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INTEGRATED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME (ITEP): THE PARADIGM SHIFT OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Education can be considered as a cornerstone of a progressive nation. It empowers people with knowledge, values and skills that contribute meaningfully towards the growth of a country and teachers are it's the guiding force. Teachers stand as one of the most essential component of education. Education has shifted from conventional way of teaching to technology-enhanced learning to make learning more accessible and interactive and for ensuring it, a dynamic teacher education programme is crucial. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 acknowledges teachers as prime element of quality education and places strong emphasis on teacher education programme. It recommended a four year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) to ensure professionally skilled and well-qualified. The Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) is a four year under graduate programme that prepares teachers for both primary and secondary levels. In a single programme, it ingrates practical training, pedagogy and disciplinary knowledge and provides a holistic training to teacher trainees. The researcher triers to explore the potential opportunities and future prospects of ITEP in redefining teacher education in India and identifies major issues related to it and also provides some suggestive measures regarding it. The researcher has used exploratory approach to collect information from different articles and government documents sourced from various journals and books.

Keywords: ITEP, Paradigm-Shift, Teacher Education, NEP2020, Pedagogical practice.

INTRODUCTION

For the advancement and prosperity of a nation, education is essential as it produces human capital, fosters social development and promotes economic growth. Education empowers individuals with proper

information, knowledge, values and skills that enable them to make significant contribution towards society. Education makes individual more informed, accountable and more prepared to make choices that encourages social harmony and strengthen democracy. It promotes creativity, minimizes poverty and socio-economic disparities by providing opportunities for all. So, education can be considered as the foundation of a nation on which a progressive, self-reliant and strong country is built. However quality of teacher is highly linked with the quality of an education system as they are one of the essential components of education. The contribution of teachers towards the development of a society is immense as they equip young minds with appropriate knowledge, information, values, morality, ethics and accountability, so that they can contribute effectively towards society. Therefore, the professional growth and development of a teacher is equally essential for ensuring excellence in education. This is where programmes for teacher education are crucial. Teacher Education can be considered as the systematic process that prepares teacher trainees for teaching profession and improves professional competencies of the teachers already are in teaching services. In order to meet the evolving needs and demands of the students as well as society, teacher education programmes prepares teachers with appropriate knowledge and information, skills, pedagogical strategies and values required for effective teaching practice.

Teacher education can be broadly classified into two types: Pre-Service Teacher Education and In-Service Teacher Education. Pre-Service Teacher Education refers to the training provided to the students prior to their entry into the teaching profession. The main purpose is to equip teacher trainees with the knowledge about the subject matter and child psychology, classroom management techniques and enhance pedagogical skills before entering the teaching profession. On the other hand, In-Service Teacher Education is for teachers who are already in the teaching profession employed as teachers and its purpose is to enhance professional growth of teachers by keeping them up to date, improving their teaching strategies, and assisting them in adapting to emerging educational trends and technologies. In-Service teacher education can be delivered through different programs; refresher courses, workshops, orientation programs, online training programmes and seminars. This can be considered as continuous learning process that helps to kept teachers effective and competent throughout their careers.

Since India gained its independence, various commissions and committees have underscored the importance of teacher education to ensure quality of education. The University Education Commission (1948-49) recommended teacher preparation for higher education and emphasised the necessity of trained teachers. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) emphasised to improve the quality of secondary teachers and recommended both theoretical and practical training for them. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) provided a comprehensive framework for teacher education and also recommended to establishment of teacher training institutions, to focus on educational psychology and making teacher education more relevant and practical. National Commission on Teachers (1983-85) recommended improving professional status of teachers through merit basis recruitment and continuous training. Significant reforms has introduced in educational system of India through National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 that emphasised on improving of teacher education and equip teachers with 21st century skills.

