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Research Article

## Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha: A Study of perspectives by Stakeholders

 Subhrajyoti Nayak

Research Scholar, Department of Education, Central University of Odisha,  
Koraput, Odisha, India

Corresponding Author: \*Subhrajyoti Nayak 

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### Abstract

Teacher education stands at the heart of educational transformation, shaping the quality of learning and the future of society. Responding to issues about fragmentation and weak integration between theory and practice, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP). This study examines the current status of ITEP implementation in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Odisha and explores stakeholder perspectives on its impact, practices, and innovations. Using a descriptive survey design with a mixed-method approach, data were collected from student-teachers, teacher educators, and administrators through questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative findings, analyzed through a SWOC Analysis, indicate strengths such as a holistic curriculum, qualified faculty, and ICT-enabled environments, alongside weaknesses including inadequate resources, limited awareness, and curriculum overload. Qualitative findings reveal that while ITEP enhances professional identity, inclusivity, and reflective practice, challenges related to infrastructure, faculty readiness, and student stress persist. The study emphasizes the need for coordinated policy support, faculty development, and continuous review to strengthen ITEP implementation and improve teacher education in India.

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**KEYWORDS:** Integrated Teacher Education Programme, NEP 2020, Teacher Education, Stakeholder Perspectives

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher education forms the cornerstone of any educational system, as the quality of teachers determines the effectiveness of student learning and the overall development of society. In India, teacher education has long been criticized for its

fragmented nature, lack of integration between theory and practice, and inadequate professional preparation. Recognizing these challenges, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposed a visionary reform through the introduction of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP).

ITEP is a four-year integrated undergraduate programme designed to combine general education with professional teacher training. Unlike the traditional model where teacher education is pursued after graduation, ITEP seeks to prepare future teachers right from the beginning of their higher education journey. The programme emphasizes multidisciplinary learning, pedagogical skills, foundational literacy and numeracy, inclusive education, and experiential learning through internships and school-based field work. This approach aims to nurture highly competent, reflective, and committed educators who can meet the diverse needs of 21st-century classrooms.

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has taken the lead in framing the curriculum structure and guidelines for the implementation of ITEP across the country. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) offering teacher education have been encouraged to apply for the launch of ITEP by aligning their infrastructure, academic workforce, and curriculum with the prescribed standards.

In the state of Odisha, a region with varied socio-economic and educational profiles, the implementation of ITEP is both a challenge and an opportunity. While some institutions are already in the process of adapting to this new structure, others are still at the preparatory stage. Issues related to infrastructure readiness, availability of qualified teacher educators, financial investment, and institutional autonomy play a critical role in shaping the pace and success of implementation. Moreover, the perceptions and attitudes of key stakeholders including teacher educators, student-teachers, administrators, and policymakers towards ITEP significantly influence its adoption and long-term sustainability.

Despite its potential benefits, the actual process of implementing ITEP in Odisha remains under-explored. There is a need to investigate how stakeholders view this transition and whether institutional capacities are adequate to support it. This study is an attempt to examine the current status and stakeholder perspectives related to ITEP in Odisha's HEIs, with the aim of informing policy directions and enhancing the quality of teacher education in the state.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Existing literature on pre-service teacher education highlights multiple dimensions influencing teacher preparedness, professional identity, and institutional effectiveness. Studies focusing on the emotional and psychological dimensions of pre-service teachers reveal that teaching practicum significantly shapes their professional outlook. Oubibi and Zhou (2022) found that pre-service teachers initially experience strong positive emotions and high professional aspirations; however, prolonged teaching practice often leads to emotional decline due to inadequate emotional education and limited institutional support. Similarly, Beach and Pearson (1998) observed that conflicts related to curriculum, interpersonal relationships, and institutional structures intensify during clinical experiences,

prompting a gradual shift in coping strategies from avoidance to reflective self-examination.

Research examining instructional competence and engagement efficacy emphasizes the centrality of student engagement in effective teaching. Asare and Amo (2023) [2] demonstrated that pre-service teachers' engagement efficacy was the strongest predictor of instructional effectiveness, outweighing classroom management and instructional strategy skills. Peterson and Treagust (1995) [13] further established that problem-based learning frameworks enhance pedagogical reasoning by enabling pre-service teachers to integrate content knowledge, learner understanding, and curriculum goals.

With the growing emphasis on technology integration and research orientation, Hsu and Lin (2020) found that ICT-based training modules improved perceived TPACK and attitudes toward technology, though they did not significantly influence actual technology adoption intentions. Katwijk and Veen (2021) [21] highlighted the positive relationship between teacher research, teaching quality, and professional perceptions, underscoring the importance of inquiry-based graduation projects in teacher education. Complementing this, Christodoulou and Papanikolaou (2023) [5] emphasized the need for targeted instructional interventions to enhance critical thinking and epistemological sophistication among pre-service teachers.

