Challenges And Issues in Teacher Education in India

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Abstract

Indian teacher education programs face a crucial moment which requires their decision about which direction to take. The education system in India ranks among the largest educational systems worldwide because it contains more than 1.5 million schools and 9.6 million teachers yet its teacher preparation results show major deficiencies due to various structural and institutional as well as pedagogical barriers. This paper presents an extensive analysis of the primary challenges which Indian teacher education programs experience which include the development of insufficient training facilities and their use of outdated teaching materials as well as their digital accessibility challenges and their deficient field training programs and their gradual adoption process for the National Education Policy 2020. The study uses secondary data along with policy documents and NCTE reports and academic literature to determine ten main obstacles while presenting research-based solutions for these problems. The paper argues that meaningful reform requires a multi-pronged approach which includes regulatory enforcement and curriculum modernization and school-university partnership development and ongoing professional development funding. The study evaluates the transformative potential of the newly introduced four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) through this framework.

Keywords -Teacher Education, India, NEP 2020, Quality Education, Professional Development.

1. Introduction

The development of a nation depends on education which teachers build as its fundamental structure. The quality of teachers depends on the quality of teacher education programs which include processes and institutions and educational policies that train future educators. Teacher education in India has developed through various stages from the establishment of Normal Schools during colonial times to the present implementation of National Education Policy 2020. The existing gap between what people want to achieve and what actually exists has persisted despite multiple educational policies which have been put into effect over several decades.

India has about 25000 teacher education institutions which produce more than 160000 trained teachers each year. The total number of teachers does not meet the required standards. The National Council for Teacher Education

(NCTE) and Kothari Commission which operated from 1964 to 1966 and National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE 2009) and Justice Verma Commission (2012) all found that educational systems remain deficient in multiple areas which include excessive focus on rote learning and insufficient practical training and commercially oriented private schools and lack of proper regulatory mechanisms and entire teacher training systems which fail to match actual classroom teaching needs.

The National Education Policy 2020 creates a turning point which introduces a new way to educate teachers through its four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP). The process of putting this initiative into action faces major obstacles. The document conducts a detailed investigation of main obstacles which it connects to existing educational policies while recommending specific reforms to create a teacher education system that meets future educational needs.

2. Objectives of the Study

The present study is guided by the following objectives:

i. The historical development of teacher education policy in India needs to be studied because it shows how current teacher education systems work

ii. The research needs to find essential structural and institutional and curricular and pedagogical problems which exist in teacher education.

iii. The study will evaluate how the NEP 2020 educational system changes have affected teacher education reforms.

iv. The study will create evidence-based solutions which will enhance teacher education.

v. The research will compare teacher education systems which existed before and after the implementation of NEP.

3. Research Methodology

The research design of this study uses qualitative methods to describe and analyze data which was obtained through secondary sources. The researchers collected data from reports that the NCTE and NCERT and UGC and World Bank and Indian Ministry of Education published. The research team conducted a systematic review of peer-reviewed journal articles and doctoral dissertations and policy briefs which were published between 2005 and 2024. The Justice J.S. Verma Commission Report (2012) and the NCFTE (2009) and the NEP 2020 document function as the main sources of policy information. The thematic analysis method was used to identify challenges which needed to be solved through examination of reform proposals.

4. Institutional Landscape of Teacher Education in India

Teacher education in India operates through a system of various educational institutions which function under the control of central government and state government and private organizations. The table below presents

an overview of the types of institutions, their approximate numbers, annual student intake, and the primary challenges associated with each category. The system reaches its maximum capacity through its operation of more than 25,000 educational institutions which accept over 16 lakh students every year.

Table 1: Overview of Teacher Education Institutions in India (2023–24)

Category	Number of Institutions (Approx.)	Annual Intake (Lakh)	Challenges
Universities (Education Depts.)	700+	~1.2	Outdated curriculum, limited research
B.Ed. Colleges (Private)	14,000+	~8.5	Poor infrastructure, commercial motives
B.Ed. Colleges (Government)	1,200+	~1.8	Understaffing, lack of autonomy
D.El.Ed. Institutions	9,000+	~5.0	Low quality, distance mode issues
Total (Approx.)	25,000+	~16.5	Systemic quality concerns

Table 1 demonstrates that private B.Ed. colleges represent the dominant portion of teacher education institutions throughout India. The establishment of these colleges which operate mainly for profit has become a continuous issue in public policy discussions. The Justice Verma Commission (2012) documented extensive illegal activities which included B.Ed. degree sales and ghost student enrollment and unqualified instructor employment and proposed complete regulatory system changes. Systematic issues continue to exist despite the fact that authorities have implemented some corrective measures.

