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A Study on the Challenges and Strategic Suggestions for the Effective Implementation of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) under NEP 2020

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Abstract

The Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), introduced as a major reform under the National Council for Teacher Education framework of the Ministry of Education through the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, aims to transform teacher preparation in India by integrating disciplinary knowledge, pedagogy, internship, and professional training into a four-year multidisciplinary programme. The initiative seeks to enhance teacher quality and align teacher education with contemporary educational demands. However, despite its transformative vision, the implementation of ITEP faces numerous institutional, academic, financial, and administrative barriers. The present paper critically examines the key challenges affecting the implementation of ITEP and proposes strategic suggestions for improving its effectiveness. The study is qualitative and analytical in nature and is based on secondary sources such as policy documents, journal articles, and reports related to teacher education reforms. The analysis reveals that inadequate infrastructure, shortage of trained faculty, curriculum integration difficulties, technological disparities, lack of institutional readiness, and weak school-institution collaboration are major obstacles in successful implementation. The paper concludes that coordinated policy support, faculty empowerment, financial investment, and systematic monitoring are essential for ensuring the sustainability and success of ITEP.

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Introduction

Teacher education occupies a central position in the educational system because the quality of teachers directly influences the quality of schooling and national development. In India, teacher education programmes have traditionally been criticized for excessive theoretical orientation, weak practical exposure, fragmented curriculum structures, and inadequate professional preparation. To address these concerns, the Government of India introduced the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) under NEP 2020 as a comprehensive reform in teacher preparation.

ITEP is designed as a four-year integrated programme that combines subject specialization, pedagogical training, internship, research orientation, and skill development within a multidisciplinary framework. The programme aims to

prepare professionally competent, socially responsible, technologically skilled, and reflective teachers capable of addressing the needs of twenty-first-century learners (Government of India, 2020). The programme also seeks to replace the traditional fragmented system of teacher education with a holistic and integrated approach.

Although the objectives of ITEP are progressive and visionary, its implementation across educational institutions has encountered several practical challenges. Many higher education institutions lack adequate infrastructure, trained faculty, digital resources, and administrative preparedness required for effective implementation. In this context, the present paper attempts to analyze the major implementation challenges and provide practical suggestions for strengthening ITEP in India.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the major challenges in the implementation of ITEP.
2. To examine institutional and pedagogical barriers affecting the programme.
3. To suggest strategies for strengthening the implementation of ITEP.

Methodology

The study is qualitative and descriptive in nature. It is based on secondary data collected from books, policy documents, research articles, government reports, and scholarly publications related to teacher education and NEP 2020. The collected literature was critically analyzed to identify recurring issues, implementation gaps, and strategic recommendations associated with ITEP.

Understanding the Concept of ITEP

ITEP is a multidisciplinary teacher education programme intended to integrate liberal education with professional

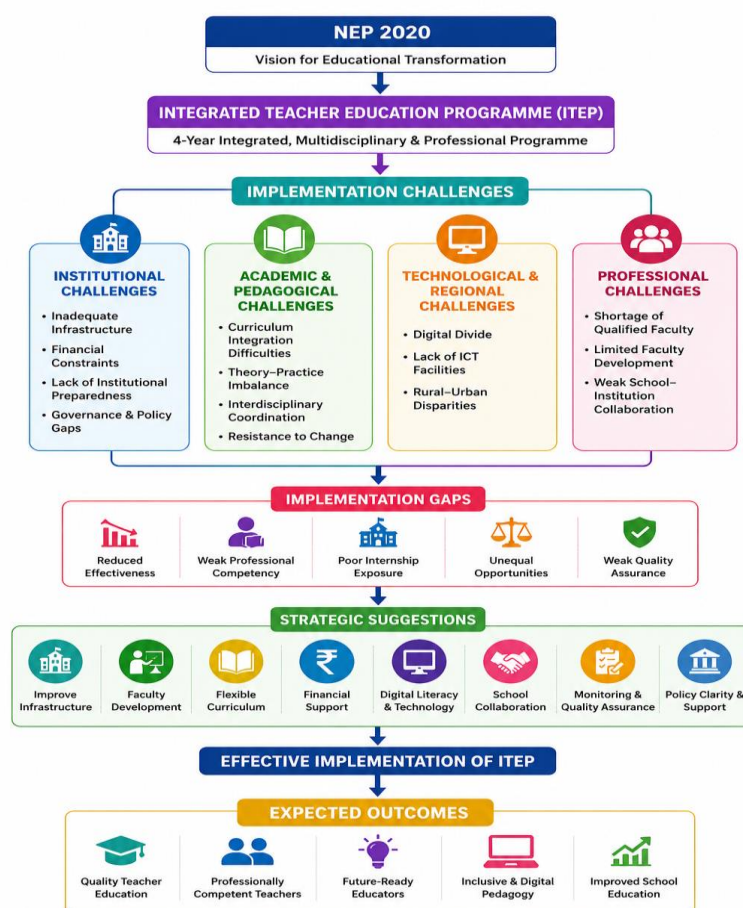
teacher preparation. The programme emphasizes experiential learning, competency-based pedagogy, critical thinking, inclusive education, and continuous professional development. According to NEP 2020, the four-year integrated B.Ed. programme will gradually become the minimum qualification for school teachers in India (Government of India, 2020).

