

## Addressing Educational Injustice through Collective Teacher Professional Development

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**Abstract :** Objectives: Educational inequality persists between China's ethnic minority regions and the mainland. The key to rectifying this disparity lies in enhancing the quality of educators. This paper delves into the Chinese government's innovative policy, "Group Educators Supporting Tibet" (GEST), designed to bridge the shortage of high-quality teachers in Tibet, a representative underprivileged ethnic minority area. GEST aims to foster collective action by networking provincial expert educators with Tibetan counterparts and collaborating between supporting provincial educational entities and Tibetan education entities. Theoretical Framework: The unequal distribution of social capital contributes significantly to the educational gap between ethnic minority areas and other regions in China. Within the framework of social network theory, motivated GEST educators take action to foster resources and relationships. This study captures grassroots perspectives to outline how social networking contributes to the policy objective of enhancing Tibetan teachers' quality and eradicating educational injustice. Methodology: A sequential mixed-methods approach was adopted to scrutinize policy impacts from the vantage point of social networking. Quantitative research involved surveys for GEST and Tibetan teachers, exploring demographics, perceptions of policy significance, motivations, actions, and networking habits. Qualitative research included focus group interviews with GEST educators, local teachers, and students from program schools. The findings were meticulously analyzed to provide comprehensive insights into stakeholders' experiences and the impacts of the GEST policy. Key Findings: The policy empowers individuals to impact Tibetan education significantly. Motivated GEST educators with prior educational support experiences contribute to its success. Supported by a collective -school, city, province, and government- the new social structure fosters higher efficiency. GEST's approach surpasses conventional methods. The individual, backed by educators, realizes the potential of transformative class design. Collective activities -pedagogy research, teaching, mentoring, training, and partnerships- equip Tibetan teachers, enhancing educational quality and equity. This collaborative effort establishes a robust foundation for the policy's success, emphasizing the collective impact on Tibetan education. Contributions: This study contributes to international policy studies focused on educational equity through collective teacher action. Using a mixed-methods approach and guided by social networking theory, it accentuates stakeholders' perspectives, elucidating the genuine impacts of the GEST policy. The study underscores the advancement of social networking, the reinforcement of local teacher quality, and the transformative potential of cultivating a more equitable and adept teaching workforce in Tibet. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research Directions: While the study emphasizes the positive impacts of motivated GEST educators, there might be aspects or challenges not fully explored. A more comprehensive understanding of potential drawbacks or obstacles would provide a more balanced view. For future studies, investigating the long-term impact of the GEST policy on educational quality could provide insights into the sustainability of the improvements observed. Also, understanding the perspectives of Tibetan teachers who may not have directly benefited from GEST could reveal potential disparities in policy implementation.

**Keywords :** teacher development, social networking, teacher quality, mixed research method

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