

# Perceived Effectiveness of 2-Year and 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Pathways

Shah Mittal P<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Kusum R. Yadav<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kadi Sarva Vishwavidyalaya, Gujarat, India

<sup>2</sup>Research Guide, R. H. Patel B.Ed. College, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India

## Abstract

Teacher education reforms in India have introduced structural transformations aimed at improving the quality of teacher preparation. The traditional two-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme and the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), recommended under the National Education Policy 2020, represent two major pathways into the teaching profession. This paper presents a comparative review of teacher trainees' perceptions regarding these programme structures. Drawing upon peer-reviewed research studies and policy documents, the analysis examines curriculum design, internship experiences, professional preparedness, and perceived employability. Findings indicate that trainees in the two-year programme value its intensive professional focus, whereas those in the four-year integrated programme appreciate its holistic and continuous structure. The study concludes that both formats contribute meaningfully to teacher preparation, though improvements in implementation and practical integration remain necessary.

**Keywords:** teacher education, B.Ed., integrated B.Ed., teacher trainees, perception study, NEP 2020

## INTRODUCTION

Teacher education serves as the foundation for developing competent and reflective practitioners. In India, the B.Ed. programme has historically been the primary professional qualification for school teaching. Initially offered as a one-year course, it was later extended to two years to strengthen pedagogical depth and school internship components.

The introduction of the National Education Policy 2020 marked a significant reform by recommending a four-year integrated B.Ed. as the minimum qualification for teachers by 2030 (Government of India, 2020). This reform emphasizes early professional preparation, integration of disciplinary knowledge with pedagogy, and extended school engagement.

Given these structural changes, understanding teacher trainees' perceptions of both programme models is essential to evaluate their effectiveness and practical relevance.

## Review of Literature

### Perceptions of the Two-Year B.Ed. Programme

Research examining trainee perspectives on the two-year B.Ed. programme suggests generally favorable attitudes toward its professional orientation. Gupta and Rakwal (2020) reported that teacher trainees appreciated the expanded duration, which allowed for improved engagement with pedagogy, assessment strategies, and internship experiences. Many participants perceived the revised duration as beneficial for

enhancing professional competence.

Similarly, Nataraja (2016) found that teacher trainees expressed positive attitudes toward the programme's contribution to teaching skills and career advancement. However, some respondents indicated concerns about curriculum overload and financial implications associated with the extended duration.

Yadav and Singh (2023) further observed that trainees valued the structured nature of the programme but recommended greater emphasis on practical application and digital pedagogy.

Overall, empirical findings suggest that while the two-year B.Ed. programme is perceived as professionally intensive and skill-oriented, improvements in curriculum flexibility and practical alignment are needed.

### **Perceptions of the Four-Year Integrated B.Ed. Programme**

The Four-Year Integrated B.Ed. Programme, formally conceptualized under the National Education Policy 2020, represents a structural shift in teacher education in India. Unlike the traditional post-graduate B.Ed. model, the integrated programme combines disciplinary studies with professional teacher preparation from the outset of undergraduate education. Research studies examining trainee perceptions suggest that this structural integration significantly influences their academic engagement, professional identity formation, and perceived preparedness for teaching careers.

#### **Holistic Curriculum Integration**

One of the most frequently cited advantages reported by trainees is the holistic nature of the curriculum. According to Gupta (2021), prospective teachers perceive the integrated programme as academically cohesive because it merges subject specialization with pedagogical training across four years. Rather than experiencing pedagogy as an "add-on" qualification, trainees develop conceptual linkages between content knowledge and teaching methodology simultaneously.

This integrated structure reduces fragmentation often reported in traditional models, where disciplinary knowledge is acquired during graduation and pedagogical training occurs separately afterward. Trainees report that early exposure to educational psychology, philosophy of education, and classroom practices helps them contextualize their subject learning within real teaching environments.

#### **Early Professional Socialization**

Another prominent perception relates to early professional socialization. Students entering the integrated programme immediately identify as future teachers. Research indicates that this early identification fosters stronger professional commitment and intrinsic motivation (Gupta, 2021). Continuous interaction with school settings through field visits, micro-teaching sessions, and internships across semesters contributes to the gradual formation of a professional teacher identity.

In contrast to the two-year B.Ed., where many candidates consider teaching as a secondary career option, integrated programme trainees often view teaching as their primary professional goal from the beginning of their higher education journey.

#### **Extended Internship and Field Exposure**

Teacher trainees frequently emphasize the value of sustained internship components embedded throughout the four-year curriculum. The NEP 2020 framework recommends continuous field engagement rather than isolated practice teaching sessions (Government of India, 2020). Trainees report that prolonged school exposure enhances classroom management skills, instructional planning, and student assessment techniques.