Literature specifically addressing Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) under NEP 2020 reflects both optimism and concern. Nial, Rout, and Nag (2024) and Mishra (2022) acknowledged ITEP's potential to promote interdisciplinary learning, professional preparedness, and systemic reform, while cautioning against rapid implementation without addressing infrastructural and faculty-related gaps. Chakraborty (2022) [4] and Kumar and Kumari (2021) identified institutional unpreparedness, inadequate ICT facilities, and insufficient faculty training as major constraints. Studies on stakeholder perceptions revealed mixed responses: while student-teachers appreciated early school exposure and integrated pedagogy (Sharma & Kapoor, 2021; Meenakshi, 2023), concerns were raised regarding workload intensity, financial burden, and disciplinary dilution (Gill, 2024) [6].

Administrative, digital, and inclusive dimensions further complicate ITEP implementation. Rai (2023) and Joshi (2022) highlighted deficits in digital readiness and faculty orientation, while Naik (2023) pointed to governance ambiguities and limited institutional autonomy. Sarkar (2021) and Reddy (2024) emphasized the need for stronger inclusivity practices and coherent interdisciplinary collaboration. Collectively, the literature indicates that while ITEP represents a transformative shift in teacher education, its success depends on institutional readiness, faculty development, infrastructural adequacy, and sustained policy support.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) associated with the implementation of

the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha?

2. What are the perspectives of Stakeholders regarding impact, practices, and innovations for the implementation of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha?

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges (SWOC) of implementation of ITEP in HEIs of Odisha.
2. To explore the perspectives of stakeholders on the implementation of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha with reference to its impact, practices, and innovations.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

For the present study, descriptive survey method was used. The researcher has employed both quantitative & qualitative research design to learn about stakeholders' viewpoints on the implementation of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

#### Population

In the present study, population consists all the stakeholders associated with the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

#### Sample

For selecting sample, the investigator used random sampling method. For this study purpose, the sample has been selected randomly from 1 institute (out of 2 institutes) i.e. MPC

Autonomous College, Takhatpur, Baripada, using Lottery method. 90 students (45 Students from first year & 45 Students from second year) and 10 Faculty Members were selected randomly including the Department Head.

#### Tools

In the present study the following self-made tools were used for the data collection:

1. Questionnaire (for Students & Teacher educators)
2. Interview Schedule (for Teacher educators & Administrators)

#### Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Quantitative data were analyzed using percentages and bar graphs to see the trends in various points while qualitative data were examined through logical and narrative analysis to capture key themes and contextual insights and then Overall analysis was done in two phases i.e data organisation and critical interpretation.

#### MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Here are the Major Findings of the Study organized under two parts:

- a) Quantitative Findings (SWOC analysis)
- b) Qualitative Findings (Stakeholder Perspectives)

#### A) Quantitative Findings (SWOC Analysis)

This section presents the quantitative findings of the study through a SWOC analysis, highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in the implementation of ITEP across Higher Education Institutions:

