

# Integrated Teacher Education Programme: A Forward Step to Teacher Education in India.

**Dr. Kishore Roy**

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Government Degree College Teliamura, Tripura

## **Abstract:**

Teacher education is an integral and vital component of education system of any country. A sound and dynamic teacher education is a must for the country like India. Hence, all the previous education commissions and committees recommended a sound and affordable teacher education system in the country. Due to their recommendations, different initiatives and modifications were occurred in different phases of teacher education in India. National Education Policy-2020 also suggests and recommends in this regard. Regarding the importance of teacher education Hence, The New Education Policy-2020 made various recommendations in regard to update and timely adjustment of the teacher education programmes in India. Integrated Teacher Education Programme or ITEP is a positive initiative of Government of India in this regard. The major objective of the ITEP is to create passionate, motivated, qualified, professionally equipped and well- trained teachers who can really create a enjoyable teaching-learning environment at each and every stage of education. This course seeks to enhance quality education at every level by providing quality and trained teachers. The National Education Policy-2020 seeks to create envisioned teachers who can shape the future of the nation and contribute a lot to the overall development of the students who are the future of the country. Hence, ITEP programme is a gateway for the aspiring teachers who want to do some innovative efforts in teaching-learning process. Thus, the paper highlights the features, advantages, disadvantages and challenges of teacher education in this context in India and makes necessary suggestions.

**Keywords:** Continuous and comprehensive education, pedagogy, inter-disciplinary, multidisciplinary, multiculturalism.

## **Introduction:**

Teacher education is a very crucial part of the entire education system of a country. So, the whole education system solely depends upon the very existence of teacher education. As teachers are the backbone of any nation and the main architect of the future citizen hence, appropriate training or education is a must for all teachers. Aspirant teachers can serve the society in a better way and it is one the best and noble job for these people. Continuous changes in society bounds the entire education system of a country for changes or for modification. Otherwise, educational system will become fruitless or no use. To remove such barriers in the present teacher education programme, the Government of India introduce National Education Policy-2020. Regarding the importance of teacher education NEP-2020 says-“Teacher education is vital in creating a pool of schoolteachers that will shape the next generation. Teacher preparation is an activity that requires multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, formation of dispositions and values, and development of practice under the best mentors. Teachers must be

grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions including tribal traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and pedagogy” (Para15.1, NEP-2020). This policy opens a new era in teacher education programme by introducing 4 year integrated teacher education programme. This programme has various advantages and can able to fulfil the desire of the existing society. “The 4-year integrated B.Ed. offered by such multidisciplinary HEIs will, by 2030, become the minimal degree qualification for school teachers. The 4-year integrated B.Ed. will be a dual-major holistic Bachelor’s degree, in Education as well as a specialized subject such as a language, history, music, mathematics, computer science, chemistry, economics, art, physical education, etc. Beyond National Education Policy 2020 43 the teaching of cutting-edge pedagogy, the teacher education will include grounding in sociology, history, science, psychology, early childhood care and education, foundational literacy and numeracy, knowledge of India and its values/ethos/art/traditions, and more” (Para-15.5, NEP-2020).

**Objectives:**

The objective of this study is to find out the characteristics of the integrated teacher education programme. Similarly another objective is to find the merits and demerits of this programme and find out the existing challenges of this programme. At last, the study will make some suggestions to overcome such challenges.

**Methodology:**

This study is purely based on secondary data and collected from the reliable sources such as books, journals, gazette notification, official documents, newspapers, websites etc. The study is descriptive in nature.

**Discussion:**

The Government of India has proposed to introduce four year integrated teacher education programme throughout the country from March, 2019 in accordance with the NCTE. Although a few numbers of institutes managed this programme prior to 2019. Regional Institutes of Education are the pioneered of this programme as they maintained as per the monitoring and controlling by the NCTE.

While introducing the ITEP, The National Education Policy 2020 re-affirms the positive role of the teachers who will make the shape of the next or future generations. Activities related to the preparations of teachers require multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, formation of dispositions and values, and development of practice under the best mentors. “...Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions including tribal traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and pedagogy” [Para 15.1, NEP 2020]. Further NEP-2020 also mentions that teachers will be trained in high quality content as pedagogy and it will gradually move into multi disciplinary colleges and universities.

Under this course, a student can study dual major including B.Ed and other relevant subjects from humanities, social sciences or physical sciences. Thus a student in teacher education programme equally acquires other relevant knowledge for future.

