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Challenges in The Implementation of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP): Perspectives of Teacher Educators in Ahmedabad District, Gujarat

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has positioned teacher education as a critical lever for the transformation of school education in India, and the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) represents its most far-reaching structural reform in this domain. Introduced by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) from the 2023–24 academic session and progressively expanded across successive admission phases, ITEP integrates a disciplinary major with professional teacher preparation within a single four-year undergraduate degree, and is slated to replace the conventional two-year B.Ed. pathway as the minimum qualification for school teaching by 2030. While ITEP has so far been piloted largely in central and state universities, Institutes of National Importance, and selected government colleges, its eventual extension to the much larger network of university-affiliated B.Ed. colleges — such as those functioning under Gujarat University in Ahmedabad District — raises a distinct set of implementation questions that have received limited scholarly attention at the regional level. This paper undertakes a conceptual and policy-analytical examination of ITEP, synthesising the available national literature on its structure, strengths, and challenges, in order to construct a context-specific framework for understanding how teacher educators in Ahmedabad District are likely to experience and respond to its eventual implementation. Drawing on themes that recur across existing empirical and policy literature — administrative and regulatory preparedness, infrastructural and resource adequacy, faculty capacity and professional development, curricular and pedagogical realignment, admission and student-profile concerns, and institutional culture and change readiness — the paper proposes

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a six-theme conceptual framework and outlines a detailed empirical methodology, including a sample interview-cum-questionnaire schedule, for a subsequent field-based study of teacher educators' perspectives in the district. The paper concludes that while ITEP carries strong transformative potential for teacher education in India, its successful translation into the affiliated-college ecosystem of Gujarat will depend substantially on anticipatory faculty development, infrastructural investment, curriculum-bridging support, and structured institutional handholding well before the 2030 transition deadline.

Keywords: *Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP); National Education Policy 2020; Teacher Educators; B.Ed. Colleges; Gujarat University; Ahmedabad District; Implementation Challenges*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background: The Trajectory of Teacher Education Reform in India

Teacher education in India has been the subject of sustained policy attention since independence, with successive commissions and frameworks repeatedly identifying the quality of teacher preparation as central to the quality of school education. The Education Commission of 1964–66 first articulated the principle that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers, a position reiterated in the National Policy on Education of 1986 and operationalised through the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), which was given statutory status to regulate teacher education programmes across the country (Government of India, 1966, 1986). The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education of 2009 further called for the integration of theoretical and field-based components of teacher preparation, anticipating many of the concerns that later informed the design of ITEP (Government of India, 2009). Despite these reforms, the two-year B.Ed. model that dominated Indian teacher education for decades continued

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to be critiqued for its fragmented structure, late entry of teaching aspirants into professional preparation, and limited integration with disciplinary knowledge built during undergraduate study.

1.2 Emergence and Rationale of ITEP

The National Education Policy 2020 directly addressed these long-standing concerns by recommending that, by 2030, the minimum degree qualification for school teaching be a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree offered at multidisciplinary higher education institutions (Government of India, 2020). Acting on this mandate, the NCTE notified the framework for the Integrated Teacher Education Programme through its 2021 amendment regulations and formally launched ITEP from the 2023–24 academic session in an initial cohort of institutions, with subsequent phases progressively widening the pool of participating universities and colleges through annual notifications and the National Common Entrance Test (NCET) conducted by the National Testing Agency. ITEP is designed as a dual-major holistic undergraduate degree — offered as B.A. B.Ed., B.Sc. B.Ed., or B.Com. B.Ed. — that prepares student-teachers across all four stages of schooling envisaged under NEP 2020's 5+3+3+4 structure: Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary. By compressing what was previously a five-year sequential pathway (a three-year undergraduate degree followed by a two-year B.Ed.) into four integrated years, ITEP is intended to produce subject-competent, pedagogically skilled teachers more efficiently while embedding early childhood care and education, foundational literacy and numeracy, inclusive education, and Indian knowledge traditions into the core curriculum.

As a flagship and still-evolving policy initiative, ITEP's rollout has so far been concentrated in a defined set of pilot institutions — Indian Institutes of Technology, National Institutes of Technology, Regional Institutes of Education, select central and state universities, and a limited number of government colleges — rather than the much larger universe of privately and publicly managed B.Ed. colleges affiliated to state universities, which continue to admit students into the

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conventional B.Ed. programme. This phased and uneven geography of implementation forms the starting point of the present paper.

2. Conceptual Overview of ITEP

2.1 Structure and Defining Features

ITEP departs from earlier teacher education models in several structural respects. Table 1 summarises its principal features as notified by the NCTE and the Ministry of Education.

