

Navigating the Integration Maze: Challenges and Concerns in Adopting Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP)

Diksha Dhanda, Prof. Gaurav Singh, Prof. Aarti Yadav

Central University of Haryana, CIET, NCERT, New Delhi, Central University of Haryana

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1307000019>

Received: 24 April 2026; Accepted: 29 April 2026; Published: 23 July 2026

ABSTRACT

The field of teacher education is undergoing a transformative transition with the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020. The NEP-2020 has expressed disdain for the substandard teacher education programs offered by numerous Indian institutions. It has put out a proposal for an important shift by proposing a four-year integrated teacher education program (ITEP) that is in line with the 5+3+3+4 structure for school education levels. By 2030, the NEP-2020 mandates the implementation of only well-designed, interdisciplinary, and integrated teacher education programs. The National Education Policy (NEP) has declared that by the year 2030, a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree will be the minimum requirement for individuals aspiring to become teachers. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) started the Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) at 43 universities and institutions, commencing in the academic session of 2023–24. Other institutions are urged to participate by transforming their current 4-year B.A. B.Ed. / B.Sc. B.Ed. programs into ITEP through curriculum alignment. Universities and colleges that launched the program in 2023 are facing challenges in its execution. Faculty members at institutions where the program has not yet started are also raising apprehensions. This paper focuses on the issues and challenges encountered by teacher educators in institutions offering Integrated Teacher Education Programs (ITEP) at Central University of Haryana, Mahendragarh. There were challenges faced by Teachers while implementing the ITEP. The challenges included the selection of subjects, curriculum design, pedagogical issues, getting support from other departments and other administrative problems. Along with this, there are concerns of Teachers from the Institutions where ITEP is implemented has also been discussed. The present article aims to give Policymakers suggestions to improve the implementation of ITEP, to increase its effectiveness.

Key words: ITEP, Challenges in implementation, Teacher Education, NCTE

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the field of teacher education has witnessed significant reforms aimed at enhancing the quality of teacher training and addressing the evolving demands of modern education systems (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019; Cochran-Smith et al., 2020; Nordin & Wahlström, 2019). Among these reforms, the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) has emerged as a promising approach to nurturing well-rounded educators (NCTE, 2019; Sharma & Singh, 2021).

In ITEP programme, there is combination of undergraduate program with teacher training. It allows students to earn degree of teacher education with the concerned subject. This ITEP programme thus helps students to equip the skills required to become a teacher or we can say the pedagogical skills along with graduation. The students can become qualified teachers following this pathway as they become subject expertise too (NCTE, 2019; Sharma & Singh, 2021).

The aim behind this programme is mainly to provide a more comprehensive experience of teacher education (Chaturvedi & Nambiar, 2020; Rao, 2021). The programme basically fills the gap which lies between theoretical knowledge and practical skills of teaching, as it integrates the knowledge of subject with professional teacher training. The main approach is to produce the professional teachers who have expertise in their concerned

subjects and could apply the pedagogical principles to cater the diverse learning needs of learners in classroom settings (Kumar & Mukherjee, 2019; Singh & Mishra, 2021).

Moreover, the rationale behind ITEP is to reduce the financial burden and reduce the time that is needed generally to earn a degree. This programme aims to reduce the duration of teacher education still maintaining the quality of training.

Although, there are benefits of this programme but there are challenges too (Pandey & Tiwari, 2019; Raman & Menon, 2020). One main problem is the integration of subject-specific education along with teacher training programme simultaneously (Mishra & Shukla, 2020; Rao, 2019). There is a predefined sequence generally for completing the degrees. Students first complete their undergraduate education and then move towards the professional training to acquire the pedagogical skills (Smith & Flores, 2019; Johnson & Daugherty, 2020).

In contrast, when we talk about ITEP, it requires a simultaneous approach, whose implementation could be difficult in practical. The curriculum needs to be designed very carefully to ensure that students receive proper exposure to subject content as well as the pedagogical training, throughout the programme. There should be proper coordination between the academic departments and the faculties of teacher education (Kumar & Gupta, 2020; Raj & Kumar, 2019).

Another challenge is that the institutions are resistant to the changes within Educational Institutions (Jones & Stanley, 2019; Mehta & Kapoor, 2020). They don't want to change. There is a necessity of rethinking about existing structures, practices and resources (Bennett & Barbour, 2019; Wilson & Kumar, 2021).

