A Study on Teacher Readiness towards Implementing Integrated Teacher Education Programme in Kerala

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
	The present study investigates the readiness of teacher educators in Kerala towards implementing ITEP in alignment with the NEP 2020. The study was conducted following a Normative survey method, the data was collected from 38 teacher educators across various universities in Kerala. The study was conducted to identify the institutional constraints, assess the faculty readiness and explore the faculty development needs in the light of implementation of ITEP in Kerala. The data was collected using Teacher Readiness Inventory prepared by the investigator. The researcher employed percentage analysis to analyse the responses of the items to reveal both strengths, concerns in preparedness, facilities and professional development needs

Introduction

Educational policies help to standardize and modernize curricula to meet contemporary demands. Policies also help to encourage research and innovation and align Indian education with global standards.

The gap between the current state of learning outcomes and what is required must be bridged through undertaking major reforms that bring the highest quality, equity, and integrity into the system, from early childhood care and education through higher education (NEP, 2020). India's educational policies play a crucial role in producing informed, competent, and responsible citizens who can strengthen country's socio-economic and cultural development. The key aims of educational policies are to promote universal access to education, to ensure quality education, to foster holistic development, to prepare a knowledge-based economy, to build a sustainable future, to achieve social transformation, to promote life-long learning, to enhance global competitiveness and to align education with National Development Goals.

The National Educational Policy 2020, under the chairmanship and guidance of Dr. K. Kasturirangan, is introduced by the Government of India to rebuild the education system and make it more flexible, holistic, and multidisciplinary. It is the first educational policy of 21st century that aims to address the contemporary and growing issues in the field of education. According to NEP 2020, the committee proposes revamping the existing educational system through restructuring new regulations and alignment with 21st century goals, while nurturing creative potential of each individual. A good education institution is one in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a wide range of learning experiences are offered, and where sound physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students. (NEP, 2020)

The Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) prepares prospective teachers through a four-year undergraduate degree program. This programme is offered by many central and state universities and institutions in India. It is a dual major degree which offers courses like B.A B. Ed, B. Sc B. Ed and B. Com B. Ed. Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) is a critical step toward improving the quality of teacher education in India, addressing limitations in traditional teacher training systems and aligning teacher preparation with modern pedagogical demands.

Need and Significance of the Study

ITEP equally prioritizes academic rigor and pedagogical rigor in shaping an education future that both addresses the needs of today's learners, and prepares them for the future. The Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) is an important advancement in teacher preparation that combines academic examiner ship with educational practice to cultivate a new generation of educators. (Jabbar & Barkati, 2024)

The present study is to assess the faculty readiness of the teacher educators while introducing the Integrated Teacher Education Programmes in the educational institutions in Kerala. In the light of NEP 2020, the undergraduate courses become 4-year integrated course, where the B. Ed course will get integrated into the undergraduate programme. Further, undergraduate programmes will become 8 semester courses with multiple exit points. This shift will change course structure, syllabus and assessment practices, credit patterns. Hence, teacher educators also have to shift from the traditional B. Ed system of teaching to a different programme, which could be challenging for at least some of them.

By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B. Ed degree that offers a broad disciplinary content and pedagogy and includes strong practicum training in the form of student-teaching at local schools. (NEP, 2020) Hence, most of the colleges have opted for Integrated Teacher Education Programme courses and they are planning to implement these courses in the recent future. As a result, the B. Ed faculty in the present B. Ed colleges have to align with the departments in the Arts and Science Colleges with the introduction of ITEP. The present study attempts to identify the institutional constraints while implementing ITEP. The relevance of introducing ITEP in India is to improve the quality of teacher education by reducing the redundancy in the traditional B. Ed programme, for encouraging holistic and multi-disciplinary education, to address the problems of teacher shortage, to align teacher education in India with global benchmarks, to equip the teachers for inclusive and experiential learning and to enhance teacher accountability. This study also tries to explore the faculty development needs while implementing Integrated Teacher Education Programme.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the Institutional Constraints in the implementation of ITEP
- To assess Faculty Readiness in the implementation of ITEP
- To explore Faculty Development Needs while implementing ITEP

Methodology

The data for the present study was collected following a Normative Survey Method.

Sample

The study was carried out on a representative sample of 38 teacher educators using simple random technique from different teacher training colleges in University of Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi University

and University of Calicut. The sample included educators with varied experience and both the genders. The sample distribution based on gender is represented in the chart and is shown below.

