

# Four Years Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP): Issues & Concerns

## Abstract

*The globe is in quest of Quality Education. Quality education is expected to come from quality teachers; Quality Teacher is the expected outcome of the Teacher Education Program. There is a dire need of quality teacher education programmes in India. Accordingly the National Council for Teacher Education has kept on striving to bring reforms in Teacher Education. The content and structure of teacher education is continuously undergoing changes. It has been trying reform practices, such as, Personalized Teacher Education”, “Wholistic Teacher Education”, “Integrated Teacher Education”, “Dedicated Teacher Education”. Presently there is buzz on four years integrated teacher education programmes, that has evolved with the attempt to bring quality teacher education in India. The present article tries to focus on the modalities, issues and concerns regarding ITEP.*

## Introduction

Teacher Education is a programme of education, that encompasses training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education. It is related to the development of proficiency and competence that enables and empowers the teacher to meet the needs of their profession and face the upcoming challenges. Its aim is to develop competent, humane & professional teachers. Teacher Education needs to be continuous, evolving & comprehensive process for developing such, teachers. According to NCTE (1998) to address quality concerns in Secondary classes, the teacher is the most important component in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at all stages. This shows that the investment in the preparation of teachers is a serious and important enterprise.

‘Quality teacher’ include several aspects like status, remuneration, conditions of work and academic and professional education. Both the initial teacher training and continuing professional courses have a major part to play in the making of a teacher.

Accordingly NCF (2005) expressed various expectations from a teacher emphasizing the length and depth of teacher education courses. These include the length of academic preparation, the level and quality of subject matter knowledge, the repertoire of pedagogical skills needed to meet the needs of diverse learning situations, the degree of commitment to the profession, sensitivity to contemporary issues and problems, knowledge of and ability to use compatible modes of curriculum transaction & learner transformation.

## Quality Crisis

NCFTE (2009), highlighted that the present teacher education scenario has seen on extraordinary expansion of teacher education institutions and programmes, (such as, the SSA (2002) to achieve UEE, the Operation Blackboard (OB) 1986, and the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) 1995) to meet the increasing demand for teachers. Along with this the earlier backlog of untrained teachers in the system and the essential requirement of pre-service teacher certification for appointment as a teacher

mounted pressure on existing institutional capacity. The larger demand of teachers the market forces has made a record rise in the number of teacher education institutions in the entire country and made teacher education a money-making business. Having a B.Ed. degree with post graduation was made mandatory for teaching pre-university courses. All this resulted in a large increase in the number of B.Ed. colleges a virtual mushrooming of teacher education institutions.

There have been many reform perspectives that have come to teacher education. For example the Education Commission (1964-66) recommended professionalisation of teacher education, development of integrated programmes, comprehensive colleges of education and internship. The National Commission on Teachers (1983-85) recommended five-year integrated courses with internship. The National Advisory Committee on Learning without Burden (1993) has also drawn attention to the need for qualitative reform of teacher education and suggested various measures. The Varma Review Committee also recommended adoption of the internship model for teacher education involving a brief theoretical orientation followed by a 3 to 5 year period of supervised teaching in a school under mentor teachers. Existing B.Ed. programmes should be reviewed to facilitate the choice between a 4-year integrated model after +2 or a 2-year model after graduation, based on State requirements and available institutional capacity. It suggested that a four-year integrated programme of elementary teacher education in selected state universities and all Central Universities, in particular, via IASEs and selected DIETs could be undertaken in the initial phase. In our view therefore, teacher education programmes should ideally be of four-five years' duration after the completion of 10+2 level of school education. To begin with, four-year integrated programmes could be instituted. Along with a four-year model, other models should be encouraged, for instance, the after graduation. These can have a 6 months to

a year of school internship. Based on such strong recommendations and considering that ITEP includes some of the best practices of teacher education in the world it needs to be used more, to bring a qualitative change in preparation of teachers.

The ITEP course content is expected to maintain a balance between theory and practice and coherently integrate components of the programme that, represent a wide knowledge base that is required for a future school teacher. Such a program that demands an integrated framework and hence is a four-year programme has earlier been limited to the four Regional Institutes of Education of NCERT in India. However, the present course which is modelled on similar guidelines, gives various institutions an opportunity to initiate the course. The aim is to groom professionals early and impart the required teaching skills.

NCTE had given a public notice on 19th November 2018, of its intentions that it proposes a 4 years Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), with the entry qualification of 12th standard with 50% marks. This is view of the long standing analysis and recommendations dating as far back as 1948. For example the university education commission in 1948 said that "People in this country have been slow to recognize that education is a profession for which intensive preparation is as necessary as it is in any other profession". (University Education Commission, 1948). As Siddiqui said in 2009, this report is as alive in its relevance now as it was at that time. (Siddiqui, 2009). Any change in educational system demands a corresponding adjustment in the curriculum; therefore curriculum renewal needs to be planned as a continuous process (NCTE, 1998). Intensive preparation is needed for the pre-service teachers along with the university prescribed syllabus, some professional development programmes and orientations are required. Hence the main intent of ITEP is to improve the quality of teacher education by professionalizing it like preparation for Engineering, Medicine & other professional courses.