Incorporating technology in pedagogic practices, equipping teachers with the knowledge of competencybased education and digital education and providing continuous professional training to teachers is the main focus of NEP2020 regarding teacher education. Introducing a four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) is one of the major reforms of NEP 2020. It emphasises on providing integrated, holistic and rigorous teacher education. This new teacher education programme replaces the older one where students have to pursue a separate 2 years course called B.Ed. after completion of graduation. According to NEP 2020, it will be compulsory for all teachers to have this four years integrated degree by 2030. Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) is a four year multidisciplinary integrated undergraduate programme that attempts to offer holistic training to both primary and secondary level teachers. In a single course, it includes pedagogical knowledge, disciplinary knowledge and practical training that ensure a strong base for both pedagogic practice and academic competency. This course intends to prepare teachers for modern classrooms by focusing on equipping teachers with 21st century skills such as creative thinking, critical thinking, digital literacy and effective communication skill. To strengthen the overall system of education ITEP attempts to produce teachers who are reflective, skilled and competitive on global scale. In this paper the researcher has tried to explore the potential opportunities and future prospects of ITEP in redefining teacher education in India and identifying key challenges and suggest some measures for successful implementation of ITEP. As recommended by NEP2020 ITEP is already introduced in different colleges and universities of India. This study has attempted explores opportunities and challenges regarding ITEP and providing some suggestive measures for its effective implementations.

Rationale of the Study

Teachers can be considered as key component of a nation as they empower young minds to lead, innovate and contribute meaningfully toward society. Therefore, to achieve the goals of a progressive nation, well-equipped teachers are crucial. By acknowledging the necessity of dynamic and well-prepared teachers NEP 2020 has introduced a four-year comprehensive Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP). It incorporates both theoretical as well as practical knowledge that required in an effective teaching - learning process. This course intends to provide knowledge related to the subject matter, pedagogy and practical classroom training within a single course. This study is significant as it highlights different potential opportunities of ITEP in redefining teacher education including fostering equity and inclusivity, technology integration in teacher education, provision of dual degree, focus on experiential learning, encouraging multidisciplinary approach, emphasis on early childhood education, continuous professional development (CPD) as well as various challenges regarding its implementation such as resource and infrastructure deficiencies, insufficiency of trained and qualified teaching personnel, shifting educational paradigms and faculty readiness, capacity building of teacher educators, lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, curriculum overload and misalignment, socio-economic barriers for aspiring teachers, digital divide and ICT Integration and recruitment uncertainty etc. It also provides some feasible solutions for its effective execution. Policymakers, stakeholders and teacher education institutions will gain valuable insights from this study that may assist them to strengthen teacher education system. The study has based on

secondary data that provides a detailed analysis integration of ITEP in Indian education system. Moreover, this study will help to design a strong and sustainable framework in improving teacher education that leads to enhance the quality of education in India.

Objectives of the study

- 1. To explore the potential opportunities and future prospects of ITEP in redefining teacher education in India.
- 2. To identify major issues and provide suggestive measures for successful implementation of ITEP.

Methodology

For this research paper, the researcher employed an exploratory approach to gather information. Data were sourced from a variety of research articles, academic journals, websites, policy documents and government reports.

Opportunities and future prospects of ITEP in redefining teacher education in India

The opportunities and future prospects of ITEP are discussed as:

Fostering Equity and Inclusivity:

The Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) offers a platform to tackle persistent inequalities in access to quality teacher training. According to **Chakraborty (2022)**, initiatives like scholarships and fee waivers play a crucial role in promoting inclusion by enabling students from marginalized backgrounds to participate in the program. Additionally, creating supportive academic environments and mentorship opportunities within ITEP can help ensure that all students, regardless of their background, thrive and succeed in their journey to becoming educators.

Technology Integration in Teacher Education:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the vital role of technology in transforming the teaching and learning experience. It promotes the integration of digital tools in teacher education to enhance the overall effectiveness of classroom instruction. NEP 2020 encourages teachers to familiarize themselves and their students with a wide range of digital resources. To support this vision, the policy proposes the establishment of the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), an autonomous body aimed at driving technological advancement in education. Teachers will receive training not only in proven pedagogical methods but also in the latest technological tools. Platforms like SWAYAM and DIKSHA will be further developed to offer standardized, accessible and efficient professional development opportunities for in-service teachers at colleges and universities, ultimately contributing to improved teaching quality and continuous learning. (Maseeh, 2023)

Provision of Dual Degree:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduces the provision of a dual major within the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP). It allows students to simultaneously earn a degree in BA, B.Sc., or B. Com along with a B.Ed. This innovative model is designed to enhance both academic

depth and pedagogical proficiency. By integrating subject-specific knowledge with professional teaching competencies, the dual degree framework promotes interdisciplinary learning and fosters the development of well-rounded educators. It offers a cohesive academic experience that not only saves time but also equips aspiring teachers with the necessary tools to connect content mastery with classroom practice.