5. Key Challenges and Issues in Teacher Education

5.1 Outdated and Theory-Heavy Curriculum

The fundamental problem with teacher education in India survives through its ongoing existence because theoretical knowledge keeps dominating practical teaching methods. The B.Ed. curriculum has historically been designed around academic knowledge of education — philosophy, psychology, sociology — with insufficient attention to how this knowledge translates into classroom practice. Student-teachers memorise concepts without developing the reflective, inquiry-based skills needed for effective teaching. The NCFTE (2009) called for a curriculum grounded in constructivist principles but implementation has been inconsistent. Many institutions continue to rely on outdated textbooks and lecture-based pedagogy which demonstrates the instructivist teaching methods that progressive education seeks to eliminate.

5.2 Mushrooming of Substandard Private Institutions

The period after 1990s liberalization saw private teacher education colleges experience fast growth which created major difficulties for maintaining education standards. Private entrepreneurs established thousands of

colleges because B.Ed. degrees which schools in India required for teaching positions had low entry barriers and high market demand. The institutions operating under these standards do not possess qualified faculty members or proper library facilities or science laboratories or effective school partnerships needed for teaching practice. The NCTE needs to operate its regulatory functions but faces two main issues because of limited resources and corruption claims that affect its recognition process.

5.3 Inadequate Practicum and School Internship

The practicum component — wherein student-teachers observe and teach in real school settings — is perhaps the most critical element of any teacher education programme. Yet in India this component is widely considered the weakest link. The practicum requirements for B.Ed. programmes extend through 14 to 16 weeks which schools divide across their two-year programs. The supervision process lacks thoroughness because the cooperating schools do not provide proper training to their mentor teachers which results in students needing to complete their required tasks. Real professional learning requires sustained mentored immersion because it enables teachers to learn how to identify student learning challenges and adapt their teaching to different student needs while they develop skills for classroom management and practice assessment. The National Educational Policy 2020 proposed a one-year internship for ITEP students which represents a major advancement although complete implementation remains to be accomplished.

5.4 Qualifications and Competency of Teacher Educators

The quality of teachers depends on teacher educators who teach B.Ed. and D.El.Ed. programs. The NCTE qualification standards are not met by a large number of instructors who work at private teacher education institutions. Many instructors do not hold doctoral degrees or have earned them from institutions that have questionable academic standing. The system creates a continuous loop because teacher educators who lack qualifications develop teachers who lack essential skills to provide effective school instruction. Teacher educators face limitations in their research work which affects their ability to demonstrate evidence-based methods.

5.5 Digital Divide and Technology Integration

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed major digital educational deficiencies throughout India's education system. Teacher education institutions in rural and semi-urban areas experienced severe difficulties when they tried to move their teaching methods towards online and blended learning. Many student-teachers lacked access to smartphones and laptops together with dependable internet service. Most educational institutions continue to use ICT for teacher education programs in a basic way which fails to meet their actual requirements. The educational technology courses serve as minor subjects to students who do not acquire the digital competencies required for developing different teaching methods that include all students. The NEP 2020 and National Digital Education Architecture NDEAR framework work to create equal educational opportunities but the process of developing equal access to education remains an essential obstacle to overcome.

5.6 Gender and Social Inclusion

The constitutional guarantees and affirmative action policies of India fail to provide equal educational opportunities for teacher training to residents of marginalized communities. The Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) and differently-abled candidates face multiple obstacles which include financial requirements and remote location challenges and insufficient hostel capacity and social discrimination. Women represent the majority of primary-level teachers yet they encounter barriers that prevent them from reaching leadership roles at teacher education institutions. The teacher education system requires active barrier removal through the establishment of specific scholarships and residential programs and mentoring initiatives and faculty awareness training.

6. Comprehensive Analysis: Challenges and Recommended Reforms

The following table provides a consolidated overview of ten key challenges in teacher education which show their current status and present evidence-based solutions that this research study has developed. The recommendations use NCTE policy documents together with international best practices and scholarly literature to support teacher education reform.

Table 2: Key Challenges in Teacher Education and Recommended Reforms

S.No.	Challenge / Issue	Current Status	Recommended Remedy
1	Outdated Curriculum	Still theory-heavy; lacks ICT integration	Revise to include technology, critical pedagogy
2	Mushrooming of Private Colleges	14,000+ B.Ed. colleges, many substandard	Strict NAAC accreditation & regulatory audit
3	Weak Practicum & Internship	14–16 weeks of practice teaching often superficial	Extend to one year; school-university partnership
4	Inadequate Faculty Qualification	Many colleges lack Ph.D.-qualified faculty	Mandatory NET/Ph.D. for all teacher educators
5	Lack of Research Culture	Minimal funded research in teacher education	Establish dedicated research centres (NCTE mandate)
6	Digital Divide	Rural teacher trainees lack device/internet access	Government-funded devices & broadband for trainees
7	Gender & Social Inclusion	SC/ST/OBC candidates face barriers in enrolment	Scholarships, mentoring, and reservation enforcement
8	Poor In-Service Training	Irregular, short-duration workshops only	Structured continuous professional development (CPD)
9	Examination & Assessment	Rote-based evaluation; no portfolio-based assessment	Introduce competency-based, reflective assessment
10	NEP 2020 Implementation Gap	4-year ITEP yet to scale nationally	Phased rollout with adequate funding & monitoring

The challenges enumerated in Table 2 are not isolated but interconnected. The inadequate teacher educator qualifications create poor curriculum quality which results in weak practicum experiences that schools and

universities fail to establish. Any serious reform agenda must therefore adopt a systemic view, addressing structural, institutional, and pedagogical dimensions simultaneously.