Generally only some of the candidates who come to teacher education programme choose it because of a wish to become teachers, most of them pursue the course as just one more course or as something that will provide some minimal job security as teachers in schools. Teacher Education is seen as the last option for higher education and it is mostly such ideas that prevail in the mind-set of candidates. So the quality of teacher education cannot be enhanced because of the non-professional mindset of the candidates, the seriousness with which they join the teacher education course affects the seriousness and quality of the course they undergo, joining the teacher education programme at the movement is more by the chance factor or the absence of choice rather than an preference by the students. All above mentioned views act as added reasons for the decline in the quality of the courses. These views also became important points for the introduction of ITEP. ITEP expects that the candidates who want to become teachers, must take this course as other students do for courses in Medical field and other professions. They should undergo the integrated course to become teaching professionals.

### Issues & Concerns

The Introduction of ITEP, bring up several issues

- The candidate has to select the course immediately after class 12 to take the integrated Teacher Education Programme. The concern is at this stage is that by +2 the candidate may not be mature enough to select a dedicated course to become a teacher. It is only after graduation in particular subjects that they are in better position to decide the future course of action.
- It is also not clear that in the present situation, whether the faculty will be teaching content and pedagogy in ITOP as separate or together components? In an Integrated Teacher Education programme, the integration is not merely combining of two or more courses. It is the complete interweaving of courses with respect to their content, pedagogy and knowledge including technology. This is not easy and requires engagement with the question and a gradual evolution of the idea.
- It has to be seen whether the three types of knowledge namely, Technological Knowledge (TK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) and Content Knowledge (CK) are combined & recombined in various possible combinations of TPCK. Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK) describes association between technological tools and particular pedagogical practice. Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) establishes the relationship between pedagogical practices and specific teaching-learning objectives. It links pedagogic knowledge to the knowledge of the content and emphasises the need of both. And to this the addition of Technological Content Knowledge (TCK) highlights the importance of Interaction & Associations between technology and learning objectives. The requirement of teaching faculty is not the same for core disciplines and education. Besides this coordination between core subject institutions & faculty all elements of education of university and among wider set of institution are extremely challenging tasks. There has to be perfect coordination among the elements of TCPK.
- Earlier Integrated Course focussed on training teachers only for the secondary classes, the proposed ITEP cuts across the two programmes, one for pre-primary & primary and other one for upper-primary to secondary.
- In the course of time ITEP programme may take over the 2 year B.Ed. programme. On this issue there are many reflections, we give a few here:
  - It is a better option because it will take 4 years for the programme and give two degrees at the same time. There can be B.A. B.Ed., B.Sc. B.Ed. & B.Com. B.Ed. If a student goes for these courses separately it will take 5

years to complete, the earlier program needs encountering different processes of admission, course process and evaluation. If one goes for ITEP the candidate can take admission once and the entire process will be done. They may feel ease with the process.

- In comparing the course durations, as the integrated course is one year shorter one year of the prime time of life is saved. This one saved year can be utilized well for preparing towards entry exams like CTET, State-wise TETs or other relevant entrance exams.
- Integrated course is a relatively new entrant. It has been designed to develop more professional teachers and should satisfy the demand for qualified teachers in India. ITEP may develop more professional teachers by enhancement of their professional competencies.
- With the introduction of 4 year ITEP, there are opportunities for more teacher education programmes, like a candidate can opt for either ITEP or a regular degree and 2 years B.Ed. programmes. But currently there are no clear cut directions to close the present 2 years B.Ed. Programme. At present those who have taken admission for Bachelor degree programmes would complete their degrees in 3 years and then may take admission in to 2 years B.Ed. course. So it may require a minimum of 5 years or more in the long run soon there will be scarcity of students for B. Ed., because as there exists a 4 year ITEP.

- ITEP programme has started from 2019, for new students, who wish to become teacher they can take this course after 12th standard. For those who are already in 1st, 2nd or 3rd year of college would have to go for regular 2 year B.Ed. programme. Hence the 2 year B.Ed. Programme would also co-exist in future along with 4 years ITEP.
- The candidates who have completed their B.Ed, D.Ed, B.El.Ed are considered for their regular employment opportunities in teaching. The candidates who complete B.A. B.Ed., B.Sc. B.Ed& B.Com. B.Ed through ITEP will also be considered for other employment opportunities based on graduation.

### Conclusion:

There is no specific good quality research that suggests Integrated Teacher Education Programs are more effective than the sequential Teacher Education Programs. It is therefore not clear why this policy has been formulated and why teacher education is restricted only to Integrated Teacher Education Programs. Therefore, we think this should be done gradually and over time. To begin with both the sequential and integrated teacher education programs should run in parallel so that we can study their relative effectiveness for policy formulation. In such a situation the present changes may contribute towards rationalizing the teacher education system.

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