Furthermore, integrated internships allow students to observe diverse school contexts, including rural and urban settings, government and private institutions, thereby broadening their understanding of educational realities. This sustained engagement contributes to higher self-efficacy and perceived classroom readiness.

### **Development of 21st Century Skills**

Studies also indicate that trainees perceive the integrated programme as more aligned with contemporary educational demands. The curriculum incorporates digital pedagogy, inclusive education, multidisciplinary learning, and competency-based assessment. As education systems increasingly emphasize technology integration and learner-centered approaches, trainees report feeling better prepared to adapt to evolving classroom expectations.

Yadav and Singh (2023) observed that teacher trainees associate integrated programmes with stronger training in ICT integration and innovative pedagogical strategies. This perception is particularly relevant in the post-pandemic educational landscape, where digital competence has become essential.

### **Alignment with National and Global Standards**

The integrated programme is often viewed as harmonized with international teacher education models, where professional preparation begins at the undergraduate level. Trainees perceive this alignment as enhancing the credibility and standardization of teacher qualifications. Since NEP 2020 designates the four-year integrated degree as the minimum qualification for teachers by 2030, many students consider it advantageous for long-term employability and career progression (Government of India, 2020).

### **Perceived Challenges and Concerns**

Despite largely positive perceptions, trainees also report certain concerns. A common issue relates to curriculum intensity. The integration of disciplinary and professional courses sometimes results in a demanding academic workload. Students indicate that balancing subject depth with pedagogical training requires effective academic planning and institutional support.

Additionally, variations in institutional infrastructure, faculty expertise, and school partnerships influence trainee satisfaction. Where adequate mentoring and field supervision are lacking, perceptions of programme effectiveness may decline.

Some trainees also express uncertainty regarding transitional policy implementation, particularly in institutions shifting from traditional models to integrated frameworks. This indicates the need for systematic monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms.

### **Overall Perception Trend**

Overall, empirical evidence suggests that teacher trainees perceive the Four-Year Integrated B.Ed. Programme as:

- Holistic and comprehensive
- Professionally identity-building
- Practice-oriented with sustained internships
- Better aligned with policy reforms
- Supportive of long-term career stability

However, perceptions of effectiveness remain closely linked to quality of implementation and institutional preparedness.

## Comparative Analysis

### Curriculum Structure

The two-year B.Ed. is designed as a post-graduate professional qualification focusing primarily on pedagogical theory and practice. In contrast, the four-year integrated programme offers a blended approach that gradually develops disciplinary knowledge alongside pedagogical skills.

### Internship and Field Engagement

Research indicates that extended and continuous internships significantly influence trainee satisfaction. Integrated programmes typically provide sustained school exposure, whereas the two-year programme offers concentrated internship blocks (Gupta, 2021).

### Professional Identity and Employability

Trainees in integrated programmes often report stronger early identification with the teaching profession. Meanwhile, candidates entering the two-year programme frequently view teaching as a subsequent career choice following graduation. With NEP 2020 advocating the integrated pathway as the future standard, trainees perceive it as advantageous for long-term employability (Government of India, 2020).

## Discussion

Teacher trainees' perceptions highlight that both programme formats contribute uniquely to professional preparation. The two-year B.Ed. programme is appreciated for its focused and intensive training structure. Conversely, the four-year integrated programme is valued for its continuity, depth, and alignment with policy reforms.

The findings suggest that programme effectiveness depends not solely on duration but on quality of implementation, faculty support, and institutional infrastructure. Strengthening partnerships between universities and schools and enhancing digital integration can improve outcomes across both models.

## Conclusion

The transition from traditional teacher education structures to integrated models reflects India's commitment to improving educational quality. Teacher trainees generally perceive the four-year integrated programme as holistic and future-oriented, while the two-year B.Ed. remains respected for its concentrated professional training. Policymakers and institutions should integrate the strengths of both approaches to ensure comprehensive teacher preparation.

## References

1. Government of India. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Ministry of Education.
2. Gupta, A., & Rakwal, R. (2020). A study of the perceptions of teacher trainees towards the two-year teacher education programme being run in India. *Social Education Research*, 1(2), 1–10.
3. Gupta, D. P. (2021). Perception of prospective teachers towards four-year integrated teacher education programme. *Voices of Teachers and Teacher Educators*, 10(1), 45–52.
4. Nataraja, R. (2016). Attitude of teacher trainees towards two-year B.Ed. programme and their future. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(26), 2890–2897.
5. Yadav, M., & Singh, S. (2023). Student teachers' perceptions towards B.Ed. programme in contemporary policy context. *Journal of Indian Education*, 49(2), 78–92.