7. NEP 2020 and the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP)

The National Education Policy 2020 marks the most significant reform of India's education system since the Kothari Commission. The Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) serves as the main element of teacher education because it replaces the two-year B.Ed. program with a complete degree that combines subject knowledge and liberal arts and pedagogical theory and professional practice. Students who complete Class XII can enter the program to develop their teaching skills during four years instead of studying for an unrelated bachelor's degree before they start their teacher education program.

Table 3: Comparative Analysis — B.Ed. Programme Before and After NEP 2020

Dimension	Pre-NEP 2020 (Old B.Ed.)	Post-NEP 2020 (New ITEP)
Duration	2 years (post-graduation)	4 years (integrated, after Class XII)
Entry Point	After Bachelor's degree	After passing 12th standard
Curriculum Focus	Theoretical; subject pedagogy only	Liberal arts + subject + pedagogy + research
Practicum	14–16 weeks	Year-long school immersion planned
Technology Integration	Minimal / optional	Mandatory ICT and AI literacy modules
Assessment	Annual examinations (theory-heavy)	Continuous, competency, and portfolio-based
Regulatory Body	NCTE only	NCTE + UGC (joint oversight)
Research Emphasis	Weak; dissertation often formality	Embedded research projects & action research

The comparison in Table 3 shows that ITEP provides a substantial advancement in the development of teacher preparation programs. The shift from a narrow, post-graduate qualification to a four-year integrated programme rooted in liberal arts research and sustained school immersion enables India's teacher education system to meet global best practices shown in Finland Singapore and Canada. The process needs to solve several operational challenges. The transition will require a complete transformation of current college operations together with faculty retraining

and new curriculum development and extensive government funding. The two-year B.Ed. program will undergo gradual phasing out which will result in operational risks during the transition period because both the previous and current systems will operate simultaneously.

8. Discussion

The research identified in this study shows that the existing problems have remained unsolved since their first discovery. Committees, commissions, and policy documents dating back to the post-independence era have identified four persistent problems: teacher preparation lacks proper context, educators fail to link their theoretical understanding to practical work, commercial interests control private teacher education institutions, and educational research remains absent. The persistent medical conditions which refuse to respond to treatment show the main problem in this situation. The structural factors which enable this situation to continue throughout time. The research shows that Indian teacher education lacks both funding and academic respect which higher education institutions receive. Primary teachers receive salaries which fail to establish their social status, thus deterring talented individuals from pursuing teaching as a career. Private education systems face two challenges which originate from political connections and regulatory capture which restrict NCTE and state regulatory bodies from functioning effectively. Indian educational institutions follow an examination-based system which drives schools to favor rote memorization instead of encouraging meaningful learning. The educational system needs two improvements to advance: new policies and a major change in cultural values which need to transform how people view teacher education. Countries which have achieved high educational standards treat teacher education with the same level of respect as medical or legal studies in Finland, Singapore, and Estonia. India will not achieve its goal of becoming a knowledge-based economy through its 2047 Viksit Bharat initiative without developing high-quality teacher education programs which have social value and professional recognition.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research study investigates the primary obstacles which Indian teacher training programs face within their historical background and association with educational institutions and existing government policies. The analysis shows that the problems which we face exist at multiple levels as interconnected issues that create a complex situation. However, they are not impossible to overcome. The following recommendations are proposed:

The NCTE needs both financial resources and institutional support to execute its quality standards through complete enforcement procedures. The NAAC accreditation process should become mandatory for all TEIs while institutions which fail to achieve basic quality requirements should lose their accreditation status. The curriculum needs continuous evaluation through active participation from teacher educators school teachers students community members and researchers because it needs to be treated as an ongoing process. Teacher education needs to make its practicum the main component because this requires schools and universities to work together with

proper compensation for their mentor teachers. The CPD system for in-service teachers needs to become a standard process through developed programs that focus on specific subjects and school environments instead of short training sessions which lack depth. The educational system needs to provide underprivileged groups with special programs which include scholarships and housing facilities and digital equipment and tutoring services to help them succeed in their teacher training programs.

The NEP 2020 and its ITEP framework provide an excellent yet ambitious reform pathway for the educational system. The critical imperative now is implementation — phased, well-funded, and carefully monitored — so that the vision of a vibrant, inclusive, research-informed teacher education system becomes a lived reality for every aspiring teacher in India.

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