Feature	Description
Duration	Four years (full-time, undergraduate)
Degree combinations offered	B.A. B.Ed., B.Sc. B.Ed., B.Com. B.Ed. (dual-major)
School stages catered to	Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary (NEP 2020's 5+3+3+4 structure)
Admission route	National Common Entrance Test (NCET), conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on behalf of the NCTE
Regulatory authority	National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)
Eligibility	Completion of Class 12 (any stream — Humanities, Science, Commerce, or other)
Implementing institutions (current phase)	Select Central/State Universities, IITs, NITs, Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs), Institutions of Eminence, and government colleges
Targeted full transition	Minimum qualification for school teaching from 2030 onward, per NEP 2020

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2.2 Phased National Rollout

I TEP was launched in pilot mode from the 2023–24 academic session, with the NCTE granting recognition to an initial cohort of institutions and expanding the list in successive phases tied to each year's NCET admission cycle. Official notices indicate that recognition has been extended across multiple phases since 2023–24, with the number of participating Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) growing year on year as more central and state universities, IITs, NITs, RIEs, and government colleges seek and receive NCTE approval; by the 2025–26 admission cycle the pool of participating institutions, as reflected in NTA's publicly notified lists, had expanded considerably beyond the original pilot cohort. This pattern of phased, application-based expansion — rather than a single nationwide switchover — is an important structural feature for understanding how and when ITEP is likely to reach different categories of institutions, including university-affiliated B.Ed. colleges.

Phasing Milestones (as per NCTE/NTA public notices)

- 2023–24: Pilot launch of ITEP in an initial cohort of Teacher Education Institutions, largely Central/State universities, IITs, NITs and RIEs.
- 2024–25: Second phase of recognition extended to additional Central/State institutions, Institutions of Eminence, and Institutions of National Importance.
- 2025–26 and 2026–27: Continued phase-wise expansion of recognised institutions, with NCET conducted annually by the NTA for admission to all participating institutions.
- Full transition: NEP 2020 envisages ITEP as the standard route into school teaching from 2030, implying that affiliated B.Ed. colleges not yet covered will need to transition within this decade.

2.3 ITEP in the Gujarat and Ahmedabad District Context

Within Gujarat, institutional participation in ITEP's pilot phases has, to date, been limited to a small number of recognised universities; publicly available NTA institution lists for recent

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admission cycles show Gujarat's representation anchored chiefly around a state university recognised for the B.A. B.Ed. (Secondary) route. The much larger network of B.Ed. colleges affiliated to Gujarat University — including the substantial cluster of such colleges located in Ahmedabad District and currently delivering the University's revised 2017 B.Ed. syllabus — has not yet been brought within the ITEP fold and continues to operate the conventional two-year B.Ed. programme. This places Ahmedabad District's teacher educators in what may be described as an anticipatory rather than a retrospective relationship with ITEP: they are not yet implementing the programme, but the 2030 transition horizon set out in NEP 2020 makes their institutional readiness, professional perceptions, and anticipated concerns a live and time-sensitive policy question rather than a purely academic one.

3. Rationale and Significance of the Study

The bulk of empirical literature on ITEP published to date has drawn its evidence chiefly from pilot institutions — IITs, central universities, and similar nationally prominent Teacher Education Institutions — where dedicated infrastructure, faculty resources, and institutional autonomy differ substantially from the conditions prevailing in university-affiliated B.Ed. colleges. Affiliated colleges, which form the backbone of teacher supply in states such as Gujarat, operate under different administrative, financial, and regulatory constraints, and their faculty — the teacher educators who will eventually be called upon to deliver ITEP — have rarely been the direct subject of empirical inquiry. Ahmedabad District, as one of Gujarat's largest hubs for B.Ed. colleges affiliated to Gujarat University, offers a particularly relevant site for examining how the policy intent of ITEP intersects with the realities of an affiliated-college system that has not yet transitioned. A focused, context-specific study is therefore both timely and necessary: timely, because the 2030 deadline leaves a finite and shrinking window for preparatory action; and necessary, because policy design informed only by pilot-institution experience risks overlooking constraints and concerns specific to the affiliated-college ecosystem. This paper addresses that gap

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by building a literature-grounded conceptual framework and a proposed empirical methodology specifically oriented to Ahmedabad District's teacher educators.