**Admission:**

The National Testing Agency is the authority to conduct the national level common entrance test

(NCST) and invites online application for the admission to four year ITEP in selected institutes/ central universities/ state universities and colleges for the academic session 2024-25. To apply for the said programme, students must have completed class-xii or senior secondary examination from any recognised board.

### **Structure of the Course:**

#### **Curriculum:**

ITEP curriculum is based on some important principles. It combines a strong theoretical understanding of foundations, theories, basics of education as well as extensive training and internships. Through this curriculum, students get ample opportunity to deeply engage with theoretical aspects of education and applied from of it with the connection with society and ethics. School experience and internship will enhance the students to adjust with the real world with their theoretical knowledge and gather overall experience to make proper lesson plans, schedules and all other necessary activities associated with the teaching-learning perspectives.

ITEP comprises the following curricular components: Student Induction Programme (Common to all student-teachers across stage specific specialisation. To be organised during the first two weeks of Semester-1) • Foundations of Education (30 Credits) • Disciplinary/Interdisciplinary Courses (64 Credits) • Stage-Specific Content - Cum - Pedagogy Courses (16 Credits) • Ability Enhancement and Value-Added Courses (28 Credits) • School Experience, including Internship in Teaching (20 Credits) • Community Engagement and Service (2 Credits)

The National Council for Teacher Education made provisions for the students of ITEP to learn the following subjects in the foundation stage of their course. Such as evolution of Indian Education; Child Development and Educational Psychology; Philosophical and Sociological Foundation of Education; Assessment and Evaluation; Inclusive Education; Curriculum Planning and Development; Perspective on School Leadership and Management; Education Policy Analysis and the provision for elective courses.

### **Characteristics of Integrated Teacher Education Programme:**

1. The National Council for Teacher Education has launched ITEP in 57 Teacher Training Institutions from the academic session 2023-24 throughout the country in accordance with the NEP-2020.
2. This 4-year dual major undergraduate degree offers B.A. B.Ed.; B. Sc. B. Ed. and B.Com. B.Ed. course to prepare teachers for the four stages of the new school structure: foundational, preparatory, middle and secondary (5+3+3+4).
3. ITEP is a four year comprehensive under graduate programme frame for the students in a multidisciplinary environment.
4. Students will be given a holistic cum comprehensive training in different subjects such as early childhood care and education, foundational literacy and numeracy, exclusive education etc.
5. It provides a solid foundation course in science and liberal arts stream. It ensures teachers to expertise in different subjects like science, social sciences, mathematics, education etc.
6. It emphasizes continuous and comprehensive professional development of teachers. It aims to promote innovation, research and academic development throughout the life of the teachers.
7. ITEP is an integrated course work programme, as it integrates specific subject with education. Students can study subjects of their choices and also education.

8. This programme provides multidisciplinary curriculum to the students. They can learn distinguished subjects such as educational psychology, child development, evaluation, assessment, curriculum design, and curriculum transaction etc.
9. ITEP programme also include technology in education. Thus it gives new outlook for the teacher training courses as it strengthen technology based education. By adopting such programmes, teacher uses technology in education.
10. Teachers will be grounded by Indian culture, values, traditions etc. as well as with modern subjects in multidisciplinary environment.
11. Admission for the said course will be made through a national common entrance test conducted by the National Testing Agency.
12. This programme has practical learning skills and hands on experience. It provides field work, experimental learning, classroom activities and internships.
13. ITEP builds a solid foundation within the humanities and science. It ensures that teachers are well versed in different disciplines such as humanities, arts, commerce, science, technology etc. xiv). ITEP curriculum is based on the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application that enhance and prepares the student to adjust with any circumstances in societal norms and ethics.