The Programme Focuses on

- Integration of theory and practice
- Multidisciplinary learning
- School-based internship
- Inclusive and learner-centered pedagogy
- Development of digital competence
- Professional ethics and reflective practice

ITEP therefore represents a shift from conventional teacher training toward a more comprehensive and professionally oriented model of teacher education.

Conceptual Framework



Major Challenges in the Implementation of ITEP

1. Inadequate Institutional Infrastructure

One of the primary challenges in implementing ITEP is the lack of adequate infrastructural facilities in teacher education institutions. Many colleges and universities do not possess well-equipped classrooms, laboratories, ICT facilities, digital libraries, and teaching-learning resources required for multidisciplinary and technology-based learning environments. This problem is particularly severe in rural and underdeveloped regions where institutions operate with limited financial and physical resources (Alam, 2024).

The absence of modern educational infrastructure affects the effective integration of innovative pedagogical practices and experiential learning approaches envisioned under NEP 2020.

2. Shortage of Qualified and Multidisciplinary Faculty

ITEP requires teacher educators who possess interdisciplinary understanding, pedagogical expertise, technological competence, and research skills. However, many institutions continue to face shortages of qualified faculty members. Existing teacher educators are often trained within conventional systems and may lack familiarity with

multidisciplinary curriculum approaches and competency-based teaching methods (Kaur & Kasuhal, 2025). Moreover, inadequate professional development opportunities reduce the capacity of faculty members to adapt to new educational reforms and pedagogical innovations.

3. Curriculum Integration and Academic Complexity

The integrated structure of ITEP combines disciplinary knowledge, pedagogy, internship, vocational education, and research activities into a single programme. Managing and coordinating such a comprehensive curriculum poses significant academic challenges.

Many institutions experience difficulties in balancing theoretical courses with practical training components. Coordination among different academic departments also remains weak because higher education institutions traditionally function within isolated disciplinary structures (Sharma & De, 2025). Consequently, achieving meaningful curriculum integration becomes difficult.

4. Financial Constraints and Resource Limitations

Successful implementation of ITEP requires substantial financial investment in infrastructure development, faculty recruitment, technological resources, and internship arrangements. However, many institutions suffer from inadequate funding and budgetary limitations.

Financial constraints restrict institutional capacity to meet the norms and standards prescribed by regulatory authorities. Resource shortages also affect the quality of teaching-learning processes and professional training opportunities available to student-teachers (Mangamma, 2025).

5. Lack of Institutional Preparedness

The transition from traditional teacher education programmes to ITEP requires extensive institutional restructuring. However, many higher education institutions were not adequately prepared for such transformation. Administrative confusion, lack of policy clarity, and insufficient orientation regarding programme implementation have created operational difficulties.

Institutions often struggle with restructuring semester systems, curriculum frameworks, assessment procedures, and internship schedules according to ITEP guidelines. This lack of preparedness affects programme efficiency and implementation quality.

6. Technological Barriers and Digital Divide

NEP 2020 strongly advocates technology-enabled learning and digital pedagogy. However, unequal access to digital devices, internet connectivity, and technological infrastructure creates barriers in implementing ITEP effectively.

Student-teachers from rural and economically disadvantaged backgrounds frequently encounter difficulties in accessing online educational resources. Similarly, many faculty members lack adequate digital literacy and technological proficiency required for blended and technology-based teaching-learning practices (Mishra *et al.*, 2020).

7. Rural–Urban Educational Disparities

Implementation of ITEP varies significantly across regions. Urban institutions generally possess better infrastructure, faculty resources, and technological facilities compared to rural institutions. Such disparities create unequal opportunities for student-teachers and affect the overall quality of teacher education.

