

# **CHAPTER I:**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Introduction**

### **1.1.1 Importance of teacher education**

Education serves as the cornerstone of any progressive society, and at the heart of this system are teachers, individuals entrusted with shaping the intellectual, emotional, and ethical development of future generations. The influence of a teacher extends far beyond the classroom; they nurture curiosity, foster a love for learning, and play a pivotal role in developing responsible and engaged citizens. It is in this context that teacher education becomes fundamentally important, as it provides the framework through which aspiring educators are equipped to assume this critical responsibility.

Teacher education refers to the formal process of preparing individuals for the teaching profession. This process is typically divided into two distinct phases: pre-service education, which prepares individuals before they enter the teaching workforce, and in-service education, which supports the ongoing professional growth of practicing teachers. Both components are essential in cultivating knowledgeable, skilled, and reflective educators.

The importance of teacher education lies in its direct impact on the quality of classroom instruction and student learning outcomes. Effective teacher preparation programs ensure that future educators understand how students learn, can plan lessons that are engaging and inclusive, and are capable of adapting to diverse learning needs. A well-prepared teacher can positively influence not only academic achievement but also the social and emotional development of students.

Comprehensive teacher education programs go beyond the transmission of academic content. They equip future educators with a broad repertoire of instructional strategies, emphasize the importance of reflective practice, and instil the capacity to meet the varied needs of learners. Such training leads to classrooms where students are more engaged, achieve higher levels of success, and are less likely to fall behind or drop out.

Moreover, teacher education contributes to broader educational and societal goals. Educators who are effectively trained are more adept at promoting critical thinking, collaboration, and ethical behaviour among their students. Through their daily interactions, teachers influence students' character and worldview, imparting essential values such as respect, empathy, responsibility, and fairness, principles that underpin a cohesive, just, and democratic society.

A well-structured teacher education system also promotes consistency and quality across the educational landscape. It ensures that educators possess a clear understanding of curriculum frameworks, can tailor instruction to meet individual learning profiles, and are proficient in using assessment to inform teaching. In this way, the robustness of a nation's teacher education system serves as a key indicator of the overall effectiveness and equity of its education system.

Teacher education also plays a central role in shaping the professional identity of future teachers. It fosters a sense of purpose and a commitment to continuous learning. Through a combination of theoretical coursework, supervised field experiences, and professional dialogue, teacher candidates develop a deeper understanding of their role as educators and their potential to influence society positively.

Another critical function of teacher education is its contribution to pedagogical innovation. Teachers who are well-prepared are more likely to adopt new teaching methodologies, integrate technology effectively, and implement differentiated instruction. By staying informed about emerging research and educational trends, these educators are better equipped to evolve their practice in response to changing student needs.

A robust teacher education framework also provides clear professional standards and benchmarks. It promotes a shared understanding of effective teaching and provides mechanisms for evaluating and enhancing teacher performance. This contributes to maintaining high-quality instruction across regions and helps align teacher preparation with national education priorities such as reducing learning disparities, improving literacy and numeracy, and leveraging educational technology.

In essence, teacher education is the foundation upon which a successful education system is built. It ensures that teachers are not only competent and confident in their subject matter and pedagogical approach but also committed to fostering inclusive, student-centred learning environments. Prioritizing high-quality teacher education is thus critical to improving educational outcomes, promoting social equity, and building a knowledgeable and compassionate society.

### **1.1.2 Evolution of Teacher Education – Pre-Independence to Post-Independence**

The evolution of teacher education in India reflects the broader socio-political and cultural shifts that have shaped the nation over time. From ancient traditions rooted in philosophical

and moral instruction to formal institutional models influenced by colonial and post-colonial reforms, the trajectory of teacher education has been long and dynamic. Understanding this historical development is key to appreciating the current structure, priorities, and challenges of the teacher education system in India.

