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Abstract

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions a holistic and multidisciplinary approach for the teacher preparation while aligning national reforms with international standards of teacher preparation replacing uneven training models with integrated, competency-based frameworks. Innovative methods promoted under NEP 2020 include the introduction of a four-year Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) to strengthen the multidisciplinary partnerships with an experiential learning. The NEP 2020 prioritizes continuous professional development (CPD) also with accountability mechanisms. NEP 2020 seeks to develop adaptable and learner-centered teachers capable of meeting the demands of 21st-century education. These innovative approaches place teacher education as a foundation for achieving equity, excellence and sustainability in Indian education. The (NEP) 2020 represents a transformative reform in teacher education innovation, quality and professional excellence in configuration with the global educational standards. The policy advocates a holistic, multidisciplinary and competency-based approach to teacher preparation. Innovative methods such as blended and online learning platforms, digital assessment tools, virtual simulations and continuous professional development modules are promoted to enhance flexibility, accessibility and effectiveness. The policy further accentuates insightful practices, mentoring, peer collaboration and research-oriented teacher education to support lifelong professional growth. Emphasis on inclusive education, multilingual pedagogy, Indian Knowledge Systems and socio-emotional learning prepares teachers to address diverse learner needs of a classroom.

Keywords: Teacher Education Innovative Methods, ITEP, Technology Integration, NEP 2020.

INTRODUCTION:-

Teacher quality is linked as a decisive factor in determining the effectiveness and equity of education systems. Acknowledging this, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) proposes a structural reorientation of teacher education in India through the introduction of the Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP). Envisioned as a four-year multidisciplinary degree, ITEP brings together disciplinary expertise, pedagogical foundations, experiential learning and research engagement within a single coherent framework. This policy shift represents a withdrawal from a fragmented, post-graduate teacher preparation models and seeks to professionalize the teaching process by an integrated preparation at the undergraduate level.

This paper offers a critical analysis of ITEP with particular reference to its implications for teacher educators who play a pivotal role in realizing the policy's transformative initiatives. Using a conceptual and policy-analysis approach, the paper draws upon NEP-2020, allied policy documents and contemporary scholarship on teacher education reforms. The paper situates ITEP within global developments that emphasize early professional induction, reflective practice and continuous school-university partnerships. It examines emerging expectations of teacher educators including curriculum integration, innovative pedagogy, competency-based assessment, interdisciplinary engagement and digital literacy. The analysis also identifies significant implementation concerns related to institutional capacity, faculty preparedness and sustained professional development. It discusses and explores the evolving roles, responsibilities and competencies expected of teacher educators, particularly in relation to curricular redesign, pedagogical innovation, assessment reform, interdisciplinary collaboration and digital proficiency. Key implementation challenges, such as institutional preparedness, faculty capacity building and continuous professional development are also included.

The paper concludes that while ITEP holds significant potential to strengthen the quality and credibility of teacher education in India, its success depends largely on empowering teacher educators as reflective practitioners and change agents supported by sustained institutional and policy commitment and that the long-term success of ITEP depends not only on structural reform but on strengthening teacher educators as autonomous professionals and active agents of change within India's evolving teacher education landscape.

NEP 2020: TEACHER EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE:-

NEP-2020 enunciates a transformative vision aimed at reorienting India's education system with an effective response to the demands of the twenty-first century. It is based on the principles of equity, quality, access, accountability and flexibility, the policy proposes systemic reforms across all the levels of education. Within this framework, teacher education occupies a strategic position, with teachers recognized as critical agents in enhancing learning outcomes, promoting inclusive practices and strengthening institutional effectiveness.

A significant policy directive is that by 2030, the minimum qualification for school teachers will be a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree offered by multidisciplinary higher education institutions. This recommendation reflects a fundamental shift in viewing teacher education as a robust academic discipline and professional field rather than as a supplementary qualification. NEP-2020 further emphasizes a merit-based recruitment, transparent career growth and continuous professional development for both teachers and teacher educators.

