

## Self-Esteem among Pre-service Teachers in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

Dr. Parthiban G.<sup>1\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the level of self-esteem among B.Ed. students in Tamil Nadu and examines how demographic variables influence their self-perception. Self-esteem, a critical psychological attribute, directly impacts professional identity, confidence, and effectiveness in teaching. A sample of 300 pre-service teachers was selected through stratified random sampling from various government, aided, and private institutions. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) was employed to assess self-worth, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA. The results revealed that a majority of students (44%) exhibited moderate levels of self-esteem, with nearly equal proportions displaying low (28.7%) and high (27.3%) self-esteem. Significant differences were observed based on gender and family income. Male students and those from higher-income families scored higher in self-esteem compared to their counterparts. However, no significant differences were found with respect to number of siblings or type of family. The findings highlight the importance of integrating psychological support within teacher education programs, particularly for economically disadvantaged students. Recommendations include incorporating self-development modules, gender-responsive mentorship, and socio-emotional learning practices. The study aligns with the goals of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes holistic teacher development. By identifying key factors influencing self-esteem, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of pre-service teacher preparation and provides insights for fostering emotionally resilient, confident, and reflective future educators.

**Keywords:** *Self-Esteem, Pre-service Teachers, B.Ed. Students, Teacher Education, Gender, Family Income, Tamil Nadu*

In the modern era of education, teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but facilitators of holistic student development. Their role encompasses academic guidance, emotional support, and social modeling. As such, the personal and professional attributes of teachers—especially those being trained for the profession—are under increasing scrutiny. One critical psychological factor that significantly impacts teaching effectiveness, professional identity, and interpersonal dynamics in the classroom is self-esteem.

<sup>1</sup>Principal, Sri K. Ramachandra Naidu College of Education, Sankarankovil, Tenkasi District, Tamilnadu.

\*Corresponding Author

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## Self-Esteem among Pre-service Teachers in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

Self-esteem is broadly understood as a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. It reflects how individuals perceive themselves, their abilities, and their social relevance. High self-esteem is typically associated with confidence, self-respect, and motivation, whereas low self-esteem can lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and passivity. In the context of teacher education, self-esteem plays a foundational role. Pre-service teachers who possess healthy self-esteem are more likely to engage confidently with students, manage classrooms effectively, take initiative in pedagogical innovation, and adapt to educational challenges. In contrast, those with poor self-esteem may hesitate to assert themselves, struggle with self-doubt, and face greater emotional strain in the teaching process.

The importance of self-esteem is magnified during the teacher training phase, where individuals transition from learners to potential educators. Pre-service teachers are not only acquiring pedagogical skills but are also developing their professional identity. Their experiences in teacher education programs—interactions with faculty, peer dynamics, institutional culture, and academic pressures—profoundly influence their self-concept. Moreover, their background characteristics such as gender, family support, and socio-economic status also shape their confidence and sense of self-worth.

In India, teacher education—especially the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program—serves as a key gateway to entering the teaching profession. In states like Tamil Nadu, where teacher education is offered across a wide spectrum of institutions (aided, government, and self-financing), the diversity in student demographics is particularly pronounced. Students from rural and urban regions, economically weaker sections, and various linguistic and cultural backgrounds converge in these programs. This diversity not only enriches the learning environment but also introduces significant variations in psychological attributes, including self-esteem.

While considerable research exists on the academic performance and pedagogical skills of B.Ed. students, there is limited empirical literature exploring their psychological well-being, particularly in the Indian context. Self-esteem, as a personal resource, often remains underexamined in teacher education programs, which tend to emphasize curricular outcomes and teaching competencies over emotional preparedness. However, with the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, there is a renewed emphasis on developing socially and emotionally competent educators. This makes it imperative to understand and support the internal psychological readiness of pre-service teachers.

This study, therefore, aims to examine the levels of self-esteem among B.Ed. students in Tamil Nadu, and analyze how it varies across demographic categories such as gender, type of institution, and parental background. By generating data-driven insights, the study seeks to inform curriculum development, institutional practices, and mental health interventions in teacher education programs. The overarching goal is to contribute to the preparation of resilient, confident, and reflective future educators who can meet the diverse and dynamic needs of the Indian education system.