Focus on Experiential Learning:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places strong focus on experiential learning, encouraging the use of hands-on, real-world experiences to enhance understanding of concepts. It recommends that teacher training programs incorporate experiential learning methods to help future educators adopt more dynamic and impactful teaching strategies. Through this approach, teachers can be equipped to use creative, interactive techniques that boost student engagement and promote active learning. It also enables teachers to better understand how to involve students meaningfully in the learning process, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes. (Irfan, et al. 2023)

Encouraging Multidisciplinary Approach:

The integration of multiple disciplines into teacher education is a crucial step in preparing educators to meet the diverse and ever-evolving demands of modern classrooms. By blending pedagogy with subjects from the arts, sciences, social sciences, and technology, future teachers develop a broader worldview along with essential skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. This multidisciplinary approach enables educators to connect academic content with real-life contexts, making learning more meaningful and engaging for students. Study highlights that this kind of interdisciplinary framework enables teachers to effectively address varied classroom needs while supporting the holistic development of learners (Kapadia, 2023).

Emphasis on Early Childhood Education:

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) holds a central place in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the critical importance of quality early learning to lay a strong foundation for lifelong education. NEP 2020 envisions universal access to ECCE for children aged 3 to 6 years, focusing on holistic development through play-based, activity-based, and inquiry-driven learning. The Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) aligns closely with these goals by preparing teachers with specialized skills and knowledge in ECCE, enabling them to effectively support young learners during these formative years. This alignment ensures that educators are equipped to foster early literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional growth, which are essential for reducing dropout rates and bridging learning gaps at the foundational level (Chakraborty, 2022).

Continuous Professional Development (CPD):

According to the NEP 2020, teachers will be consistently supported through structured opportunities for professional growth and exposure to current innovations in education. These opportunities will be delivered through multiple modalities, including workshops at various levels and online development modules. Digital platforms will facilitate the exchange of best practices among educators. Each teacher will be required to complete a minimum of 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development annually,

aligned with their professional interests. The CPD content will focus on contemporary pedagogies, particularly in foundational literacy and numeracy, formative and adaptive assessment, competency-based learning, and integrated approaches such as experiential, arts-based, sports-based, and storytelling-oriented pedagogies.

Issues related to the implementation of ITEP

Challenges or issues related to the implementation of ITEP are discussed as follows:

Resource and Infrastructure Deficiencies:

Many Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) in India face significant challenges related to inadequate infrastructure and resources. These deficiencies hinder the effective implementation of NEP 2020, which emphasizes the integration of technology and innovative teaching methods. A study by **Tasa**, et al. (2024) highlights those schools in Assam struggle with limited digital infrastructure, affecting the delivery of the curriculum and the adoption of ICT tools.

• Insufficiency of Trained and Qualified Teaching Personnel:

The shortage of qualified teacher educators poses a significant challenge to the successful implementation of ITEP. Bhowmik et al. (2022) conducted a study in West Bengal, revealing that while teachers are theoretically aware of NEP 2020's goals and methods, their application skills are not satisfactory. The study also found that teachers' knowledge about ICT-oriented pedagogy is limited, indicating a need for targeted professional development programs. (Bhowmik, et. al. 2022)

Shifting Educational Paradigms and Faculty Readiness:

Implementing NEP 2020 requires a cultural shift among educators and administrators, which can be challenging. Panicker (2020) explores the cultural challenges to implementing educational technology in India's higher education sector, emphasizing that factors such as uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and individualism/collectivism significantly impact the culture of technology use. These cultural dimensions can influence the readiness of faculty to adopt new pedagogical approaches and technologies. (Panicker, 2020)

Capacity Building of Teacher Educators:

Effective capacity building of teacher educators is crucial for the successful implementation of NEP 2020. Kumari and Pandey (2025) discuss the promise and pathways of NEP 2020 in enhancing teacher capacity, highlighting challenges such as infrastructure limitations, digital literacy gaps, and ensuring equitable access to training centers across regions. They suggest that addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies to build the capacity of teacher educators. (Kumari and Pandey, 2025)

Lack of Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:

The absence of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms impedes the assessment of ITEP's effectiveness. Jadhav (2022) discusses the issues and challenges of NEP 2020 implementation in teacher education, noting that the lack of structured monitoring systems makes it difficult to assess the impact

of reforms and make necessary adjustments. Implementing effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks is essential for ensuring the success of ITEP. (Jadhav, 2022)