#### Strengths

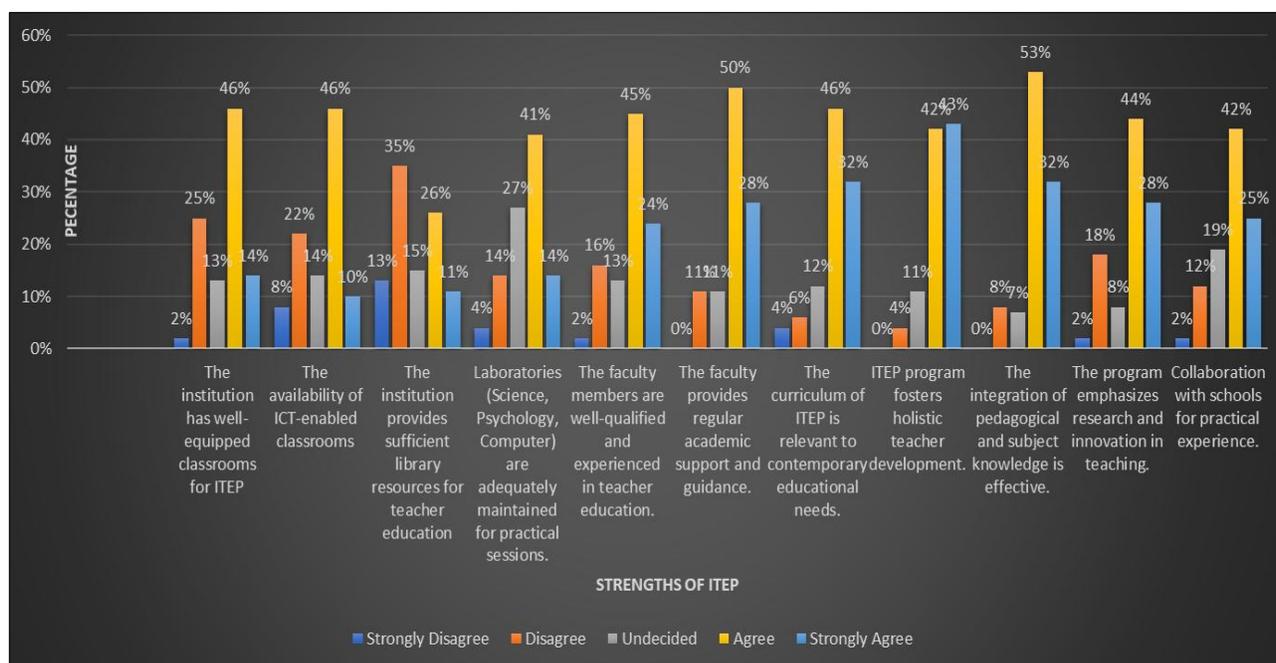


Fig 1.1:

- Classrooms and labs are largely well-equipped for ITEP, although variability exists across institutions.
- A majority of students acknowledged the availability of ICT-enabled teaching environments.
- Faculty members are generally seen as qualified, supportive, and experienced.
- The curriculum is viewed as relevant, modern, and fostering holistic and interdisciplinary teacher

- development.
- Strong emphasis is placed on blending pedagogy with content knowledge and encouraging research and innovation.
- Institutional collaborations for practicum and real-life teaching exposure are moderately present.

**Weaknesses**

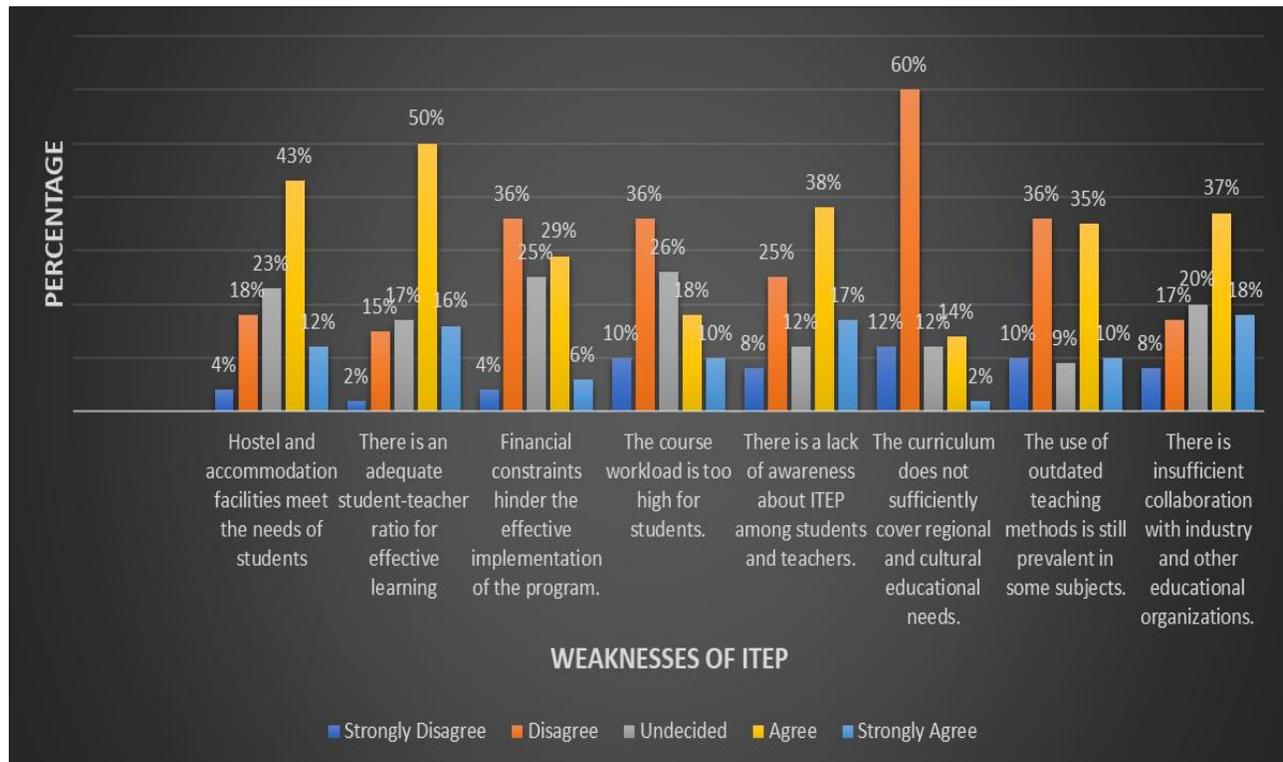


Fig 1.2:

- Library resources are found to be insufficient in several institutions.
- There is significant lack of awareness about ITEP among both students and educators.
- The curriculum reportedly lacks regional and cultural contextualization.

- Traditional teaching methods are still prevalent in some institutions.
- Financial constraints and a high course workload present additional challenge for students.
- Industry and external collaborations are perceived as limited or absent.

**Opportunities:**

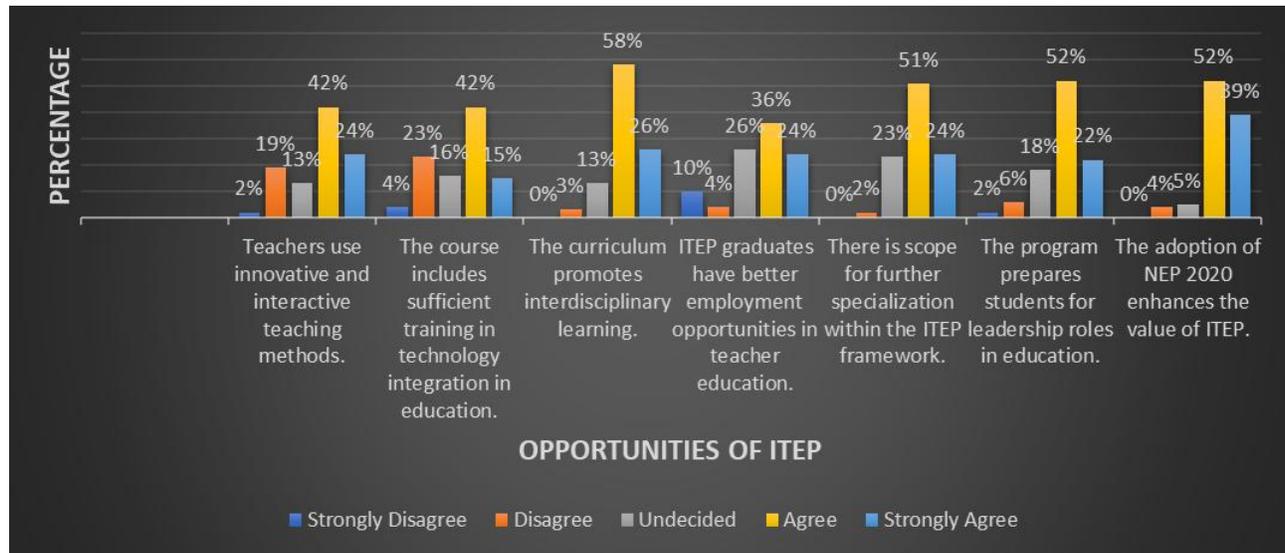


Fig 1.3

- Use of innovative teaching practices and technology is on the rise.
- The curriculum supports interdisciplinary learning and specialization.
- ITEP graduates are believed to have better employment prospects and leadership potential.
- The adoption of NEP 2020 is widely seen as enhancing the value and vision of ITEP.