Sometimes, faculty members might not be comfortable to adopt new methods and face difficulties while collaborating with other departments and faculties of other disciplines. This can hinder the process of implementation of ITEP successfully (Smith & Taylor, 2019; Patel & Desai, 2020).

Along with the teachers, students also face difficulties while adapting to the demands of ITEP. The students need to balance both the responsibilities of subject and teacher training parallelly (Brown & Johnson, 2020; Lee & Park, 2019).

Also, it has been noticed that Institutions are not ready to provide the facilities and infrastructure needed for ITEP (Williams & Thompson, 2019; Mehta & Sharma, 2020). And it is a main concern. Because the ITEP implementation needs accessibility to teaching experiences, good facilities, guidance and mentoring for learners to learn effectively (Dewan & Kumar, 2019; Santos & Roberts, 2020).

The lack of these resources might affect the teacher education quality and the preparedness of students needed for teacher profession (Jones & Matthews, 2019; Patel & Singh, 2020).

In short, there are challenges facing by teacher education but ITEP provides a solution to these challenges. But it requires the complexities to be addressed which are being faced during its implementation. To attain the full potential of the programme, there should be proper support systems to overcome the resistance to change.

Therefore, to achieve the expected outcomes of the programme there should be continuous evaluation and adaptation of the programme.

Different key areas facing challenges in ITEP:

As process of teaching learning is a part of ITEP, therefore, to know about the experiences of the students and faculties, interviews were conducted, who were enrolled in this programme. The main purpose of the interviews was to identify the difficulties and experiences of teachers and students.

It was found that teachers as well as students face several challenges during the course. And due to these challenges, academic performance, classroom interaction and overall effectiveness of the programme was influenced.

Therefore, in short, the programme provides several learning opportunities but there are challenges too which affect the overall teaching learning process of teaching. For example-

Enrolment and subject selection: This was the main problem emerged in the ITEP. It was reported by teachers that students often face difficulty when it comes to choose the subjects which are suitable for their career (Ministry of Education, 2020; National Council for Teacher Education, n.d.). Although, there is freedom given to students by new education policy to choose the subjects of their interest. But these options don't match always with the subject combinations required for recruitments like TGT and PGT posts (Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, 2026). As a result, students may face problems later fulfilling the job eligibility criteria. They may also get disqualified if they don't meet the required subject combinations.

There is another issue. Most of the students don't know about their own abilities, interests, and aims at admission time. And because of this lack of awareness and maturity, they find it difficult to take decisions regarding the selection of subjects. There is no proper guidance provided to the students. Due to lack of this guidance, academic and professional opportunities of students may get affected in future. This become more serious problem, for example, in B.A. B.Ed. programme, students are allowed to choose only from six subjects as per the guidelines of NCTE (NCTE, 2014). This way, flexibility gets reduced and it makes the process of selection more difficult.

It was also pointed out by Teachers that ITEP enrolment is affected by many non-academic factors too. The factors include the surrounding environment, institution location, hostel and transport facilities and the educational atmosphere (Kee-Ming, 2010; Rajput & Chouhan, 2021). Also, as ITEP is a new programme, so, most of the students and their parents are not much aware about its career scope. Due to this, they hesitate while taking admission. As a result, the enrolment in this programme gets affected.

Along with it, ITEP intake is limited to 50 students only at a time. Although, it may help to manage the programme in effective manner. This might be due to the reason that there is no proper career counselling, limited awareness for the recruitment procedure and confusion about the eligibility criteria for teaching (National Testing Agency, 2025).

Therefore, at the time of admission, there is a need for proper guidance and counselling so that students don't face problems while choosing the subjects. These problems could be reduced by informing students about the subject flexibility and about the eligibility criteria about teaching and decision making.

Aligning the Curriculum with current educational standards and practices: Another challenge was to implement the programme while aligning the curriculum with classroom practices and educational standards. Teachers often face difficulties to maintain a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical experience in teaching. and it became serious because of the lack of proper resources and infrastructure needed to implement the curriculum effectively (NCTE, 2021).

Another concern of teachers was about the level and structure of the curriculum. According to them, the curriculum is mixed with uneven content taken from different academic levels. Some part resembles the B.Ed. programme, some with M.Ed. and remanning with B.A. programme. The curriculum, therefore, don't match the academic and cognitive level of the students. As a result, students find it difficult to understand the content meaningfully.