### ***Need and Importance of the Study***

The teaching profession demands much more than subject knowledge or instructional technique. A teacher's effectiveness is deeply influenced by their psychological orientation—especially their self-concept, motivation, and emotional stability. Among these, self-esteem is a particularly significant determinant. It shapes how teachers perceive their

## Self-Esteem among Pre-service Teachers in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

capabilities, handle challenges, interact with students, and respond to criticism or failure. For pre-service teachers, who are at a crucial stage of developing their professional identity, cultivating healthy self-esteem is not only desirable but essential.

The transition from being a student to becoming a teacher involves a shift in responsibilities, expectations, and self-perception. During this formative period, self-esteem functions as a core psychological asset that supports confidence, decision-making, and interpersonal communication. Trainees with low self-esteem may struggle with classroom control, doubt their ability to handle learners with diverse needs, or withdraw from opportunities for professional development. In contrast, those with high self-esteem are more likely to innovate, lead, and persevere in the face of challenges.

In the Indian context, and particularly in Tamil Nadu, pre-service teachers come from highly diverse backgrounds. Many are first-generation graduates, others may be from rural areas with limited exposure to technology or formal schooling systems. Students enrolled in self-financing institutions often face greater economic constraints, limited counselling support, and high competition. These external factors interact with internal perceptions of self-worth and can lead to significant differences in self-esteem levels. Moreover, gender norms, parental education, and social expectations can further affect how teacher trainees view themselves and their potential.

Despite its relevance, self-esteem is rarely addressed systematically in B.Ed. curricula. Teacher education programs typically focus on pedagogical theory, classroom management, educational psychology, and practicum experiences. Few programs include explicit components on emotional intelligence, self-awareness, or psychological well-being. This creates a gap between what pre-service teachers are expected to perform in schools and the emotional resources they are equipped with.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 calls for reforms that emphasize the holistic development of teachers, including social-emotional learning. This vision cannot be realized without understanding the baseline psychological state of teacher trainees. Studying self-esteem provides a useful window into this readiness. It helps identify vulnerable groups, informs interventions, and offers actionable insights for teacher educators and policymakers. Thus, the present study is not only timely but also necessary for enhancing the quality of teacher education. By identifying patterns of self-esteem among B.Ed. students in Tamil Nadu, the study offers a foundation for building resilient, confident, and emotionally prepared future educators.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

While teacher education programs emphasize pedagogical and instructional training, they often overlook the psychological readiness of pre-service teachers—particularly in relation to self-esteem. Self-esteem significantly influences a teacher's confidence, motivation, and ability to manage classroom dynamics. Pre-service teachers with low self-esteem may face difficulties in adapting to the teaching profession and fulfilling its multifaceted demands.

In Tamil Nadu, B.Ed. programs attract students from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds. This diversity brings variation in emotional preparedness, shaped by factors such as gender, parental education, and type of institution. However, empirical research focusing on the self-esteem of B.Ed. students in this regional context remains limited.

## Self-Esteem among Pre-service Teachers in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

Understanding the self-esteem levels of future teachers is essential, especially in light of national education reforms that emphasize holistic teacher development. This study addresses the gap by assessing self-esteem among pre-service teachers in Tamil Nadu and analyzing its association with key demographic factors, offering insights for strengthening teacher education practices.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-esteem is generally defined as an individual's overall evaluation of their own worth. It encompasses beliefs (such as "I am capable") and emotions (like pride or shame) that reflect how people perceive themselves. According to Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem reflects a global sense of self-acceptance and personal value. High self-esteem is associated with confidence, emotional resilience, and positive social behavior, while low self-esteem is often linked to anxiety, depression, and academic underachievement.

In educational settings, self-esteem is considered a foundational element in students' personal development and learning capacity. For future educators, self-esteem influences not just academic performance but also their future role in managing classrooms, handling stress, and building professional relationships.

Teacher trainees face unique psychological challenges as they transition from learners to educators. During this phase, their self-perception plays a crucial role in shaping their teaching identity and effectiveness. According to Yilmaz and Yavuz (2019), pre-service teachers with high self-esteem are more likely to integrate digital tools confidently, adapt to classroom demands, and establish better relationships with students.

In the Indian context, Kumar and Priya (2021) explored the relationship between academic motivation and self-esteem among teacher trainees and found a strong positive correlation. Pre-service teachers with higher self-esteem were more motivated, self-regulated, and professionally engaged. Similarly, Meena and Yadav (2020) found that family environment, institutional support, and self-efficacy were critical predictors of self-esteem in teacher education.