Gender
38 responses

● Male
● Female
● Other

78.9%

21.1%
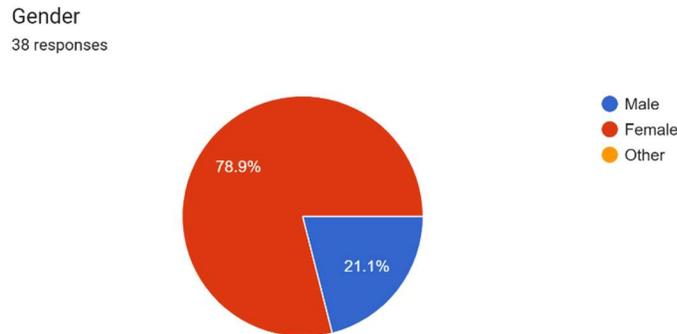
The sample distribution based on years of experience in the teacher education field is represented in the chart and is shown below.

Years of Experience in Teacher Education
38 responses

● Less than 5 years
● 5-10 years
● More than 10 years

39.5%

18.4%

42.1%
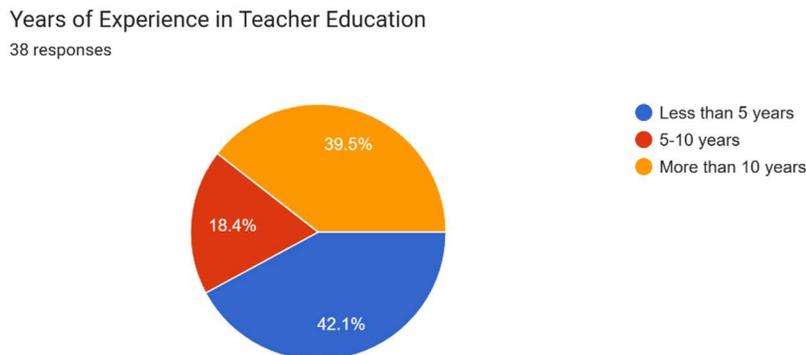
Tool used for the Study

Teacher Readiness Inventory prepared by the investigator was used for collecting data from the teacher educators from different teacher training colleges in Kerala. The inventory consisted of 35 statements, where, the participants have to respond whether the statements are highly acceptable, moderately acceptable, neutral, slightly acceptable or not at all acceptable for them.

Each of the option signifies,

Highly Acceptable: Fully aware, prepared and motivated to implement ITEP.

Moderately Acceptable: Somewhat prepared but need more clarity and support.

Neutral: Need more information.

Slightly Acceptable: Doubts and concerns about it.

Not at all Acceptable: Not ready or interested.

The tool was validated by an expert team and the data was collected using google forms.

Statistical Technique used for the study

The data were analysed using Percentage Analysis to interpret the responses.

Analysis of the Study

In the present study, the researcher has employed Teacher Readiness Inventory which consisted of 35 statements with regard to the readiness of teacher educators towards introducing Integrated Teacher Education Programme. The participants of the study have to mark whether the statement is Highly Acceptable (HA), Moderately Acceptable (MA), Neutral (N), Slightly Acceptable (SA) and Not at all Acceptable (NA) for them.

The researcher has used percentage analysis to categorize the responses of the participants. The table below shows the percentage analysis of each items in the Teacher Readiness Inventory.

Sl.no	Statements	HA	MA	N	SA	NA
1.	Aware of ITEP introduced by NEP 2020	50%	42.1%	2.6%	5.3%	0%
2.	Got more information about ITEP through mass media.	23.7%	55.3%	13.2%	7.9%	0%
3.	Feel that the existing system is more practical than ITEP.	21.1%	34.2%	26.3%	13.2%	5.3%
4.	ITEP demands a significant restructuring of the curriculum	60.5%	34.2%	0%	5.3%	0%
5.	My colleagues do not consider the introduction of ITEP to be significant.	18.4%	13.2%	42.1%	13.2%	13.2%
6.	Reluctant to attend ITEP workshop initially	2.6%	23.7%	10.5%	23.7%	39.5%
7.	ITEP workshop I attended provided	31.6%	39.5%	13.2%	7.9%	7.9%