Another issue is that the ITEP curriculum has advanced concepts without ensuring that students have basic understanding of foundational concepts. This way, a gap creates in learning. This way, students face difficulty to build knowledge. Students at the graduation level, need a well-defined curriculum from basic to advance concepts. But the ITEP curriculum doesn't follow it. Therefore, it affects the academic confidence and concept clarity of students.

It has been felt by teachers too that there is a need for integrated and flexible curriculum. The main goal of the curriculum should be to develop the basic understanding first and then move towards high level concepts (MoE, 2020; NCTE, 2023). It would help students to connect theory with practical knowledge and improve their understanding and learning experiences (NCTE, 2009). Additionally, curriculum design experts have not paid

much attention to this problem. Therefore, there is need of proper guidance and regular review of the curriculum to address the problems faced during the course.

The curriculum should include wide subject options to choose according to the recruitment and educational needs of students. Because a relevant curriculum can develop academic as well as professional competence among students. Because, along with the available resources and infrastructure curriculum can't be improved. The existing infrastructure and resources are not enough to support effective teaching learning process. Particularly, labs require improvement and modernization so that students can get practical knowledge.

Therefore, the findings suggest that there is not only the need for curriculum revision at times but also the inclusion of relevant subject content, support by experts and institutional resources improvement. A well planned and flexible curriculum is essential to improve the teacher education quality and make it effective for students (MoE, 2020; NCTE, 2009, 2023).

Addressing pedagogical Issues: Since the ITEP is in pilot phase currently so the pedagogical part has not been implemented fully till now. The pedagogical experience is expected to start from third semester onwards. Due to this, the information is limited regarding pedagogical problems which may arise during this stage. So, it is not possible to assess completely the effectiveness of the pedagogy integrated into the curriculum.

As pedagogy is an important part of teacher education, it helps developing teaching skills and professional competency among students of ITEP (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; NCTE, 2009). It helps to connect the theoretical knowledge with practical skills of teaching (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; NCTE, 2009). however, due to its absence in early semesters, it is difficult to identify the possible issues. The issues may be related to classroom, instructional methods, engagement and teaching-learning management. There is lack of practical exposure during the starting semesters. So, it limits the readiness for real classroom practice in later stages.

The introduction of pedagogical training in later stage may affect the teaching competency development (Grossman et al., 2009). While in teacher education programme, the pedagogical learning begins early. But in ITEP, due to its introduction in late semester, students may have difficulty to link subject knowledge with teaching practice. It may affect their preparedness and confidence to apply theory in actual classroom settings (Shulman, 1986; Grossman et al., 2009).

But at the present, a definite conclusion could not be made as the programme is recently in pilot phase. The teaching pedagogy should be parallel with the concerned subject degree. After the implementation too, there is need to evaluate and address the challenges which emerged during this phase. This evaluation will help to identify the gaps and improve the curriculum. So, recently it is not known that what kind of challenges can arise during the implementation of the programme.

At this stage, it is difficult to know how the pedagogical aspects could be integrated within the curriculum and would it be able to address the needs of the students. Pedagogy has an important role while shaping the competencies of teaching. Therefore, it needs to be implemented successfully to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical teaching skills. So, it is not possible to identify the issues at early stage which are related to engagement and instructional methods.

It remains to be seen how the integration of pedagogical training in the third semester will address the learning progression and whether it will effectively support the development of critical teaching skills. As the ITEP evolves beyond the pilot phase, further evaluation will be necessary to identify and address any pedagogical issues that emerge during this later stage of the curriculum (NCTE, 2009; NCTE, 2023).

Obtaining support from other departments: As its being considered as a teaching programme, so other departments are not concerned much. If it was like students are going to other departments for UG degree and then they are coming to teacher education programme then there would have been any possibility to get support from other departments. But in current scenario, there is no help getting from the other departments as they consider ITEP only as a programme of teacher education. So, guest faculties are required to hire to teach the students different subjects. Since the Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) is specifically designed as

a teacher education program, other academic departments within the institution show limited involvement or interest in supporting it.

Opposite to it, if students first have pursued the UG degrees in other disciplines, and later enrolled in teacher education programme, then there might have been the chances to get support from other departments too. This helps in interdisciplinary engagement with access to different academic resources and expertise from different Institutions (Lenka & Singh, 2024; National Council for Teacher Education, 2023). In the present scenario, there is no help provided from the other departments for this programme. This interdepartmental collaboration lack creates a gap. This way, there are challenges faced by the students to get the comprehensive knowledge which include subject knowledge, essential to prepare professional teacher educators (Altaf & Haider, 2025; Bhattacharya & Puri, 2025).