Gender differences have also been widely studied. Several researchers have reported that female teacher trainees tend to exhibit higher levels of emotional awareness and self-regulation, which can contribute to higher self-esteem. However, others have suggested that societal expectations and traditional gender roles may lead to suppressed self-worth among women, especially in patriarchal settings.

Socio-economic status, parental education, and occupational background are commonly cited as influencing factors in the development of self-esteem. Narayan and Reddy (2018) observed that pre-service teachers from urban or better-educated families reported higher self-esteem compared to those from rural or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Parental involvement and encouragement were also identified as significant contributors.

Furthermore, the type of institution—government, aided, or self-financing—has been found to influence self-esteem due to varying levels of support, infrastructure, and student-teacher interaction. Anderson (2014) noted that institutional climate and access to mentoring opportunities were positively associated with the psychological well-being of teacher trainees.

## Self-Esteem among Pre-service Teachers in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

### *Research Gaps*

Despite the extensive literature on self-esteem in general education, few studies have specifically examined its role in teacher education programs in India. Even fewer studies have explored self-esteem among B.Ed. students in Tamil Nadu, a state with significant diversity in institutional types, student backgrounds, and educational practices.

Additionally, while several studies have examined gender or academic factors, there is limited research that takes a multidimensional approach, analyzing the combined influence of gender, institutional type, and parental background on self-esteem. Most existing studies also adopt a surface-level treatment of self-esteem without exploring its educational implications for teacher preparation.

### *Objectives of the Study*

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To assess the overall level of self-esteem among B.Ed. students in Tamil Nadu.
2. To examine whether there are significant differences in self-esteem among B.Ed. students based on the following demographic variables:
  - Gender
  - Number of siblings
  - Type of family (nuclear/joint)
  - Family income

### *Hypotheses of the Study*

To test the research objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. The level of self-esteem among B.Ed. students is moderate in nature.
2. There is no significant difference in self-esteem among B.Ed. students with respect to:
  - Gender
  - Number of siblings
  - Type of family
  - Family income

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Design of the Study*

The present investigation employed the survey method, which is most appropriate for studies that aim to collect data from a defined population and describe existing conditions or relationships. This method was chosen to systematically assess the level of self-esteem among B.Ed. students and examine how it varies across selected demographic variables.

### *Sample and Sampling Technique*

A sample of 300 B.Ed. students was selected from various teacher education institutions in Tamil Nadu. The sampling was conducted using the stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation of students from different institutional types. The strata were categorized into government, government-aided, and self-financing (private) colleges. From each stratum, students were randomly selected, considering proportional representation, to form a balanced and diverse sample reflective of the region's educational demographics.

## Self-Esteem among Pre-service Teachers in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

The sample included both male and female students, as well as students from different family structures, income levels, and educational backgrounds. This diversity enabled the study to explore the influence of various demographic variables on self-esteem.

### *Tool Used*

To measure the self-esteem levels of the students, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), developed by Dr. Morris Rosenberg (1965) of the University of Maryland, was used. The scale comprises 10 items, with responses recorded on a four-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” The scale includes both positively and negatively worded statements and is widely recognized for its simplicity, reliability, and validity in assessing global self-worth.

### **Reliability and Validity of the Tool**

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale used in this study has been extensively tested for its psychometric properties. In the present investigation, the reliability coefficient of the tool, determined through the Split-Half method, was found to be 0.80, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The content validity of the scale was also established, with a validity coefficient of 0.89, affirming that the tool is both accurate and appropriate for measuring self-esteem among pre-service teachers.

### *Statistical Techniques Used*

Data analysis was carried out using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The descriptive statistics included mean and standard deviation, which were used to summarize the levels of self-esteem among the respondents. To test the formulated hypotheses, appropriate inferential techniques were applied:

- t-test was used to compare the means between two groups (e.g., gender, type of family)
- Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences across more than two groups (e.g., family income, number of siblings)

All statistical analyses were conducted at a 5% level of significance to determine the presence of meaningful differences between groups.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### *Overall Level of Self-Esteem Among B.Ed. Students*

To assess the overall level of self-esteem among B.Ed. students, the responses were classified into three categories: low, moderate, and high self-esteem. The following table presents the frequency and percentage distribution of students across these levels.

