teaching training institutes.**

Sr. No.	Academic factors	Yes		No	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%
1	Do you feel Assignments developed analytical capability in pupil teacher?	146	48.67	154	51.33
2	Do you feel Internal viva and exams are helps in preparing for final Practical and theory exams?	252	84	48	16
3	Do you feel teaching Internship is useful in Job/ professional career?	106	35.34	194	64.67
4	Do you feel Micro / simulated teaching is useful in building teaching skills.	198	66	102	34
5	Do you feel Assignments/ projects are industry relevant?	116	38.67	184	61.33
6	Fairness in Results.	212	70.67	88	29.33
7	Theory classes are regular and interesting	136	45.33	164	54.67
8	Social, cultural and extra- curricular activities Sports activities are organised in institution?	172	57.33	128	42.67
9	Do you get enough Time for the preparation for Exam?	202	67.33	98	32.67
10	Ample time for preparation/ Revision for and during the papers?	241	80.33	59	19.67
11	Do you feel this training / course improved Decision making ability in pupil teacher?	98	32.67	202	67.33
12	Do you feel this training / course improved Communication skill in pupil teacher?	112	37.33	188	62.67
13	Do you feel this training / course improved Teaching ability is improved in pupil teacher?	131	43.67	169	56.33
14	Do you feel you can learn better in Online learning platforms?	186	62	114	38

The above tables 1.3, portrays that the rate of students who feels that Assignments developed analytical capability in pupil teacher is only (48.67%). Further, majority of students’ (84%) feels internal viva and exams are helps in preparing for final Practical and theory exams. However, only (35.34%) found teaching Internship useful in future Job/ professional career, but on the other hand (66%) agreed that Micro / simulated teaching is useful in building teaching skills. Only (38.67%) students found their Assignments/

projects are industry relevant. (70.67%) student finds Fairness in Results, Moreover, (45.33%) students agreed that Theory classes were regular and interesting. (57.33%) student mentions that Social, cultural and extra- curricular activities Sports activities are organised in institution. (67.33%) students agreed that get enough Time for the preparation for Exam preparation, (80.33%) for Revision. Only (37.33%) students' feels that this training / course improved Decision making ability in pupil teacher, (43.67%) think that this training / course improved Communication skill in pupil teacher and (62%) feels that this training / course improved Teaching ability is improved in pupil teacher. In this technological era (62%) students feels that they can learn better in Online learning platforms.

- **What are the challenges of student engagement in teaching training institutes?**

After this analysis we found that Engaging pupil teachers during their training period can be challenging due to various factors:

- **Lack of Motivation**

It's difficult to motivate students. Learning can be made more enjoyable and interesting by using activity based components like leaderboards, points, and badges, appreciations. Motivation and involvement can also be increased by praising and rewarding effort, advancement, and success.

- **Individual Differences**

Students' capacities for taking in and analyzing information vary. Taking into account these individual variances can be difficult. Differentiated instruction styles can be beneficial, nevertheless. All students may learn at their own pace and in their own way when the learning process is customized to match their needs, which increases overall engagement.

- **Teacher-Centered Approach**

The teacher serves as the main source of guidance and information in a traditional classroom, which may unintentionally cause pupils to become passive learners rather than active contributors. Because they don't force students to conduct much independent thinking, lessons that are overly teacher-centered may reduce student engagement.

- **The Digital Distraction**

Distractions are easily accessible in the digital world with social media, Ott platforms, virtual games, and website browsing. But there are meaningful and purposeful ways that instructors may use technology into their lesson plans. Technology can enhance interactivity and engagement in the classroom when used wisely.

- **Lack of Relevance**

Students' engagement may suffer if they don't think their academics are relevant. In order to counter this, teachers should make an effort to make learning applicable by tying the material to actual situations. Students can benefit from project-based learning by seeing how their knowledge is applied in real-world situations...

- **Emotional and Psychological Factors**

A student's capacity to participate might be strongly impacted by mental health concerns. Institutions should make sure that sufficient support systems are in place, such as teacher training to recognize indicators of mental distress and access to college counselors. Establishing a secure and encouraging learning atmosphere helps boost students' comfort levels and engagement.

- **Inadequate Resources:**

A large number of teacher training schools in India are devoid of proper technology, teaching materials,

and infrastructure. This may reduce training programs' efficacy and make it more challenging to engage student teachers.

- **Big Class Sizes:**

It might be difficult for student teachers to receive customized attention and assistance from mentors when they are put in classes with a lot of children.

- **Language hurdles:**

Due to India's linguistic diversity, student teachers who are not fluent in the language of instruction utilized in their training program may encounter language hurdles. This may make it more difficult for them to fully interact with the content...

- **Unplanned Practical Experience:**

A few Indian teacher preparation programs place a strong emphasis on theoretical knowledge with little chance for hands-on learning in actual classroom environments. It could be difficult for student teachers to put what they've learned into practice.

- **Socioeconomic problems:**

Financial limitations or family obligations are examples of socioeconomic problems that disadvantaged student teachers may encounter in addition to other difficulties that may limit their capacity to participate completely in their training.

- **Mentorship and Support:**

There is a large range in the caliber of mentorship and support given to student teachers during their training. Insufficient direction and support from seasoned educators may make it difficult for student instructors to remain inspired and involved.

- **Evaluation and Assessment**

Effective procedures for assessment and evaluation are often difficult for student instructors to comprehend and put into practice. It could be difficult for them to create unbiased and trustworthy procedures for evaluating student learning and giving helpful criticism.

- **Opportunities for Professional Development:**

Teachers must engage in ongoing professional development if they are to advance and become better educators. However, there might not be as many opportunities for high-quality professional development available to student teachers in India, which could result in a stalling of their career advancement.

- **Policy Reforms and Changes:**

India's educational environment is always changing due to the regular implementation of new policies. It could be difficult for student instructors to stay on top of these changes and comprehend how they affect their professional obligations and methods of instruction.

### **Conclusion:**

The analysis shown above yields some intriguing results, indicating that students naturally prefer to view certain aspects of their training more intrinsically and possibly more fascinating than others. The findings showed that students regularly believe certain factors to be more significant than others. While some activities were deemed rather insignificant in all three dimensions, others were viewed as essential to both academic success and personal wellbeing. However, some were considered to be more crucial to the study's success or overall well-being than others. As we stated at the beginning of this paper, the difficulties associated with providing facilities, resources, and supports for teachers and students at a local educational institution cannot be the sole reason why teaching and learning are not effective.

In the field of higher education students are also accountable to themselves for the high caliber of education they should receive. The student has a major responsibility to participate in the establishment and upkeep of an efficient teaching and learning environment. They must also contribute their degree of desire, engagement, dedication, efforts, and time dedicated to the institution and the learning process. Students who want to succeed academically and financially after completing their higher education must exhibit professionalism, devotion, responsibility, and a commitment to study and training.

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