**Challenges:**

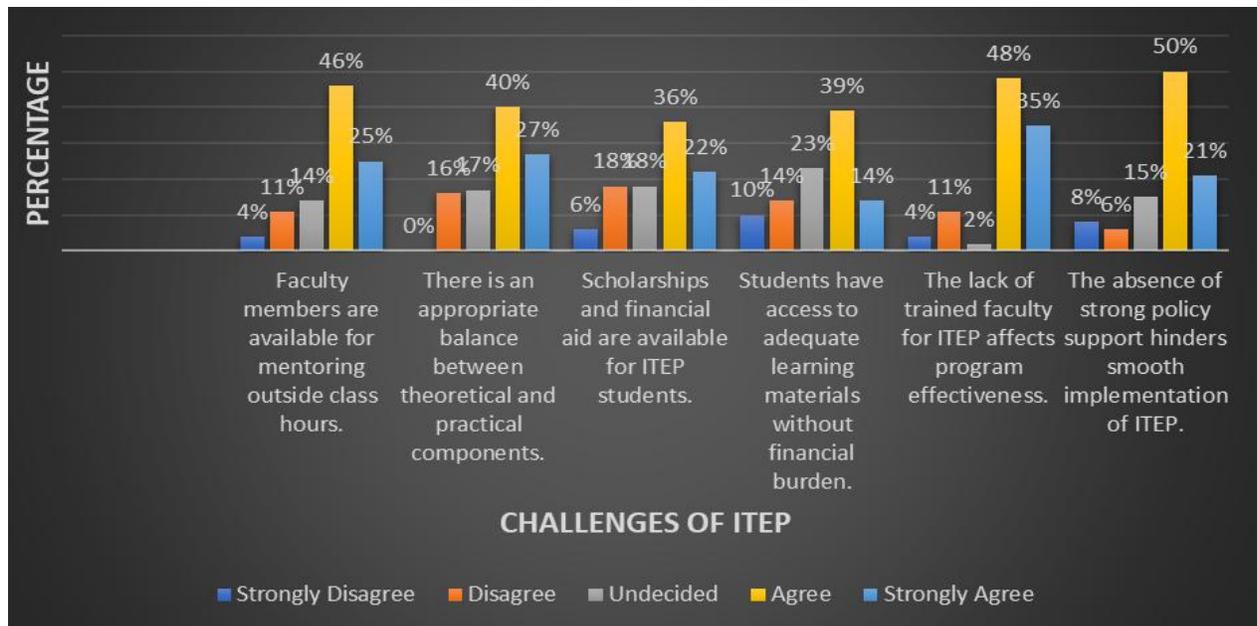


Fig 1.4

- Despite willingness, faculty availability and mentoring beyond classroom hours are not consistent.
- Imbalance in theoretical and practical components still exists in some institutions.

- Access to learning materials without financial burden remains uneven.
- There is a serious concern about a lack of trained ITEP faculty and weak policy-level support.

### B) Qualitative Findings (Stakeholder Perspectives)

The qualitative findings reveal that ITEP positively impacts teacher education by promoting holistic, interdisciplinary training and preparing student-teachers for 21st-century classrooms through reflective practices and integration of theory with practice. However, challenges such as faculty shortages, inadequate infrastructure, untrained staff, and curriculum overload hinder effective implementation. Best practices like peer mentoring, community learning, reflective journaling, and early internships are appreciated. Stakeholders emphasized the need for teacher training, better funding, digital infrastructure, and research support. ITEP is seen as shaping socially responsible, inclusive educators with strong critical thinking and communication skills. Compared to traditional programs, ITEP is favored for its alignment with NEP 2020, flexibility, and emphasis on professional identity. Suggested curriculum changes include reducing theoretical load, increasing field-based activities, and incorporating local contexts. Technological integration remains weak due to infrastructure gaps and lack of training. While internships and peer support motivate students, issues like course duration, academic stress, and career uncertainty cause demotivation, highlighting the need for counselling. Additional recommendations include regular program reviews, greater institutional autonomy, and structured feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement.

### EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

The outcome of this research can be useful for researchers, students, teacher educators, administrators and Policy makers. The utility of this research is as follows:

- The findings inform policymakers and institutions to strengthen policy, infrastructure, and support systems for effective ITEP implementation.
- Insights into curricular gaps and faculty needs guide curriculum revision, regional relevance, and targeted professional development.
- Identifies student challenges and implementation issues emphasize the need for counselling, mentorship, and continuous review mechanisms.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to various constraints the present study have some limitations and narrows in scope. However, it can guide further interest in research under this topic. From literature reviews and current trends in education based on NEP 2020 implementation, many topics evolve for further research. Few of them are:

- Future research can compare ITEP implementation across different states to identify regional variations and best practices.

- A long-term study can be conducted to assess the actual impact of ITEP on teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

### 5. CONCLUSION

The study examined the status and stakeholder perspectives on the implementation of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha using a mixed-method approach. Findings indicate that ITEP is a progressive reform aligned with NEP 2020, promoting holistic, interdisciplinary, and practice-oriented teacher education. However, its implementation is constrained by inadequate resources, limited awareness, financial and infrastructural gaps, faculty shortages, and student stress. While opportunities exist through policy reforms, leadership development, and technology integration, persistent systemic challenges require urgent attention. The study highlights the need for a coordinated, multi-stakeholder support system and offers valuable insights for policymakers, institutions, and researchers to strengthen teacher education in India.

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#### About the corresponding author



**Subhrajyoti Nayak** is a Research Scholar in the Department of Education at the Central University of Odisha, Koraput, India. His academic interests focus on educational research, pedagogy, and policy studies. He is committed to advancing innovative teaching practices and contributing to scholarly discussions in the field of education.