4. Review of Related Literature

4.1 Policy Antecedents and the Vision Underlying ITEP

The conceptual roots of ITEP can be traced through several decades of policy thinking on teacher education. The Education Commission (1964–66) and the National Policy on Education (1986) established the foundational premise that teacher quality is inseparable from the quality of teacher preparation, leading to the creation of the NCTE as a statutory regulator (Government of India, 1966, 1986). The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (Government of India, 2009) subsequently called for closer integration of subject knowledge, pedagogy, and field engagement — a call that NEP 2020 operationalised through the four-year integrated model (Government of India, 2020). Earlier experiments with integrated teacher education, including models developed for open and distance learning contexts, had already demonstrated both the pedagogical promise and the implementation complexity of combining disciplinary and professional preparation within a single programme (Bose, 2013).

4.2 Strengths and Opportunities Identified in Existing Studies

Several recent studies frame ITEP positively as a structural improvement over the conventional B.Ed. pathway. Altaf and Haider (2025), drawing on semi-structured interviews with sixteen teacher educators, reported that participants recognised ITEP's potential to integrate theoretical and practical preparation more coherently, reduce the overall duration of teacher preparation by a year, and expose student-teachers to a genuinely multidisciplinary curriculum. Similar optimism is echoed in policy-analytical work that frames ITEP as a long-overdue alignment of teacher education with global standards of integrated professional preparation, and as an opportunity to

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embed early childhood care, foundational literacy, and inclusive-education content directly into pre-service training rather than treating these as later add-ons.

4.3 Challenges Identified in Existing Studies

Alongside this optimism, a substantial body of literature flags significant implementation challenges. Even before ITEP's formal notification, Bharti (2019) had identified persistent issues and concerns associated with four-year integrated teacher education models, including unresolved questions of curricular load and the recognition of dual degrees by recruiting bodies. Kundu (2021), examining stakeholder attitudes toward the four-year integrated B.Ed. format, found a mixed picture in which support for the underlying concept coexisted with apprehension about workload, regulatory clarity, and the career flexibility of graduates relative to those from conventional pathways. Gupta (2021) similarly reported that prospective teachers held generally favourable but cautious perceptions of the integrated format, with concerns centring on the dual-degree's recognised value in the job market and on the adequacy of institutional preparation to deliver it well.

More directly focused on ITEP itself, Altaf and Haider (2025) found that, alongside its strengths, teacher educators in their sample raised concerns about infrastructural readiness, the adequacy of faculty training for the programme's expanded scope, and the pace at which administrative and curricular guidance was being communicated to implementing institutions. Sumi (2024) similarly highlighted infrastructure and faculty-development gaps as central obstacles to ITEP's effective rollout, while a critical policy analysis by Sharma (2024) cautioned that the ambition of NEP 2020's teacher-education reforms could outpace the administrative and resource capacity of many institutions expected to implement them, particularly outside a small set of well-resourced pilot universities. Tiwari (2022), reviewing NEP 2020's broader implications for teacher education,

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similarly noted that translating policy intent into institutional practice would require sustained capacity-building rather than a one-time curricular change.

4.4 Research Gap

Taken together, this literature converges on a recurring set of concerns — infrastructure, faculty capacity, regulatory clarity, and institutional readiness — but its empirical base remains concentrated in pilot universities and nationally prominent institutions. None of the studies reviewed specifically examines the perspectives of teacher educators in university-affiliated B.Ed. colleges in Gujarat, and none addresses Ahmedabad District as a discrete administrative and institutional context. Given that affiliated colleges constitute the majority pathway through which Gujarat currently produces school teachers, and that these institutions have not yet begun ITEP implementation, this represents a clear and policy-relevant gap that the present paper seeks to address conceptually, ahead of a proposed empirical study.

5. Statement of the Problem

The problem investigated in this paper may be stated as follows: Teacher educators serving in B.Ed. colleges affiliated to Gujarat University in Ahmedabad District are likely to face a distinct set of administrative, infrastructural, curricular, and professional challenges in anticipation of the eventual implementation of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), and a structured conceptual and empirical framework is required to identify, understand, and address these challenges before the 2030 transition timeline mandated under NEP 2020 is reached.

6. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the conceptual and structural features of ITEP as envisaged under NEP 2020 and notified by the NCTE.

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2. To synthesise the strengths and challenges of ITEP implementation reported in existing national literature.
3. To develop a thematic conceptual framework for studying teacher educators' perspectives on the anticipated implementation of ITEP in Ahmedabad District.
4. To propose a detailed empirical research design and data-collection instrument for assessing the readiness, concerns, and recommendations of teacher educators regarding ITEP.
5. To suggest measures that may facilitate a smooth eventual transition to ITEP at the affiliated-college level in Gujarat.