	useful information					
8.	Prefer to attend more orientation sessions of ITEP	81.6%	18.4%	0%	0%	0%
9.	Believe ITEP workshops would help me to overcome the confusions with regard to its implementation.	65.8%	21.1%	5.3%	7.9%	0%
10.	Teacher educators may find it difficult to adapt to ITEP without in-service training.	60.5%	26.3%	10.5%	2.6%	0%
11.	Ongoing professional development is essential for ITEP success.	52.6%	34.2%	5.3%	5.3%	2.6%
12.	The existing facilities in our institution are sufficient for ITEP.	10.5%	26.3%	18.4%	23.7%	21.1%
13.	ITEP will address the challenges of existing teacher education programme.	36.8%	26.3%	21.1%	2.6%	13.2%
14.	Willing to work in an institution that will run ITEP.	55.3%	28.9%	13.2%	2.6%	0%
15.	Experienced enough to handle the students with diverse needs in ITEP classrooms.	23.7%	36.8%	26.3%	5.3%	7.9%
16.	Have enough academic credit points to step into institutions that offer ITEP.	21.1%	36.8%	23.7%	10.5%	7.9%
17.	Will accept situations of additional responsibilities and workload.	34.2%	44.7%	10.5%	7.9%	2.6%
18.	Willing to acquire additional qualifications for ITEP.	57.9%	28.9%	5.3%	2.6%	5.3%
19.	Able to handle inclusive classroom	42.1%	36.8%	13.2%	7.9%	0%
20.	Believe ITEP will reduce the current gap in teacher preparedness for diverse classroom.	26.3%	42.1%	18.4%	5.3%	7.9%
21.	Teacher preparedness is required in	57.9%	34.2%	5.3%	2.6%	0%

	terms of acquiring skills before implementing ITEP.					
22.	Able to provide technology integrated learning sessions for students.	52.6%	28.9%	13.2%	5.3%	0%
23.	Comfortable to teach vocational and skill-based components included in ITEP.	31.6%	42.1%	13.2%	10.5%	2.6%
24.	Sufficient learning resources are NOT available for implementing ITEP.	39.5%	31.6%	21.1%	7.9%	0%
25.	It is quite difficult to access the learning resources for ITEP.	21.1%	39.5%	21.1%	13.2%	5.3%
26.	ITEP will encourage more students to take up teaching as a profession	31.6%	28.9%	26.3%	2.6%	10.5%
27.	ITEP will improve the quality of teacher preparation programs.	36.8%	36.8%	13.2%	5.3%	7.9%
28.	Modifications are necessary for teaching practice to meet ITEP requirements.	68.4%	18.4%	10.5%	2.6%	0%
29.	ITEP will rectify the issue of lack of continuity across teacher education stages.	18.4%	47.4%	21.1%	5.3%	7.9%
30	ITEP can rectify the mismatch between field expectations and teacher preparation.	26.3%	31.6%	28.9%	2.6%	10.5%
31.	ITEP implementation will emphasize professionalism.	36.8%	28.9%	21.1%	2.6%	10.5%
32.	Teachers have to play multiple roles when implementing ITEP.	52.6%	31.6%	13.2%	2.6%	0%
33	Teachers need to design content and subject specific teaching, learning and assessment strategies.	47.4%	44.7%	7.9%	0%	0%
34.	Confident to implement the new	36.8%	44.7%	5.3%	10.5%	2.6%

	methodologies and pedagogical strategies of ITEP.				
35.	Confident to implement the new assessment methods introduced through ITEP.	44.7%	31.6%	10.5%	10.5%	2.6%

Table 1: Percentage Analysis of items of the Teacher Readiness Inventory

Interpretation and Findings of the Study

From this study, the researcher attempted to identify the institutional constraints in the implementation of ITEP, assess the faculty readiness in the implementation of ITEP and explore the faculty development needs while implementing ITEP. Through the analysis of the data the researcher reached the following interpretations.

Institutional Constraints

- Only about 26% teachers moderately agree that the existing facilities in the institutions are sufficient for implementing ITEP. On the other hand, a good majority cannot accept the existing facilities in the institutions are sufficient for implementing ITEP as there is a requirement for building facilities.
- Most of the teachers agree that sufficient learning resources are not available in their institutions for implementing ITEP.
- Many of them moderately agree that it is quite difficult to access the learning resources for the programme.
- Most of the teachers moderately agree that ITEP will rectify the issue of lack of continuity across teacher education stages due to lack of institutional facilities such as infrastructure and other resources.