#### **Advantages of ITEP:**

1. ITEP will save time and energy to the students as they can continue dual courses in a same time.
2. It is a medium to provide qualified and expert teachers to the teaching-learning arena. They will be expert and skilled in different subjects.
3. This programme develops their cognitive area as well as linguistic area. Thus they can give their best in education.
4. Due to the presence of technology teacher will be acquainted with technology and they can use technology in their teaching learning process.
5. It plays a pioneer role by providing holistic learning experiences to the teachers. They will be equipped with innovative ideas and teaching to strengthen existing teaching skills.
6. It helps to blend theoretical knowledge with hands on experience among the teachers and thus they will serve themselves in proper manners.
7. It helps to provide efficient, skilled, knowledgeable, aspirant and well versed teacher to the educational institutions particularly in schools.
8. ITEP helps teachers to focus on appropriate teaching methods and skills to tackle the students and to maintain the ideal classroom condition.
9. Integrated Teacher Education Programme priorities the lifelong learning and advocates for the continuous growth and development in teaching and knowledge gathering and sharing.
10. There is a scope of internship in the ITEP which enable the teachers and students to make the teaching-learning process more interesting and acceptable.
11. This integrated programme enhance the scope of education in multidisciplinary environment. It also opens the doorways in regard to science or arts education.
12. Science and arts education will get strengthen with the incorporation of this teacher education programme.
13. This course will be benefitted the students community as they can acquire knowledge in their subjects as well as pedagogical knowledge.

14. It develops self development as well as career development potentialities of the students. Students will be engaged in different competitive examinations after completing such courses.
15. By attending the course, students can function effectively in multilingual and multicultural context and environment.
16. Students can communicate effectively through written and oral form as well as adjust with different conditions after attending the course.

**Disadvantages of ITEP:**

1. ITEP needs huge amount of infrastructure and it is impractical to maintain such facilities to all the institutions.
2. This course needs huge amount of money which is impossible for all trainee teachers to maintain.
3. NCTE maintains various strict norms and procedures for opening of this course in different institutions. Thus it is impossible for all institutions to start this course.
4. There is a need of adequate number of books, journals and other necessary items for smooth running of this course and that is a huge task for the institutions.
5. There is a chance of lacking the balance between theory and practical aspects of the subjects as in B.Sc, B.Ed course science subjects are available. Providing adequate laboratory facility is also a vital task for these institutions.
6. There is chance of lacking of pedagogical knowledge of the students in a multidisciplinary course. Hence proper attention is needed in this regard.
7. There is chance of imbalance of knowledge among the students as they will attend pedagogical classes in different department and content knowledge in other departments.
8. Students enrol in this course just after completing their senior secondary examinations; hence there is a scope of immature decision from the side of the students regarding choice of subjects.
9. There is need of adequate autonomy from the side of institutions for the smooth running of this course which may not be possible at last.
10. Number of seats is very limited for the students to get admission for the said courses. It is not possible for all students to enrol themselves for the said course.
11. Mohanty's (2022) article highlights several barriers to the implementation of the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in a multidisciplinary setting. Firstly, the cost factor is a major challenge, as four-year integrated courses are considerably more expensive than traditional one-year B. Ed.

**Suggestions:**

Though this course is in primary stage and started as pilot project, hence its limitations are also not clear at all. Following suggestions can be made for the improvement of teacher education as well as the ITEP. Such as –

1. There is an urgent necessity to change the mindset of the people to accept this course. Preparing the community in this regard is a must. By deliberate discussion and organizing seminars, workshops and sensitization programmes, this can be possible.
2. Adequate and appropriate infrastructures are very much needed for the smooth running of this course. For giving science knowledge and pedagogy to the students better, laboratory and other equipments are needed. A good number of classrooms, laboratories, language rooms, computer labs

etc. are needed to be installed.

3. Teachers are the backbone in this course. Hence, recruitment of well trained and expert teachers in a good number is very much needed. Teachers have equipped with knowledge and skilled in different disciplines such as science, humanities, social sciences, pedagogies etc.
4. There is a need for minimum course fee for the said course as most of the students have poor financial background. In case of private institutes and organizations, strict rules must be maintained in this regard.
5. Proposed curriculum of this course is very much relevant but proper training and sensitization regarding curriculum transactions and knowledge is a must.
6. There is a necessity of good number of skilled and experienced teachers to run this course as it has connected with multiple subjects and streams.
7. An ideal multidisciplinary environment is very much needed for the smooth running of this course where students can able to study in each and every subjects irrespective of their own subjects.
8. Students enrol for the said course must be familiar with multi disciplinary environment and as well as multicultural setting. They must learn and equipped with Indian cultures and traditions, value systems, ethics etc.

### Conclusions:

At par with the NEP-2020 visions, it can be said that teachers are the cornerstone of our society and all types of societal development. They are the real architect of Indian society. To make them 21<sup>st</sup> century's teacher, the proper implementation of NEP-2020 is a must. ITEP as per NEP-2020 will surely make a foundation for the new India. The innovative ideas and recommendations associated with this teacher education will surely enhance and develop the entire teacher education in India and also enrich the education system of this country. Urgent implication and application of this course at massive level is a must.

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