



The 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme under NEP 2020: A Systematic Review of Implementation Concerns and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This A new and transformative approach in the field of teacher education is represented by the 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP). ITEP was created as an integrated program for the acquisition of subject knowledge, teaching methodology, and experiential learning in one cohesive program, as opposed to traditional programs that provide these three components separately. The success of ITEP, however, will depend on many different factors including physical resources, financial feasibility, restructuring the ITEP curriculum, professional development of faculty members and access to ITEP by marginalized groups. This systematic review of recent studies and policy documents will help identify significant barriers to ITEP's implementation and how they affect higher education. While findings from this study suggest that ITEP has the potential to create positive changes in the way teachers are educated through progressive pedagogical methods aligned with the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it will require implementing ITEP in stages, investing large sums of money into ITEP, developing strong curricula, increasing institutional capacity, and creating a collaborative system of governance to sustain ITEP as a model for teacher education in India today.

Keywords: Integrated Teacher Education, Teacher Training Reforms, Higher Education Policy, Implementation Barriers, Teacher Educator Preparation.

1. Introduction

This document The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents India's most comprehensive educational reform initiative in recent decades (Jayalakshmi, 2024; Singh & Yadav, 2024), establishing a vision for restructuring the education system to align with contemporary global standards and address the evolving competencies required for 21st-century learning. Within this framework, the 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) emerges as a pivotal intervention designed to reform the fundamental structure of teacher preparation in India (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2023).

Historically, teacher education in India has operated under a two-stage model wherein students complete a general bachelor's degree followed by a separate two-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme (Sharma & Kumar, 2022). This sequential approach has been extensively critiqued in academic and policy literature for perpetuating disciplinary fragmentation, creating curricular redundancy, and failing to establish coherent connections between subject knowledge and pedagogical theory (Rajput & Deshmukh, 2024). Consequently, graduates have often demonstrated insufficient integration of content expertise with practical teaching competencies.

In contrast, ITEP introduces an integrated four-year curriculum structure that simultaneously develops disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical expertise within a unified learning trajectory (Mandal & Mete, 2023). This approach is theoretically grounded in principles of integrated learning, experiential education, and professional development, positioning it as aligned with international best practices in teacher education (Meenakshi, 2023). The programme aspires to cultivate educators who are not merely content experts but reflective practitioners capable of designing learner-centered interventions, adapting to diverse classroom contexts, and fostering critical thinking and creativity among students.

However, despite the conceptual promise of ITEP, the transition from policy framework to institutional implementation encounters substantial systemic, financial, and organizational obstacles (Kaur, 2023; Manani & Kumar, 2023). This review synthesizes existing scholarship and policy documentation to critically examine the multidimensional challenges confronting ITEP implementation while identifying feasible solutions and strategic recommendations for stakeholders.

This review addresses the following primary research questions:

1. What are the primary institutional, financial, and curricular challenges to ITEP implementation?
2. How do these barriers interconnect and compound systemic inefficiencies in higher education?
3. What evidence-based strategies can mitigate these challenges and enhance implementation effectiveness?
4. How can ITEP be positioned as a sustainable model for teacher education in diverse institutional contexts across India?

Based on this question, the sole objective of the study was to critically analyze identify the concerns and challenges in implementing the 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme under NEP 2020

Methods And Material

This systematic review employs a qualitative synthesis approach integrating evidence from multiple **Source Categories:**

Policy documents: Official NEP 2020 framework, NCTE guidelines, and state-level education department directives.

Academic literature: Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and dissertations addressing NEP implementation and teacher education reform

Government reports: Ministry of Education publications, institutional readiness assessments, and implementation status reports

Institutional case studies: Documented experiences from colleges and universities piloting ITEP programmes.

Sources were evaluated for relevance to ITEP implementation challenges, methodological rigor, and temporal currency (prioritizing 2020-2025 publications). Data synthesis involved thematic coding to identify recurring barriers, interconnected challenges, and proposed solutions across sources. The analysis deliberately incorporates perspectives from diverse geographic regions, institutional types, and stakeholder groups to ensure representative coverage of implementation realities

Policy Vision and Objectives of ITEP

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a ground-breaking vision of the education system in India, and teacher education is given a particular focus as one of the foundations of future learning. The NEP emphasizes the use of a holistic and multi-disciplinary and learner-focused methodology to teaching, considering that teacher quality is directly related to education quality and student achievement (Ministry of Education, 2023). In the context, the 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) becomes one of the strategic interventions that can be implemented to overcome the weaknesses of the conventional two-year B.Ed. system.