7. Research Questions

- What are the structural and policy features that distinguish ITEP from the conventional B.Ed. programme currently offered in Ahmedabad District?
- What strengths and challenges of ITEP implementation have been documented in the existing national literature?
- What thematic categories best capture the range of challenges teacher educators in Ahmedabad District are likely to anticipate in relation to ITEP?
- What research design, sampling strategy, and data-collection tool would be appropriate for empirically studying these perspectives?
- What measures might support a smoother eventual transition of affiliated B.Ed. colleges in Ahmedabad District to the ITEP framework?

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8. Proposed Conceptual Framework

Based on the themes recurring across the literature reviewed in Section 4, this paper proposes a six-theme conceptual framework for organising the anticipated challenges of ITEP implementation as perceived by teacher educators in Ahmedabad District. This framework is intended to structure both the discussion that follows and the data-collection instrument proposed in Section 9.

Theme	Illustrative Indicators
1. Administrative & Regulatory Preparedness	Clarity on NCTE recognition procedures; alignment between university and NCTE timelines; awareness of NCET admission processes
2. Infrastructural & Resource Adequacy	Laboratory and ICT infrastructure; library and learning resources; classroom capacity for an expanded, multidisciplinary cohort
3. Faculty Capacity & Professional Development	Availability of faculty qualified to teach disciplinary-major content alongside pedagogy; need for orientation/FDPs; faculty workload implications
4. Curricular & Pedagogical Realignment	Mapping of the existing 2017 B.Ed. syllabus to ITEP's four-stage (5+3+3+4) curriculum; integration of FLN, ECCE and inclusive-education components
5. Admission, Enrolment & Student Profile	Effects of NCET-based admission on enrolment patterns; student awareness and preference for the four-year dual-major route
6. Institutional Culture & Change Readiness	Faculty and management attitudes toward structural change; communication and consultation mechanisms; resistance or readiness to change

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9. Proposed Methodology for Empirical Investigation

Because ITEP has not yet been implemented in Ahmedabad District's affiliated B.Ed. colleges, this paper does not report primary survey or interview data; rather, it sets out, in some procedural detail, the empirical research design through which the conceptual framework proposed in Section 8 may subsequently be tested. This design draws methodologically on the semi-structured interview approach used by Altaf and Haider (2025) in their study of teacher educators at pilot institutions, extended here to a larger, college-based sample appropriate to the affiliated-college context.

9.1 Research Design

A descriptive, cross-sectional mixed-method design is proposed, combining a structured Likert-type questionnaire (for breadth across the six framework themes) with open-ended interview items (for depth and locally specific detail). This combination allows both statistical summarisation of perceived challenge intensity and thematic analysis of teacher educators' own framing of their concerns and suggestions.

9.2 Population and Sample

The target population comprises teacher educators currently working in B.Ed. colleges affiliated to Gujarat University within Ahmedabad District, across government-aided, grant-in-aid, and self-financed institutions. A stratified purposive sample of approximately 60–80 teacher educators, drawn proportionately across these three management categories and across major method/pedagogy specialisations, is proposed in order to capture variation in institutional context while remaining feasible for a single-investigator study.

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9.3 Tool of Data Collection

A self-developed semi-structured questionnaire-cum-interview schedule is proposed, organised into six sections corresponding to the conceptual framework's six themes, with each section containing both closed (five-point Likert) and open-ended items. A sample version of this instrument, illustrating item construction for each theme, is provided in Appendix A.

9.4 Data Analysis Plan

Closed-item responses would be analysed using descriptive statistics (means, percentages, and standard deviations) computed theme-wise and disaggregated by management category and years of teaching experience. Open-ended responses would be analysed through thematic/content analysis, with codes generated inductively and subsequently mapped back onto the six framework themes to assess convergence or divergence with the literature-derived framework.

9.5 Ethical Considerations

- Voluntary participation, with informed consent obtained from all respondents prior to data collection.
- Assurance of anonymity and confidentiality in reporting institution-level and individual responses.
- Prior institutional permission sought from participating college principals and, where required, from Gujarat University.
- Right of respondents to withdraw at any stage without consequence.

10. Anticipated Implications and Discussion

Read against the conceptual framework proposed above, the literature reviewed in Section 4 suggests several plausible patterns that a subsequent empirical study in Ahmedabad District might be expected to test. On the dimension of administrative and regulatory preparedness, the relatively

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recent and phase-wise nature of NCTE recognition suggests that affiliated-college teacher educators — who have so far operated outside the ITEP recognition cycle — may report lower familiarity with NCET procedures and NCTE documentation requirements than counterparts already working within pilot institutions, echoing the policy-misalignment concerns noted by Sharma (2024).