Curriculum Overload and Misalignment:

The Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) introduces a comprehensive curriculum that seeks to integrate pedagogical theory, subject-matter expertise, educational psychology, and digital literacy within a condensed four-year structure. The shift to an interdisciplinary, flexible curriculum under NEP 2020 has led to curriculum overload and misalignment. Khatun and Deb (2023) analysed the vision and implementation challenges of NEP 2020 in teacher education, noting that the integration of various disciplines and competencies can lead to an overloaded curriculum that may not align with the practical needs of teacher education. Addressing curriculum overload and ensuring alignment with practical requirements is crucial for the effective implementation of ITEP. (Khatun & Deb, 2023)

Socio-Economic Barriers for Aspiring Teachers:

The extended duration and potential residential requirements of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) may unintentionally disadvantage students from economically and socially marginalized backgrounds. Constraints such as limited financial means, geographical inaccessibility, and familial responsibilities can hinder their ability to engage in full-time, long-duration programs. As a result, these structural barriers risk reducing socio-economic diversity within the teaching workforce thereby is undermining the policy's core goals of equity and inclusion in teacher education.

Digital Divide and ICT Integration:

The policy emphasis on integrating information and communication technology (ICT) into teacher education is a progressive step; however, its implementation remains uneven across regions. A significant proportion of teacher education institutions, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas, face constraints in digital infrastructure including access to reliable internet connectivity, hardware, and trained personnel. These disparities hinder the effective adoption of digital pedagogy and limit the ability of pre-service teachers to acquire essential technological competencies.

Recruitment Uncertainty:

The aim of Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) is to train and produce skilled educators. However, unclear policies on the prioritization of its graduates in recruitment process create uncertainty and may hinder enrollment of students (Mandal et al., 2025). Therefore, providing clear recruitment guidelines is crucial to increase enrollment in the program and ensure that training corresponds effectively with job prospects.

Suggestive measures for successful implementation of ITEP:

The researcher has provided some suggestive measures for successful implementation of ITEP:

Enhance Professional Development for Teacher Educators:

Teacher educators should be provided with continuous professional development to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to implement innovative, multidisciplinary pedagogies aligned with the goals of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP).

Establish Structured Mentorship for Pupil Teachers:

Structured mentorship initiatives can be introduced to guide teacher educators in managing the curriculum, emphasizing co-curricular engagement, and effectively integrating theoretical knowledge with practical classroom application.

Revise Recruitment Policies to Reflect ITEP Structure:

Recruitment guidelines should be updated to accommodate the multidisciplinary nature of ITEP, ensuring that flexibility in subject combinations does not disadvantage graduates. Collaboration between policymakers, academic institutions, and recruitment bodies is essential to ensure alignment between ITEP training and employment opportunities.

Promote Awareness and Advocacy for ITEP Graduates:

Targeted awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts should be undertaken to emphasize the relevance of updating recruitment criteria and to reduce systemic barriers faced by ITEP graduates entering the teaching profession.

• Invest in Infrastructure and Learning Resources:

Educational institutions must prioritize investment in physical infrastructure, digital tools, and instructional resources to support effective implementation of ITEP. Policymakers should allocate dedicated funding, while partnerships with private and philanthropic sectors can help bridge resource gaps.

Address Socio-Economic Barriers for Aspiring Teachers:

Special attention must be given to the socio-economic challenges faced by students from marginalized communities. The extended duration and possible residential nature of ITEP may act as barriers to access. Providing financial aid, scholarships, and flexible program models can help ensure equitable participation in teacher education.

Conclusion:

The Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), introduced under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a paradigmatic shift in the conceptualization and delivery of teacher education in India. By combining subject knowledge, teaching skills, and professional values into a single program, ITEP aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of teacher preparation. NEP 2020 presents a clear and forward-looking plan for improving the entire education system, and teacher education is a key part of this reform. ITEP reflects this vision by offering a modern, well-structured approach that prepares teachers to meet the current and future needs of the learners. For this policy to succeed, it is important that institutions, government bodies, and education professionals work together. In order to make this program effective continued support, proper funding, and careful implementation are necessary. Overall, ITEP provides a platform to reimagine Indian education by fostering a new generation of educators who can inspire, lead, and elevate learning outcomes across the nation. The success of this initiative will shape not just classrooms but the future of India itself.

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