Teacher education in India has traditionally been known to be disorganized with students taking a disciplinary bachelor's degree first and then taking a second degree in a B.Ed. programme to be trained as teachers. This has regularly contributed to content redundancy, uncoordinated learning and lack of emphasis of viable teaching skills (Manani & Kumar, 2023). The ITEP also aims to minimize redundancy and offer comprehensive professional training over the course of four years by combining the subject specialization and pedagogical training to instill the teaching profession as an alternative career choice (Rajput and Deshmukh, 2024).

The ITEP policy vision is based on several objectives. To start with, it should create teachers that are not just experts in the subject, but also able to implement pedagogical strategies in various classrooms. Second, it focuses on the overall growth of teachers, such as critical thinking, creativity, ethical knowledge, and inclusion. Third, it aims to streamline teacher education according to the international standards, so that the Indian teachers will be prepared to achieve the international quality and competency standards (NCTE, 2021). Based on the focus on multidisciplinary learning, NEP 2020 presupposes the presence of educators who will be able to combine the knowledge across different areas and make a significant contribution to the development of educational patterns.

Curriculum and Pedagogical Integration

The key feature of ITEP is the association of subjectivity with pedagogical training that distinguishes it and a traditional B.Ed. model. This will be geared towards provision of a holistic learning experience where theory and practice are interlaced throughout the programme. To situate the content knowledge and apply the new methods of teaching, Meenakshi (2023) emphasizes that the combination of pedagogy with the subject specialization is the factor to contribute to the better teacher preparedness.

ITEP curriculum is multidisciplinary and flexible in nature and would allow students to experience contacts with diverse subjects, and simultaneously acquire teaching competencies. Mandal and Mete (2023) argue that a whole holistic curriculum would enable the creation of reflective, flexible, and competent teachers. Teacher readiness and professional identity can be enhanced, they say, through the assistance of the integration of real classroom experience, perpetual evaluation, and project learning. In addition, cross-disciplinary learning is provoked and facilitates critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential in modern courses. Despite these advantages, scholars have observed that there are several issues with curriculum design and operations. According to Sharma and Kumar (2022), even nowadays, most institutions use old syllabi that cannot be applicable to modern pedagogical activity. The content knowledge as well as Pedagogy must be intertwined with the close sequencing of the courses, relation to the learning outcomes, and preparation of the faculty members who may also be not conversant with the interdisciplinary teaching techniques. Such challenges are worsened by opposition to curriculum change, lack of standardized directions and low quality of resources of learning by experience.

Institutional and Faculty Challenges

The implementation of ITEP can be successful with the presence of the qualified faculty and strong institutional support. Gupta (2024) and Kaur (2023) emphasize that there is a lack of teacher educators in many colleges and universities as professionals who are knowledgeable in both subject matter and the pedagogical process. The faculties in traditional B.Ed. programmes had the option of specialising in either content or teaching methods, whereas the interdisciplinary character of ITEP is such that students must be skilled in both. This is a relatively unusual type of dual expertise, which results in a serious disparity in faculty preparedness. Another significant issue is the institutional infrastructure. ITEP needs well-equipped laboratories, technology enabled learning environments, libraries and ample classrooms to support experiential and multidisciplinary learning. Such facilities are not available in many institutions, particularly in rural or resource-poor areas, thus restricting the implementation of the programme according to plan (Manani & Kumar, 2023). Also, the presence of administrative assistance, proper management and interaction between departments are essential to seamless functioning, which are frequently underdeveloped.

Financial and Accessibility Concerns

The cost factor is one of the major obstacles to the popularization of ITEP. The long term period of the programme suggests more expensive tuition and higher living standards among the students and more investments in institutional infrastructure (Mohanty, 2022). These aspects can have disproportionate impacts among disadvantaged or underprivileged students, restricting them to access high-quality teacher education. Bharati (2019) focuses on the fact that cost-based obstacles may intensify any existing imbalance within the education system, especially in rural areas and less developed regions.

The public institutions are usually limited in their budget and therefore, it is difficult to invest in the required infrastructure, faculty recruitment as well as curriculum development. In the event of inadequate funding, institutions might be unable to achieve quality standards, offer field-based experiences, and integrate

technology in an effective way. Mohanty (2022) proceeds to state that the mechanisms of government support, scholarships and financial aids are necessary to make the programme inclusive and accessible.

Financial issues are not the only accessibility obstacle. Rural or remote students might not have as many options to colleges with ITEP, which might continue to propagate geographical imbalances in teacher education. Moreover, the program might impose extra obstacles on the first-generation learners or those with little prior experience of higher education due to all its rigorous academic and practical requirements (Bharati, 2019).