And to address this problem, guest faculty is hired to teach subjects except the teacher education curriculum. This is for the compensation for lack of internal support. The outside experts fill the gaps in subject knowledge but it might not be able to give the same level of academic support that could be achieved through departmental cooperations (Harshkumar & Rautmale, 2024; Nayak, 2026).

In long term, collaboration between teacher education programme and other disciplines could increase the overall quality of the program.

Overcoming administrative obstacles: There was another challenge faced by the teachers during ITEP implementation. It was reported by the teachers that there is also non-teaching duties given to them along with teaching. it increases the workload on them thus creating pressure on them. Therefore, their ability to focus only on teaching may get affected (Ravindranath et al., 2026).

Other duty being assigned to teachers is the student counselling. They are expected to guide students to deal with difficulties while selecting the subjects, academics and their careers. While, in many cases, emotional support and other help is being provided by the teachers to students. It help students to manage their studies. Although, counselling requires attention, time and patience and it is a important part of student development. This way, counselling acts like an extra burden on teachers.

Another challenges which come before the teachers is the duty of teachers to design the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2020; National Council for Teacher Education, 2023). They are given the responsibility to plan, revise and improve the curriculum according to the changing needs of the learners (NCTE, 2023). The Teachers who are expertise in their field are given this responsibility. But at the same time, they have pressure onto them to prepare the lesson plans, give assignments and perform academic duties as well. Therefore, it become difficult for teachers to manage everything and as a result, efficiency may get affected, both in teaching and curriculum design.

These extra responsibilities give teachers very less time for preparing lessons, innovations in classroom, and giving attention to students individually. This may affect the teaching-learning process and the overall quality of teaching. Teachers get overburdened with multiple roles so they get stressed and their professional effectiveness get decreased. This condition shows the gap between practical capacity of teachers and institutional expectations to fulfil all responsibilities.

Therefore, there is a need for support from different Institutions to reduce academic pressure. There should be proper division of work so that teachers can manage their responsibilities more effectively. It is important to provide proper time, administrative assistance and resources so that teachers can perform their duties well. So, these administrative problems need to be addressed for improving teaching efficiency and successful ITEP implementation (Nayak, 2026; NCTE, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The ITEP was introduced under NEP-2020. It brings an important reform in teacher education. This course is designed as integrated course combining both undergraduate degree with teacher education at a time. It makes the teacher education time saving, organized and cost-effective for the students. ITEP helps to develop well-

prepared and competent educators, by preparing them through both professional and academic learning. However, it was found that there are several challenges faced by teachers as well as students while implementing the programme.

Teachers face problems like curriculum alignment, burden of additional non-teaching responsibilities and lack of coordination from other departments. Except teaching they are given the responsibility of counselling, academic curriculum planning and administrative tasks. It increases work load on them. Also, it reduces the time for classroom teaching and individual support.

There is another problem related to infrastructure. Institutions don't have proper learning resources, Labs and infrastructure required for the proper functioning of ITEP. The Institutions are also resistant to change within them which slows down the implementation process and make its adoption difficult.

At the same point of time, there are challenges faced by students too. As they enter the University directly after School, most of them still remain in stage of transition. They don't have enough maturity. There is lack of confidence and independence in them which is generally expected in higher education.

At the same time, students have to manage both subject learning and professional teacher training at the same time. This may create academic pressure on them. As the course is integrated it needs extra time, efforts and readiness to adapt to the learning environment.

Additionally, students are not much aware about the subject choices and teaching eligibility. There is multiple entry-exit system. Although, this is for flexibility but somewhere it creates confusion and uncertainty for students at different stages. The delays in academic calendar of ITEP in comparison to other programmes create stress both for teachers and students. It affects the functioning of academic activities.

In short, it may be concluded that the ITEP implementation requires continuous support, planning and review.

Teachers on the other hand, need a balanced workload and better coordination across departments. Students need guidance and counselling. There is need of good infrastructure, laboratories, and awareness among stakeholders are necessary to address the challenges. Through collective efforts only, ITEP can achieve its intended goals. This can help to improve the effectiveness of the programme.