In the earliest stages of Indian civilization, education was imparted through the Gurukul system, where students (shishyas) lived with their teachers (gurus) in an immersive and holistic learning environment. The guru-shishya tradition emphasized moral development, self-discipline, and experiential learning. Knowledge was closely linked with values, and teachers were revered not only for their scholarship but also for their character and wisdom. Although the Gurukul model lacked formal assessment and certification, it laid the foundation for personalized and values-based education.

With the advent of Buddhist education systems, particularly in renowned institutions like Nalanda and Takshashila, teacher-student interactions continued to emphasize deep inquiry, discipline, and moral training. These early systems, while informal by modern standards, were rigorous and guided by a strong ethical framework. Teachers were expected to model the virtues they sought to instil, and learning often focused on philosophy, logic, medicine, astronomy, and religious texts.

The arrival of Islamic rulers brought with it the madrasa system of education, which also contributed to shaping pedagogical practices. Teachers in madrasas were respected scholars who imparted religious, philosophical, and scientific knowledge. These early education systems, though diverse, shared a common reverence for teachers and viewed education as a sacred and transformative process.

The colonial period marked a significant turning point in the history of Indian teacher education. The British colonial administration introduced a system of education modelled on Western lines, with a strong focus on creating clerks and administrators to serve the colonial bureaucracy. As part of this effort, the training of teachers became more formalized but also increasingly utilitarian.

One of the earliest efforts in structured teacher training came in the form of Normal Schools, which began in the early 19th century. These institutions aimed to train teachers in basic pedagogical methods suitable for primary education. However, their scope was limited, and the emphasis remained on rote learning and obedience rather than critical thinking or creativity. Teacher education during this period was largely driven by the needs of the

colonial government, with limited regard for indigenous knowledge systems or pedagogical innovation.

Several education commissions during the British era attempted to bring reform to the system. The Wood's Despatch of 1854 recognized the importance of training teachers and recommended the establishment of teacher training institutions. The Indian Education Commission (1882), also known as the Hunter Commission, stressed the need for improving primary education and enhancing the quality of teacher training. Despite these recommendations, teacher education remained underdeveloped and poorly resourced.

With India's independence in 1947, there was a renewed commitment to building an education system that would serve national development and social transformation. The Radhakrishnan Commission (1948–49) on University Education emphasized the importance of teacher training in higher education. However, it was the Secondary Education Commission (1952–53) that provided more focused recommendations for improving teacher education, including the need for comprehensive training programs, better infrastructure, and well-qualified faculty.

A major milestone came with the establishment of the Education Commission (1964–66), chaired by Dr. D.S. Kothari. The commission's report famously stated that “the destiny of India is being shaped in her classrooms,” underscoring the centrality of teachers to national progress. The commission advocated for the professionalization of teacher education, recommended integrated programs that combined content and pedagogy, and proposed the establishment of teacher training institutions at all levels.

One significant outcome of these recommendations was the introduction of traditional integrated teacher education programs, particularly the B.A.B.Ed. and B.Sc.B.Ed. courses. These four-year integrated programs were primarily offered by the Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs) under NCERT. They aimed to provide a holistic model of teacher preparation by merging undergraduate disciplinary studies with professional training in pedagogy and school internship. These programs represented an early attempt to bridge the gap between subject knowledge and teaching practice within a unified curriculum structure. The RIEs became centres of excellence in integrated teacher education and continue to play a vital role in the professional preparation of school teachers.

Subsequent developments in the 1980s and 1990s continued to build on these recommendations. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, later modified in 1992,

reiterated the importance of teacher education as a means of ensuring quality schooling. It led to the creation of institutions such as the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) for pre-service and in-service training of elementary school teachers. Additionally, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was established in 1993 as a statutory body to regulate and maintain standards in teacher education across the country.

The turn of the millennium brought further reforms, particularly in response to the changing educational landscape. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE 2000) and its successor, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005), emphasized learner-centred education, constructivist pedagogy, and inclusive practices. These principles were echoed in the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE 2009), which offered a comprehensive vision for preparing teachers as reflective practitioners committed to equity and justice.