The policy also highlights the need to integrate disciplinary knowledge with pedagogy, experiential learning and research-based practices. By setting teacher education programs within the multidisciplinary universities and colleges, NEP-2020 seeks to elevate the academic depth, professional credibility and societal status of teaching, recognizing it as a complex and reflective profession. This extra ordinary role raises important questions regarding professional identity, workload, expertise and preparedness within the Indian context.

THE CONCEPT AND STRUCTURE OF ITEP PROGRAM:-

The Integrated Teacher Education Program represents a paradigm shift in the design and delivery of teacher preparation in India. Structured as a four-year undergraduate program, ITEP enables the concurrent development of subject expertise and pedagogical competence from the beginning of higher education. This integrated model contrasts sharply with traditional pathways in which teacher education follows the completion of a general degree.

ITEP adopts a multidisciplinary approach, allowing student teachers to engage with disciplines such as liberal arts, sciences, mathematics and vocational studies alongside professional education courses. Such exposure is intended to cultivate intellectual breadth, interdisciplinary thinking and contextual understanding among future teachers. The program places strong emphasis on sustained school internships, practicum-based learning, reflective practices,

community engagement and research-oriented activities, thereby fostering early professional socialization and continuous engagement with real educational settings.

ITEP - NEP-2020 IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) marks a decisive attempt to address continuing structural shortcomings in the teacher education system of India by repositioning teachers at the center of educational reform. This emphasis aligns closely with international research that identifies teacher quality as a critical determinant of student achievement and systemic improvement (Darling-Hammond- 2017; OECD - 2019). The introduction of the Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) reflects a global policy shift towards longer-duration, practice-embedded and academically rigorous models of teacher preparation as observed in countries such as Finland, Singapore and Australia.

The four-year multidisciplinary design of ITEP reflects international best practices that emphasize professional socialization, coherence between disciplinary knowledge and pedagogy with sustained quantifiable engagement in schools (Grossman et al. - 2009; Hammerness et al.- 2014). By integrating subject studies, educational theory, practicum and research from the undergraduate level, NEP-2020 seeks to move away from the unconnected, post-graduate teacher education models that have often been criticized for their limited impact on classroom practices in India.

However, a critical comparison with global systems reveals significant implementation challenges. High performance from teacher education systems are characterized not only by integrated program structures, but also by selective student intake, research-active teacher educators, strong university-school partnerships and sustained public investment (Sahlberg- 2015; Cochran-Smith et al. - 2016). Whereas, Indian teacher education institutions face limitations related to faculty preparation, institutional autonomy, research capability and infrastructural support. Without addressing these conditions systemically, the transformative step of ITEP jeopardies being diluted into a technical reform rather than a functional professional revitalization.

The keen anticipations from teacher educators under ITEP further intensify this concern. International evidence suggests that teacher educators play a decisive role in mediating reform outcomes, particularly through curriculum integration, mentoring, assessment innovation and practice-based research (Loughran - 2014). Teacher educators in India are expected to function

simultaneously as curriculum designers, pedagogical innovators, researchers and institutional leaders according to NEP 2020. However, the policy offers limited clarity about the factors that are critical for sustaining these reforms and the mechanisms for large-scale faculty development, workload restructuring and professional recognition.

From a critical standpoint, the success of ITEP therefore depends less on program architecture and more on the professional empowerment of teacher educators. Without sustained investment in their continuous professional learning, research engagement and institutional support, ITEP may replicate existing disproportions under a new institutional framework. The discussion emphasizes that for NEP-2020 to achieve its global aspirations, teacher educators must be positioned not merely as policy implementers but as reflective professionals and change agents capable of contextualizing international models within India's diverse educational realities. For ITEP to achieve its transformative potential, teacher educators must be recognized not merely as implementers of policy, but as intellectual leaders also.

TRANSFORMATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS' ROLE IN ITEP:-

The introduction of ITEP significantly reshapes the professional role of teacher educators, moving it well beyond the conventional function of delivering education-related coursework. They are expected to act as mentors, facilitators, curriculum designers, researchers and reflective practitioners within the integrated framework. This expanded role necessitates close collaboration with disciplinary faculty to design and implement integrated curricula that establish meaningful connections between subject knowledge, pedagogy and classroom practice.

Teacher educators' tasks consist of guiding student teachers through extensive school internships, reflective inquiry and research-based activities which demands a pedagogical shift from transmission-oriented teaching towards facilitative, dialogue based and inquiry-driven approaches to emulate international best practices in teacher education. Furthermore, teacher educators serve as key professional role models, responsible for demonstrating ethical practice, reflective thinking, collaboration and a commitment to lifelong learning attributes recognized as an essential quality for effective teaching in complex educational settings.

Comparative studies from robust education systems highlight that a strong research orientation among teacher educators is critical for fostering empirically supported practices and preparing teachers who can respond adaptively to evolving curricular and societal demands. In this context, a research based teacher education culture becomes a prerequisite for the success of ITEP in

which teacher educators are expected to engage actively in research, innovation and continuous professional development.

IMPLICATIONS OF ITEP:-

This is quite evident that the **ITEP** contains far reaching curricular, pedagogical and professional implications for the teacher educators. This program requires a sustained interdisciplinary coordination between subject departments and education faculties at curricular level. Teacher educators must therefore assume an active role in curriculum planning and review processes to ensure coherence, progression coordination and conceptual integration across various disciplines that previously remained uninvolved in the Indian teacher education institutions.

ITEP necessitates a decisive move towards learner centered, experiential and technology-enabled approaches to teaching and learning. Teacher educators are required to design learning experiences that foster critical thinking, reflective practices, collaboration and professional inquiry. Assessment practices also need significant transformation with an emphasis on formative assessment, performance-based tasks, reflective portfolios and continuous feedback mechanisms. Such shifts demand advanced assessment literacy, professional judgment and reflective capacity among teacher educators.

Besides this, ITEP places intensified stress on digital competence and the pedagogically meaningful use of technology. Teacher educators must therefore continuously update their technological skills to effectively integrate digital tools into teaching, mentoring and assessment processes. Research evidence suggests that without systematic professional support and institutional investment, expectations related to digital innovation remains rhetorical rather than transformative.

On the whole, while ITEP offers a coherent and globally aligned framework for strengthening teacher preparation, its success is critically dependent on the professional capacity, autonomy and sustained development of teacher educators. Without addressing these dimensions, the program remains reinforcing the existing implementation gaps rather than realizing its envisioned transformative potential.

Views and Perspectives of Educationists and Teacher Educators in India regarding the Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) under NEP-2020 based on the current research literature and policy commentaries:

Educationists and teacher educators in India have varied perspectives on the (ITEP) introduced under the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020). Many scholars view ITEP as a progressive reform with strong potential to professionalize teacher education and to bridge the gap between theory and practice in teacher preparation. Research indicates that ITEP's four-year integrated and multidisciplinary design is more aligned with global best practices compared to the traditional B.Ed. course, offering opportunities to incorporate experiential learning and competency-based pedagogies more systematically (**Bhattacharya and Puri - 2025; Rudupra - 2025**).

But a significant research highlights the challenges of implementation and concerns expressed by teacher educators. A recurrent theme in the literature is that many teacher education institutions currently lack the infrastructure, faculty capacity and institutional readiness required to operationalize ITEP's integrated curriculum effectively. Scholars point to the infrastructural deficits, gaps in faculty training and misalignments between policy drives and ground realities especially in rural and underserved regions as major constraints on the reform's success (**Mandal et al.- 2025; Jolly-2025**).