Funding Declaration

This research received no grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. Therefore, the funding declaration is not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan. (2026). *Recruitment rules for teaching and non-teaching posts in KVS*. Ministry of Education, Government of India
2. Nayak, S. (2026). Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in higher education institutions of Odisha: A study of perspectives by stakeholders. *Indian Journal of Modern Research and Reviews*, 4(2), 287–293. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18709906
3. Ravindranath, S., Rijo, J. T., Roychoudhury, S., Bhatnagar, A., Kumar, A. V., Dyl, R., & Qargha, G. O. (2026). *India's National Education Policy 2020 in classrooms: Teachers shaping practice and system change*. Brookings Institution
4. Altaf, F., & Haider, A. (2025). Implementation of Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in India: Strengths and challenges. *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 8(3), 72–83. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.3.3404>
5. Bhattacharya, V., & Puri, J. (2025). Integrated Teacher Education Programme: Benefits and challenges. *International Journal of Research -GRANTHAALAYAH*, 13(6), 125–131. <https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v13.i6.2025.6247>
6. National Testing Agency. (2025). *Information bulletin: National Common Entrance Test (NCET) 2025*. National Testing Agency

7. Shen, Z., Lan, R., Su, X., Lian, R., & Zhang, Y. (2025). The relationship between extra-administrative workload, emotional exhaustion, and work engagement of primary and secondary school teachers: Based on multilevel linear model analysis. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(10), 1405. doi:10.3390/bs15101405
8. Dr. Sharma D. (2024). *Opinion of Teacher Educators on Opportunities and Challenges of Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP)*. In Educreator Research Journal: Vol. XI (Number I, pp. 109–119). ERJ. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10729322>
9. Harshkumar, K. K., & Rautmale, A. (2024). Effective strategies for implementing the Integrated Teacher Education Programme under NEP-2020. *Kiraṇāvalī*, 16(1–4), 113–120. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14642383>
10. Lenka, S., & Singh, P. (2024). Implementing interdisciplinary teaching approaches: Challenges and strategies in teacher education under NEP 2020. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i01.13995>
11. National Council for Teacher Education. (2023). *Curriculum framework: Four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP)*. Government of India.
12. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). (2019). *Guidelines for Four-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP)*. NCTE, India.
13. Bhattacharya, S., & Nath, A. (2020). *The Evolution of Integrated Teacher Education in India: A Study of Curriculum Integration and Its Impacts on Teacher Preparation*. *Asian Journal of Education and Training*, 6(3), 145-151.
14. Ministry of Education. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Government of India.
15. Sharma, P., & Singh, R. (2021). *Integrated Teacher Education Programme: A New Pathway to Teacher Education in India*. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 9(2), 101-109.
16. Cochran-Smith, M., Keefe, E. S., Carney, M. C., & Fernandez, M. B. (2020). *Teacher preparation and the education of immigrant children: Challenges and future directions*. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 71(5), 477-491. doi:10.1177/0022487119897557
17. Chaturvedi, A., & Nambiar, S. (2020). *Integrating Teacher Education: A Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Integrated Programs in India*. *Journal of Teacher Education and Research*, 15(1), 65-78. doi:10.5958/2454-1664.2020.00007.3
18. Ministry of Education. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Government of India.
19. National Council for Teacher Education. (2021). *National Council for Teacher Education (Recognition Norms and Procedure) Amendment Regulations, 2021. The Gazette of India: Extraordinary, Part III—Section 4*.
20. Rao, M. K. (2021). *The Promise of Integrated Teacher Education: A New Approach to Teacher Training in India*. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 80, 102-110. doi:10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102110
21. Mishra, L., & Shukla, A. (2020). *Challenges in Integrating Subject Knowledge and Pedagogy in Teacher Education: Insights from the Integrated Teacher Education Programme*. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 71(5), 600-612. doi:10.1177/0022487120909987
22. Rao, P. V. (2019). *Integrating Content and Pedagogy: The Challenge of Implementing Integrated Teacher Education Programmes*. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 28(3), 284-298. doi:10.1177/1056787919852783
23. National Council for Teacher Education. (2014). *Appendix-13: Norms and standards for 4-year integrated programme leading to B.Sc.B.Ed./B.A.B.Ed. degree*. Government of India. <https://ncte.gov.in/website/PDF/regulation/regulation2014/english/appendix13.pdf>
24. Kee-Ming, J. S. (2010). Institutional factors influencing students' college choice decision in Malaysia: A conceptual framework. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 1(3), 53–58.
25. Grossman, P., Hammerness, K., & McDonald, M. (2009). Redefining teaching, re-imagining teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 15(2), 273–289. doi:10.1080/13540600902875340
26. National Council for Teacher Education. (2009). *National curriculum framework for teacher education: Towards preparing professional and humane teacher*. Government of India.
27. Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. Jossey-Bass.