Another significant development came in the form of the Justice Verma Commission (2012), which was set up to examine the state of teacher education in India. The commission's report highlighted widespread concerns, including the proliferation of substandard teacher training institutions, inadequate regulation, and disconnect between theory and practice. It recommended a complete overhaul of the teacher education system, with a focus on integrated and practice-based programs, rigorous accreditation, and faculty development.

Throughout this evolution, teacher education in India has gradually expanded in scope and complexity. From basic training in colonial Normal Schools to integrated professional degrees like the B.Ed., and from short-term certificate programs to comprehensive postgraduate research in education, the field has grown significantly. Despite these advances, challenges remain. Issues such as uneven quality, limited access in rural areas, under-resourced institutions, and weak linkage between schools and training centres continue to affect the impact of teacher education.

However, the cumulative effect of historical efforts has laid the groundwork for the current phase of reform. Contemporary teacher education builds on this legacy while seeking to overcome its limitations. With the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, India aims to bring teacher education in line with global best practices and national aspirations. The policy's emphasis on integrated programs, multidisciplinary approaches, and practice-based learning reflects a synthesis of lessons learned over centuries of educational evolution.

In conclusion, the evolution of teacher education in India, from its roots in moral and philosophical instruction to the present emphasis on professional training and reflective practice, illustrates the dynamic interplay between tradition, policy, and pedagogy. Each phase of development has contributed to shaping a system that now aspires to be inclusive, rigorous, and aligned with the needs of a diverse and changing society. Understanding this historical context is essential for critically engaging with current reforms and envisioning the future of teacher education in the country.

### **1.1.3 How the Structure of Teacher Education Programs Have Changed Over Time**

The structure of teacher education programs in India has undergone significant transformations over time, reflecting evolving educational philosophies, policy shifts, and the need to respond to changing social and classroom realities. From early systems that emphasized moral instruction and informal training to the contemporary focus on integrated, professional, and research-based preparation, the progression has been both dynamic and multifaceted. A closer look at how these structures have changed helps contextualize the rationale for new reforms such as the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) under the National Education Policy 2020.

In the colonial era, teacher training programs were largely designed to meet the administrative needs of the British Empire. Training structures were rudimentary and emphasized uniformity, obedience, and rote memorization. The establishment of Normal Schools introduced a more organized form of teacher preparation, though these remained limited in scope. The programs were generally short in duration and did not offer deep pedagogical training or opportunities for classroom practice. The focus was on training teachers for primary and lower secondary levels, with minimal attention to educational philosophy, psychological understanding, or reflective practice.

Post-independence, there was a strong push to revamp and expand teacher education. One of the earliest and most prominent changes was the development of diploma and degree-level programs. These included the Basic Teacher Certificate (BTC), the Diploma in Education (D.Ed.), and the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.). Initially, the B.Ed. was offered as a one-year program following a three-year undergraduate degree. This model became the standard for secondary teacher preparation and remained largely unchanged for several decades.

Over time, concerns emerged about the adequacy of a one-year B.Ed. program. Critics noted that it did not provide sufficient time for practical training, often emphasized theoretical knowledge at the expense of hands-on teaching experience, and failed to adequately integrate content and pedagogy. To address these limitations, institutions began experimenting with more comprehensive formats, leading to the development of integrated programs that would combine general education with teacher training from the outset.

A notable structural innovation came with the launch of four-year integrated teacher education programs such as B.A.B.Ed. and B.Sc.B.Ed., primarily by the Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs) under NCERT. These programs represented a shift in both structure and philosophy. They allowed students to pursue undergraduate studies in arts or sciences alongside pedagogical training, thereby integrating subject expertise with professional preparation. The structure was more coherent, offered sustained school-based practicum, and fostered a deeper understanding of teaching as a process grounded in both theory and practice.