Educational inequality between rural and urban institutions may further widen if targeted policy interventions and financial support mechanisms are not introduced.

8. Resistance to Educational Change

Educational reforms often face resistance from institutional stakeholders who are accustomed to traditional practices. Some faculty members and administrators hesitate to adopt multidisciplinary teaching methods, continuous assessment systems, and learner-centered pedagogies.

Institutional rigidity, bureaucratic procedures, and fear of change slow down the implementation process and limit innovation within teacher education institutions.

9. Weak School–Institution Collaboration

ITEP emphasizes intensive school internship and practical engagement. However, effective collaboration between teacher education institutions and schools remains inadequate in many regions.

Schools often lack trained mentor teachers, structured internship support systems, and proper coordination mechanisms. As a result, student-teachers may not receive meaningful practical exposure and professional guidance during internship programmes (Altaf & Haider, 2025).

10. Governance and Policy Coordination Issues

Implementation of ITEP involves coordination among multiple agencies such as universities, state governments, regulatory bodies, and educational institutions. Lack of effective coordination among these stakeholders frequently results in administrative confusion and policy inconsistency.

Variations in institutional practices, regulatory interpretations, and state-level educational priorities create implementation disparities across regions.

Strategic Suggestions for Strengthening ITEP

1. Improvement of Institutional Infrastructure

The government should provide adequate financial assistance for strengthening infrastructure in teacher education institutions. Smart classrooms, digital laboratories, libraries, and ICT facilities should be developed to support innovative teaching-learning practices.

Special grants may be provided to rural and under-resourced institutions to reduce regional disparities.

2. Continuous Faculty Development

Teacher educators should receive regular professional development training related to multidisciplinary education, digital pedagogy, curriculum integration, and research methodology.

Workshops, refresher courses, faculty exchange programmes, and online professional development initiatives can enhance faculty competency and adaptability.

3. Flexible and Contextual Curriculum Design

Universities should develop flexible curricula that accommodate regional educational needs and local contexts. Greater collaboration among academic departments can improve interdisciplinary integration and curriculum coherence. Practical engagement, community participation, and experiential learning should receive greater emphasis.

4. Increased Financial Support

Adequate funding is essential for successful implementation of ITEP. Governments and regulatory bodies should allocate

sufficient financial resources for infrastructure development, faculty recruitment, internship management, and digital education initiatives.

Public-private partnerships may also support institutional capacity building.

5. Promotion of Digital Literacy and Technology Integration

Institutions should organize digital literacy programmes for faculty members and student-teachers. Equal access to technological resources and internet connectivity must be ensured, especially in rural regions.

Blended learning models and digital teaching platforms can strengthen educational accessibility and instructional effectiveness.

6. Strengthening School Internship Mechanisms

Teacher education institutions should establish strong partnerships with schools to improve internship quality. Mentor teachers should receive orientation and training to guide student-teachers effectively during practical training.

Regular monitoring and reflective feedback mechanisms should be incorporated into internship programmes.

7. Establishment of Monitoring and Quality Assurance Systems

Regular monitoring, evaluation, and institutional review systems should be established to assess programme effectiveness. Internal quality assurance cells and academic audits can improve accountability and implementation standards.

Feedback from faculty members, student-teachers, and schools should be systematically incorporated into programme improvement strategies.

8. Policy Clarity and Administrative Support

Clear implementation guidelines should be provided by regulatory agencies to reduce administrative confusion. Institutions should receive orientation programmes regarding curriculum planning, assessment procedures, and operational management under ITEP.

Effective coordination among educational agencies is necessary for smooth implementation.

Conclusion

The Integrated Teacher Education Programme introduced under NEP 2020 represents a transformative step toward improving the quality and professionalism of teacher education in India. By integrating disciplinary knowledge, pedagogy, practical training, and technological competence within a multidisciplinary framework, ITEP has the potential to produce competent and future-ready teachers.

However, the successful implementation of the programme depends upon addressing several institutional, academic, technological, and administrative challenges. Infrastructural deficiencies, shortage of qualified faculty, financial limitations, digital inequalities, and weak governance structures continue to hinder effective implementation.

Therefore, coordinated policy action, adequate financial investment, faculty empowerment, institutional preparedness, and continuous monitoring are essential for achieving the objectives of ITEP. Strengthening these dimensions can contribute significantly toward building a robust and inclusive teacher education system in India.

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