Teacher educators have raised concerns related to capacity building also perceiving that the shift toward a multidisciplinary, research-oriented program demands substantial professional development and reorientation for the existing faculty. Without sustained support for teacher educators to develop new pedagogical skills, research literacies and competencies in mentoring, there is a risk that the envisioned transformation may remain theoretical rather than practical (**Bansal and Kapoor - 2021; Mandal et al.- 2025**).

It is also emphasized that the importance of equity and inclusion in the ITEP is overlooked. There have been apprehensions that the shift of teacher education into multidisciplinary higher education institutions could inadvertently limit access to the students from economically disadvantaged and rural backgrounds unless adequate support mechanisms such as scholarships and targeted outreach are put in place. There is also concern about temporary disruptions in teacher supply during the transition phase, especially if traditional Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) are closed without any alternative arrangements.

Despite these challenges, exponents argue that ITEP holds transformative potential to unify teacher education with contemporary educational needs such as inclusive instruction, digital competence and practice-based learning which could enhance the professional status and relevance of teaching in 21st-century India. The program is viewed as an opportunity to align India's teacher education system more closely with international models that prioritize sustained practicum, reflective practice and interdisciplinary study.

LITERATURE REVIEW: PERSPECTIVES ON ITEP IN INDIA:-

The Integrated Teacher Education Program has stimulated diverse reactions among the educationists and teacher educators in India. The literature review reveals three interrelated ideas among stakeholders: (1) optimism about the potential ITEP to transform teacher preparation (2) recognition of significant implementation challenges and (3) calls for careful policy planning and capacity building.

Thematic Synthesis of the Perspectives of the Stakeholders on ITEP.

Key Perspectives of Educationists and Teacher Educators Representative Studies / Arguments

ITEP as a Necessary Reform:- ITEP is widely viewed as a progressive and long-overdue reform aimed at professionalizing teacher education through integration of subject knowledge, pedagogy, practicum and research. **Rudupra (2025); Devi and Konwar (2025); Giri and Pradhan- (2024).**

Alignment with Global Practices:- Best Scholars observe that the four-year integrated model is aligned with the international teacher education systems with an emphasis on professional socialization, extended practicum and research orientation.- **Darling-Hammond et al.-(2017) ; OECD (2019); Sahlberg (2015).**

Institutional Readiness:- Significant apprehensions exist regarding infrastructural inadequacies, uneven institutional capacity and lack of research culture in many teacher education institutions. - **Mandal et al. (2025); Jolly (2025).**

Transformed Role of Teacher Educators:- Teacher educators assume extended roles as mentors, curriculum designers, researchers and facilitators of reflective practice raising concerns about workload and preparedness.- **Loughran (2014); Altaf and Haider (2025).**

Faculty Capacity Building:- Literature review underlines the need for systematic professional development to equip teacher educators with competencies in interdisciplinary teaching,

assessment literacy and digital pedagogy. - **Bansal and Kapoor (2021); Cochran-Smith et al. (2016).**

Issues of Equity and access:- Some educationists warn that relocating teacher education to multidisciplinary universities may limit access for rural and disadvantaged students if adequate support mechanisms are not ensured.- **Haque and Haider (2025).**

Hence the dominant perspective is of a cautious optimism supporting ITEP's vision while emphasizing the need for enabling systemic conditions.- **Overall studies synthesized.**

CONCLUSION:-

Thus, the related literature reflects cautious optimism about ITEP's transformative potential, it also highlights significant conditions that must be met for its success including institutional investments, interdisciplinary collaboration, faculty development and a wide awareness among stakeholders. The evidence features that achieving the predominant goals of NEP-2020 through ITEP will require sustained policy attention and capacity enhancement across multiple levels of the teacher education ecosystem.

The literature reflects a balanced perspective where educationists and teacher educators largely endorse the vision and intent of ITEP, while simultaneously stressing that its success depends on enabling institutional, professional, and policy conditions. The consensus emerging from the literature is that ITEP should be understood not merely as a new program structure, but as a complex systemic reform requiring sustained alignment across curriculum, faculty development, institutional governance and professional culture.

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