*Table 1: Distribution of B.Ed. Students Based on Self-Esteem Levels*

Self-Esteem Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	86	28.7%
Moderate	132	44.0%
High	82	27.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100%</b>

As shown in Table 1, the majority of students (44%) fall under the moderate level of self-esteem, followed by 28.7% with low self-esteem and 27.3% with high self-esteem. This

## Self-Esteem among Pre-service Teachers in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

distribution suggests that while most pre-service teachers in the sample possess an average sense of self-worth, a substantial proportion still report either low or high levels.

These findings support the first hypothesis of the study, which proposed that the level of self-esteem among B.Ed. students is moderate in nature. The result is consistent with earlier research by Kumar and Priya (2021), who found that moderate self-esteem is common among teacher trainees, especially in diverse educational settings where institutional and socio-cultural pressures shape personal perception.

The presence of nearly 29% of students with low self-esteem is noteworthy and calls for attention from teacher education institutions. Low self-esteem at the pre-service level can hinder the development of a confident teaching identity, reduce classroom effectiveness, and increase vulnerability to stress and burnout. On the other hand, the group with high self-esteem (27.3%) reflects a promising segment of students who may demonstrate leadership, initiative, and resilience in their future teaching roles.

The overall result emphasizes the need for teacher education programs to address not only academic competence but also psychological readiness. Institutions should consider integrating self-development and confidence-building modules into their curriculum to uplift those with lower self-perception and help all students reach their full potential as future educators.

### Self-Esteem Based on Gender

To examine whether gender plays a role in the self-esteem levels of B.Ed. students, a **t-test** was conducted to compare the mean scores between male and female respondents. The results are presented in the table below.

**Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-value of Self-Esteem Based on Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Level of Significance
Male	96	31.41	3.99	2.496	0.01 (Significant)
Female	204	30.10	4.35		

As shown in Table 2, the mean self-esteem score of male students ( $M = 31.41$ ) is significantly higher than that of female students ( $M = 30.10$ ). The calculated t-value (2.496) exceeds the critical value at the 0.01 level of significance, indicating that the difference is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in self-esteem based on gender is rejected.

This finding suggests that gender is a significant factor influencing self-esteem among pre-service teachers in the sample. The result aligns with the findings of Yılmaz and Yavuz (2019), who noted that male students often exhibit slightly higher self-esteem in educational settings, possibly due to social expectations, confidence in public settings, or self-perception shaped by cultural norms.

However, the result should also be interpreted cautiously. While male students scored higher, the difference is not drastic. The relatively close mean scores indicate that both genders share similar levels of self-esteem, with only slight variation. Moreover, external factors such as institutional culture, classroom dynamics, and peer support may mediate these gender-based differences.

## Self-Esteem among Pre-service Teachers in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

The findings highlight the importance of gender-sensitive counselling and self-development programs in teacher education institutions. Female trainees, in particular, may benefit from confidence-building workshops and mentorship opportunities that foster leadership, assertiveness, and professional identity formation.

### *Self-Esteem Based on Number of Siblings*

To determine whether the number of siblings influences the self-esteem of B.Ed. students, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The results are presented below.

**Table 3: ANOVA Results on Self-Esteem Based on Number of Siblings**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Significance
Between Groups	100.77	4	20.15	1.106	Not Significant
Within Groups	5356.15	295	18.22		
Total	5456.92	299			

As evident from Table 3, the calculated F-value (1.106) is lower than the critical value at the 5% level of significance. This indicates that the difference in mean self-esteem scores across students with different numbers of siblings is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

This result suggests that the number of siblings a student has does not significantly influence their self-esteem in the context of this study. Whether a student is an only child or part of a larger family, the level of self-worth and self-perception appears to remain relatively stable. This finding is consistent with earlier research (e.g., Narayan & Reddy, 2018), which observed that sibling dynamics may play a role in social development but do not necessarily have a direct impact on self-esteem unless influenced by broader family functioning, parental attention, or birth order roles.

From an educational standpoint, this finding reinforces the idea that individual psychological development is influenced more by the quality of relationships and family support than by the number of siblings alone. Teacher education institutions may, therefore, focus more on nurturing peer connections, mentorship, and self-reflection rather than targeting family size as a factor.

### *Self-Esteem Based on Type of Family*

To explore whether the type of family—nuclear or joint—has any influence on the self-esteem of B.Ed. students, an independent samples t-test was performed. The findings are presented in the table below.

**Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-value of Self-Esteem Based on Family Type**

Family Type	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Level of Significance
Nuclear	217	30.68	4.34	1.205	Not Significant (NS)
Joint	82	30.01	4.04		

As shown in Table 4, the mean self-esteem score of students from nuclear families ( $M = 30.68$ ) is slightly higher than those from joint families ( $M = 30.01$ ). However, the calculated t-value (1.205) is below the critical threshold at the 5% level of significance, indicating that the difference is not statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

## Self-Esteem among Pre-service Teachers in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

This result implies that the structure of the family unit alone does not significantly impact the self-esteem of pre-service teachers in this sample. While family environments undoubtedly shape emotional development, the distinction between nuclear and joint setups may not, by itself, be a determining factor for self-worth. The quality of familial relationships, parental support, and emotional climate within the family may play a more vital role than the structural format.

These findings align with prior literature suggesting that emotional bonding and individual autonomy within the family—regardless of its type—are stronger predictors of self-esteem than whether the family is joint or nuclear (Yadav & Meena, 2020). For teacher education programs, this indicates that interventions aimed at building self-confidence and emotional well-being should not assume vulnerability based solely on family type.

### *Self-Esteem Based on Family Income*

To determine whether family income influences the self-esteem of B.Ed. students, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: ANOVA Results on Self-Esteem Based on Family Income**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Level of Significance
Between Groups	180.10	2	90.05	5.068	0.01 (Significant)
Within Groups	5276.82	297	17.77		
Total	5456.92	299			

As shown in Table 5, the calculated F-value (5.068) is significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in self-esteem among students based on their family income. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

To identify the specific income groups where the differences lie, post hoc comparisons were made using t-tests, as presented in Table 5(a).

**Table 5(a): t-test Comparisons of Self-Esteem Based on Family Income**

Income Group	N	Mean	S.D.	Comparison	t-value	Significance
Below ₹25,000	136	30.38	4.276	vs ₹25,000–₹75,000	0.646	Not Significant
₹25,000–₹75,000	124	30.04	4.249			
Below ₹25,000	136	30.38	4.276	vs Above ₹75,000	2.743	<b>Significant (0.01)</b>
₹25,000–₹75,000	124	30.04	4.249	vs Above ₹75,000	3.183	<b>Significant (0.01)</b>
Above ₹75,000	40	32.45	3.883			

The results reveal that students from families with income above ₹75,000 have significantly higher self-esteem (Mean = 32.45) than those from lower-income brackets. However, no significant difference was found between students in the below ₹25,000 and ₹25,000–₹75,000 income groups.

These findings highlight the positive relationship between socio-economic status and self-esteem, consistent with previous research (Yadav & Meena, 2020). Higher income levels

## Self-Esteem among Pre-service Teachers in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

likely provide access to better educational resources, more parental support, and less financial stress—all of which can enhance a student's confidence and self-worth.

From an educational perspective, this underscores the need for targeted psychological support for students from lower-income families. Institutions may consider offering mentorship, peer support programs, and financial counselling to ensure that economic disadvantage does not translate into diminished self-perception and lower professional confidence.

### *Major Findings*

Based on the analysis of data collected from 300 B.Ed. students in Tamil Nadu, the following key findings were observed:

- 1. Overall Level of Self-Esteem:** A majority of B.Ed. students (44%) exhibited moderate levels of self-esteem, while 28.7% showed low self-esteem and 27.3% reported high self-esteem. This supports the hypothesis that the self-esteem of pre-service teachers is generally moderate in nature.
- 2. Gender Differences:** A significant difference in self-esteem was found between male and female students. Male students scored higher on average than their female counterparts, indicating that gender influences self-esteem levels among pre-service teachers.
- 3. Number of Siblings:** No statistically significant difference was found in self-esteem based on the number of siblings. This suggests that family size does not have a direct effect on students' self-perception in this context.
- 4. Type of Family:** Students from nuclear and joint families did not differ significantly in their self-esteem scores. Thus, family structure alone does not appear to be a determining factor in self-esteem levels among B.Ed. students.
- 5. Family Income:** A statistically significant difference was observed in self-esteem based on family income. Students from families earning above ₹75,000 per month had significantly higher self-esteem compared to those from lower-income groups. However, no significant difference was observed between students from the lowest two income brackets.

These findings collectively highlight the role of gender and socio-economic background, particularly income, in shaping the psychological self-worth of pre-service teachers in Tamil Nadu.

### *Educational Implications*

The findings of this study hold several important implications for teacher education institutions, curriculum developers, and policy makers concerned with the holistic development of pre-service teachers.