Implementation Barriers and Prospects

A number of papers have pointed to administrative and regulatory issues with ITEP-at-large scale implementation. Jayalakshmi (2024) observes that co-ordination among universities, regulatory agencies like NCTE, and state education departments are very crucial to promote uniformity, quality, and adherence to NEP goals. Adequacy discrepancies in administration readiness, interpretation of policy and institutional readiness may demoralize the effectiveness of the programme. Chand and Singh (2025) also stress that there should be quality assurance mechanisms, constant monitoring and feedback loops to detect gaps and take corrective actions.

In spite of these difficulties, the literature highlights the long-term opportunities and possibilities of ITEP. The authors believe that the programme has the potential to professionalize the teaching profession and improve the position of teachers and have a talent pool of multidisciplinary competent teachers, who can adapt to the modern educational needs (Rajput and Deshmukh, 2024). With systemic barriers being tackled, i.e. through targeted faculty development, curriculum innovation, infrastructure improvement, financial support and inclusive policies, ITEP can become a model of contemporary teacher training.

Discussion

The 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) is a conceptual change in Indian teacher education system, to integrate subject knowledge, pedagogy and practical training material in a four year course. As the literature review demonstrates, despite the fact that the programme itself echoes the vision of NEP 2020 of the holistic, multidisciplinary, and future-ready teacher education, the successful implementation of the programme is fraught with systemic, institutional, and financial challenges. These challenges, implications on them and their future learning prospects are critically discussed using ITEP.

The most noticeable is curriculum design and pedagogical integration. It is estimated that the ITEP will combine disciplinary knowledge and approach to teaching to create holistic teachers that have the ability to instill critical thinking and creativity in the students (Meenakshi, 2023; Mandal and Mete, 2023). However, many institutions of higher learning still operate with the traditional syllabi and the faculty personnel may not be trained to deliver the interdisciplinary material effectively. The old fashioned lecture based methods continue to dominate and inhibit experiential and reflective learning which forms the core of NEP 2020 vision. ITEP success, therefore, relies on the novelty of curriculum, shaping of the staff, as well as incorporating learner-based pedagogies that accept the presence of technology, project-based learning and field trips.

Institutional and faculty issues complicate the procedure. The literature suggests that a research gap exists of the knowledgeable and experienced teacher educators with knowledge on the subject matter and pedagogy (Gupta, 2024; Kaur, 2023). It is not only the quality of the instruction that is affected by the gap but also the overall objectives of the programme. It is also true that in many institutions particularly in rural and resource-strained regions, there is a lack of the infrastructure to support a four-year integrated programme. In most instances, laboratories, classrooms, libraries and online learning environments are few and this may limit the prospects of experiential learning and interdisciplinary interactions. In order to address these gaps, schools must invest in faculty recruitment, professional development and in infrastructure development by aligning their capabilities with the challenging skill requirements of ITEP.

Accessibility and financial problems are also very impeding. The tuition and living costs of a four-year teacher education can be too expensive, and even students with a less privileged background can be driven away (Bharati, 2019; Mohanty, 2022). The institutions that serve the general population may have limited capacity to provide scholarships, learning solutions based on infrastructure or technology due to limited funds. These can increase the inequality that exists in accessing teacher education. In this way, the role of financial support systems plays a significant role in ensuring that the education is inclusive and allows the means of meeting the NEP 2020 goal of equitable learning by implementing governmental subsidies, scholarships, and targeted support of economically disadvantaged learners.

Conclusion

NEP 2020 The 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) will be a groundbreaking move in the Indian system of teacher education, and it seeks to develop holistic, multi-disciplinary, and future-oriented teachers. The programme aims to professionalize the teaching, improve the learning outcomes, and internationalize the education of the Indian teachers by incorporating the subject knowledge with pedagogy and practical experience. According to the literature, ITEP has a strong conceptual framework, but its effective implementation has been impeded by several obstacles such as curriculum inflexibility, lack of qualified faculty, inefficiencies in infrastructure, financial constraints and inaccessibility of marginalized students.

These issues must be solved in a multidimensional way. Reforming curriculum, introducing new practice based on the most innovative approaches, and implementing learning with the help of technology should also be given priority in order to guarantee successful combination of theory and practice. The quality depends on the faculty development and continuous professional training as well as hiring educators who are capable of mastering both content and pedagogy. Mechanisms in support of finances and scholarships are needed to enhance inclusiveness and infrastructural investments and administrative readiness are essential to facilitate smooth implementation of the programme.

Finally, ITEP can only be successful through the concerted action of policymakers, institutions and regulatory bodies. By turning these systemic obstacles into an opportunity by strategic planning and gradual execution ITEP can make a difference in teacher education in India and produce competent, versatile, and contemplative teachers who can face the challenges of the 21st century classroom and play an active role in the NEP 2020 objectives.

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