On infrastructural and resource adequacy, the multidisciplinary breadth that ITEP demands — spanning a disciplinary major, foundational literacy and numeracy, inclusive education, and ICT integration — is likely to surface as a significant concern in an affiliated-college context where laboratory, library, and digital infrastructure has historically been built around the narrower requirements of the conventional B.Ed. curriculum, consistent with the infrastructural-deficit findings reported by Altaf and Haider (2025) and Sumi (2024).

Faculty capacity and professional development is, on the evidence of the literature, perhaps the most consistently flagged theme: delivering a genuinely dual-major programme requires either recruiting new disciplinary faculty or substantially reorienting existing teacher-educator faculty, a transition that Bharti (2019) and Kundu (2021) suggest is likely to generate both workload concerns and demand for structured orientation programmes well in advance of implementation. Curricular and pedagogical realignment — specifically, the mapping of Gujarat University's existing 2017 B.Ed. syllabus onto ITEP's four-stage structure — represents a theme not directly addressed in the national literature reviewed, since most existing studies concern institutions building ITEP curricula from a comparatively clean slate rather than bridging an established affiliated-college syllabus, making this a particularly important focus for the proposed empirical phase.

Finally, on institutional culture and change readiness, the mixed attitudes documented by Gupta (2021) and Kundu (2021) toward integrated formats suggest that successful transition will depend

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as much on communication, consultation, and perceived fairness in the change process as on resource allocation alone. Collectively, these anticipated patterns underscore that ITEP's eventual success in Ahmedabad District's affiliated colleges will be shaped less by the policy's design in isolation than by the adequacy of preparatory support extended to the institutions and educators who will be asked to implement it.

11. Recommendations and Suggestions for Effective Implementation

Proposed Measures for a Smooth Transition

- Phase-wise faculty orientation and Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs) on ITEP's curriculum and pedagogy, organised by Gujarat University well ahead of any rollout in affiliated colleges.
- An infrastructure-readiness audit of Ahmedabad District's affiliated B.Ed. colleges, identifying laboratory, library, and ICT gaps relative to ITEP's multidisciplinary requirements.
- A formal curriculum-mapping exercise bridging Gujarat University's revised 2017 B.Ed. syllabus with ITEP's four-stage (5+3+3+4) curricular structure.
- Structured mentoring or twinning arrangements between affiliated colleges and institutions already implementing ITEP (such as recognised state universities in Gujarat), to transfer practical implementation experience.
- Regular information-dissemination and consultation forums in which teacher educators are briefed on NCTE/NCET timelines and invited to raise institution-specific concerns.
- Establishment of a university-level monitoring and coordination cell to track affiliated colleges' readiness against the 2030 transition deadline and to channel feedback to the NCTE and state higher education authorities.

12. Limitations of the Study

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- This is a conceptual and policy-analytical paper; it synthesises secondary literature and proposes, but does not itself execute, an empirical data-collection phase among Ahmedabad District teacher educators.
- The literature drawn upon is based predominantly on pilot-institution experiences elsewhere in India, and its findings may not generalise fully to the affiliated-college context of Gujarat without empirical verification.
- ITEP's admission phases, recognised-institution lists, and regulatory guidance continue to evolve; specific figures and timelines cited here reflect the position as publicly notified up to the time of writing and may be superseded by subsequent NCTE/NTA notifications.

13. Conclusion

The Integrated Teacher Education Programme represents a deliberate and substantial reform of India's teacher education system, consolidating disciplinary and professional preparation within a single four-year degree and aligning teacher education with NEP 2020's broader restructuring of school stages. Its implementation, however, has so far been concentrated in a defined set of pilot institutions, leaving the much larger network of university-affiliated B.Ed. colleges — including those in Ahmedabad District functioning under Gujarat University — in an anticipatory position ahead of the policy's 2030 transition deadline. This paper has synthesised the available national literature on ITEP's strengths and challenges into a six-theme conceptual framework spanning administrative, infrastructural, faculty-related, curricular, admission-related, and institutional-culture dimensions, and has proposed a detailed empirical methodology, including a sample data-collection instrument, through which the perspectives of Ahmedabad District's teacher educators can be systematically studied. Pursuing this proposed empirical phase before the transition deadline arrives would allow Gujarat University and its affiliated colleges to move from a reactive to an anticipatory stance — identifying and addressing faculty, infrastructural, and curricular gaps

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in good time, and thereby improving the likelihood that ITEP's transformative intent is realised in practice rather than constrained by avoidable implementation barriers.

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