- 1. Integration of Self-Development Modules:** Since the majority of B.Ed. students reported only moderate levels of self-esteem, and nearly 29% exhibited low self-esteem, it is essential for teacher education programs to incorporate self-awareness and self-confidence building sessions. These can include activities such as guided reflections, peer support groups, life skills training, and personal development workshops.
- 2. Gender-Sensitive Approaches:** The significant difference observed between male and female students suggests the need for gender-responsive counselling and mentorship programs. Female teacher trainees, in particular, may benefit from targeted interventions that boost professional confidence and leadership skills.

- 3. Support for Economically Disadvantaged Students:** Family income was found to be a strong determinant of self-esteem. Students from lower-income families may lack access to learning resources, emotional support, or technological exposure. Institutions should consider offering scholarships, financial guidance, and inclusive participation opportunities to reduce psychological and academic disparities.
- 4. Equity-Oriented Institutional Practices:** Though type of family and number of siblings were not statistically significant factors, teacher education institutions should still recognize the diversity of student backgrounds. Building inclusive, non-judgmental learning environments that encourage student voice and psychological safety can help all learners thrive.
- 5. Faculty Sensitization and Role Modelling:** Teacher educators play a critical role in shaping the mindset of trainees. Faculty should be sensitized to the emotional and psychological needs of students, and trained to offer constructive feedback, recognize signs of low self-worth, and foster positive interpersonal relationships in the classroom.
- 6. Alignment with NEP 2020 Goals:** The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes holistic teacher development, including emotional well-being. The results of this study support the inclusion of social-emotional learning (SEL) principles in pre-service teacher curricula to ensure the development of confident, resilient, and reflective educators.

### ***Suggestions for Further Research***

While the present study provides meaningful insights into self-esteem among B.Ed. students in Tamil Nadu, it also opens avenues for further exploration. The following suggestions are proposed to guide future research:

- 1. Wider Geographical Scope:** This study was limited to students from the Vellore district. Future studies could be conducted across multiple districts or states to compare self-esteem patterns and examine regional differences among pre-service teachers in India.
- 2. Longitudinal Studies:** Self-esteem is not static and may evolve over time. Longitudinal research tracking pre-service teachers throughout their training and into their early teaching careers would help in understanding how self-esteem develops in relation to practical teaching experience and professional exposure.
- 3. Qualitative Exploration:** While this study used a quantitative survey method, qualitative approaches such as interviews, case studies, and focus group discussions can provide deeper insight into the lived experiences behind low or high self-esteem. These methods could explore cultural beliefs, identity formation, and institutional influences.
- 4. Comparison Across Courses:** Future research could compare self-esteem levels of B.Ed. students with those in other professional programs (e.g., nursing, engineering, law) to determine whether teacher training involves unique psychological demands.
- 5. Role of Digital and Social Media:** In today's connected world, digital exposure can affect self-esteem. Investigating how social media use, online learning platforms, or digital feedback influence self-perception among pre-service teachers could offer relevant insights.
- 6. Intervention-Based Studies:** Experimental research testing the impact of specific interventions—such as mindfulness training, mentoring, or confidence-building workshops—on the self-esteem of teacher trainees can inform institutional policy and practice.

## CONCLUSION

Self-esteem plays a vital role in the development of pre-service teachers, shaping their professional identity, classroom behavior, and overall readiness to enter the teaching profession. This empirical study examined the self-esteem levels of B.Ed. students in Tamil Nadu and explored how various demographic factors—such as gender, family structure, number of siblings, and family income—affect their self-perception.

The findings reveal that most students exhibit moderate levels of self-esteem, with statistically significant differences observed across gender and family income. Male students and those from higher-income families tended to demonstrate higher self-worth, while factors such as number of siblings and type of family showed no significant influence. These insights underscore the need for emotional and psychological support systems within teacher education institutions, especially for students from economically disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

In light of India's evolving educational priorities, especially under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, this study reinforces the importance of incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL) and self-development programs in teacher training curricula. As future educators, B.Ed. students must not only be knowledgeable but also self-aware, confident, and emotionally resilient.

By acknowledging and addressing the psychological dimensions of teacher education—such as self-esteem—institutions can play a transformative role in preparing teachers who are not only professionally competent but also mentally strong and empathetic. These qualities are essential in fostering inclusive, engaging, and impactful learning environments for the next generation of learners.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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