Faculty Readiness

- A majority of teachers (50%) are aware about the introduction of ITEP and are fully willing to implement ITEP.
- However, some teachers (34%) moderately accept that the existing system is more practical than ITEP.

- A good majority of teachers agree that ITEP demands a significant restructuring of the existing curriculum.

- Most of the teachers were prepared to attend ITEP workshops in the first phase of introducing ITEP itself.

- Many of them believe that ITEP will address the challenges of existing teacher education programme.

- More than 50% of teachers are willing to work in institutions that will run ITEP.

- A greater number of teachers are somewhat prepared for situations of additional responsibilities and workload.

- A lion's share of teachers is willing to acquire additional qualifications for ITEP.

- Maximum number of teachers agree that they are able to handle inclusive classroom and are able to provide technology integrated learning sessions for students.

- Majority of the teachers think that ITEP will encourage more students to take up teaching as a profession and they strongly believe that ITEP will improve the quality of teacher preparation programmes.

- Teacher educators moderately accept that ITEP can rectify the mismatch between field expectations and teacher preparedness.

- Majority of teachers (52%) highly accept that teachers have to play multiple roles in ITEP.

- Most of the teachers moderately accept that they are confident enough to implement the new methodologies and pedagogical strategies of ITEP.

- Majority of teachers are highly confident to implement the new assessment methods introduced through ITEP.

Faculty Development Needs

- Most of the teachers found that the ITEP workshop they had already attended was very useful, but need more clarity regarding the programme.

- More than 80% of teacher educators prefer/ want to attend more orientation sessions of ITEP.

- It is clear that still there are confusions among teachers regarding the implementation of ITEP and most of them believe that workshops could help them overcome such misunderstandings.

- A majority of teachers highly accept to attend in-service training sessions to adapt to ITEP.

- They agree that there is a need of continuous support for their professional development which is essential for ITEP success.

- A lot of teachers moderately accept that they are experienced enough to handle the students with diverse needs in ITEP classrooms, however, they need more support and guidance.

- Most of the teachers moderately agree that they have enough academic credit points to step into institutions that offer ITEP, yet they need support and only a handful of them lack enough points.

- A good majority of teachers moderately accept that ITEP will reduce the current gap in teacher preparedness for diverse classroom and hence they need proper direction.

- Majority of teachers highly accept that teacher preparedness is required in terms of acquiring skills before implementing ITEP.

- Majority of them moderately accept teaching vocational and skill-based components included in ITEP, hence they need more support and exposure.

- Majority of teachers suggest that modifications and necessary guidelines should be provided for teaching practice to meet ITEP requirements.

- Most of the teachers highly accept that ITEP implementation will emphasize professionalism.

Conclusion

The study conducted among the teacher educators concludes that, the majority of teacher educators have a positive and proactive attitude towards the implementation of Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in Kerala. More than half of the participants of the study have an awareness of ITEP and are willing to implement it, considering it as a necessary step to improve teacher quality and educational relevance. Many teacher educators have an opinion that ITEP will enable a holistic approach and it will address the limitations of traditional B. Ed programme. There is a common preparedness from the part of teacher educators to attend more orientation sessions on ITEP for better clarity and to adapt to the pedagogical and structural demands of ITEP. Teacher educators also agree in playing multiple roles and take up situations of additional responsibilities in their professional life in alignment with ITEP. There is a widespread agreement that ITEP could attract more students towards the teaching profession and elevate the overall status of teacher education in India.

At the same time, the study clearly highlights several challenges that must be addressed for the effective implementation of ITEP in Kerala. Despite their enthusiasm, many teacher educators express only moderate confidence in implementing new methodologies and assessment practices. The study also

reveals that there is a demand for more infrastructural facilities in the light of the implementation of Integrated Teacher Education Programme in Kerala. Teacher Educators raised their concerns regarding the availability of learning resources and other facilities. Most of the teacher educators need in-service training and sustained guidance for professional development. Teacher educators also suggest the need for modifications in teaching practice to balance with ITEP standards. To conclude, there is a strong foundational acceptance of ITEP among teacher educators in Kerala, its success will solely depend on continuous support, clear communication and well-resourced implementation.

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