The structural shift toward integrated programs marked a recognition that teacher education should not be viewed as a standalone post-degree qualification but as a continuous developmental process. These programs also addressed issues related to the redundancy of content between undergraduate and teacher education degrees, offering a more efficient and focused pathway into the profession. They aimed to nurture a professional identity from the early stages of a student's academic journey.

Simultaneously, new structures were introduced for elementary teacher training. The D.El.Ed. (Diploma in Elementary Education) emerged as a two-year course designed to replace older programs like the BTC and D.Ed. With the establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) across the country, pre-service education at the elementary level became more systematized. However, variations in quality, faculty preparedness, and infrastructure remained persistent challenges.

Another important structural development was the expansion of postgraduate and research programs in education. Master of Education (M.Ed.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Education programs became increasingly common, serving to build academic leadership and advance educational research. These programs offered a route for those interested in educational policy, teacher training, curriculum development, and educational leadership to contribute meaningfully to the field.



Despite these advances, structural inconsistencies remained a challenge across teacher education institutions. The unregulated expansion of teacher education colleges, particularly in the private sector, led to concerns about the dilution of standards. Many institutions offered the B.Ed. as a one-year or two-year course with little attention to practical training or curricular coherence. The Justice Verma Commission Report (2012) noted these discrepancies and recommended the rationalization of teacher education structures through standardization, integration, and improved governance.

Responding to these issues, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) introduced new regulations in 2014 that extended the B.Ed. program from one to two years. This change was aimed at providing more space for practicum, reflection, and integration of ICT and inclusive education. The structure now included components such as field engagement, internship, and action research, signalling a more practice-oriented approach. Similarly, the D.El.Ed. program was formalized as a two-year course with updated curriculum guidelines.

The most recent and potentially transformative structural reform in teacher education has been the introduction of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) under the NEP 2020. ITEP is a four-year dual-major undergraduate program designed to replace fragmented pathways with a unified, multidisciplinary, and practice-based structure. Unlike previous programs that required a separate degree before entering teacher education, ITEP integrates general and professional education into a seamless whole. It includes rigorous coursework, school immersion, community engagement, and emphasis on foundational literacy, numeracy, and Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

The structural innovation of ITEP also introduces multiple entry and exit points, credit transfers, and alignment with the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF). It reflects a modern approach to curriculum design and delivery, offering flexibility while maintaining academic rigor. The program is envisioned as the cornerstone of a new era in teacher preparation, one that is inclusive, interdisciplinary, and globally informed.

In essence, the structure of teacher education programs in India has moved from short-term, disconnected models toward longer, integrated, and professionally enriching formats. Each phase of structural reform has sought to address the gaps in earlier models, whether related to depth, coherence, practical training, or professional identity. While implementation challenges remain, the current trajectory reflects a strong commitment to elevating the

profession and ensuring that teacher preparation is aligned with the complex demands of modern classrooms.

#### **1.1.4 Traditional Integrated B.A.B.Ed./B.Sc.B.Ed. Programs – Introduction and Development**

The traditional four-year Integrated B.A.B.Ed. and B.Sc.B.Ed. programs were conceived as an innovative approach to address the fragmented structure of teacher education in post-independence India. Primarily introduced by the Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs) under the aegis of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), these programs aimed to integrate academic and professional education in a coherent and continuous manner. They sought to develop committed and professionally equipped teachers who could cater to the secondary school level with both subject expertise and pedagogical proficiency.

As noted in Mandal and Mete's (2023) comparative study of B.Ed. curricula, the Integrated B.A.B.Ed./B.Sc.B.Ed. model offered a significant advantage by concurrently blending the content knowledge of subjects such as science, mathematics, social sciences, and languages with essential pedagogical training. This integration allowed student-teachers to grasp educational theory and classroom practice in a more meaningful, context-rich manner from the beginning of their academic journey. The programs also reduced redundancy in course content, offering a time-efficient alternative to the traditional route of pursuing a general degree followed by a B.Ed.

Another strength of these integrated programs, particularly those conducted at the RIEs, lies in their structured practicum model. Student-teachers were engaged in school observation, internship, micro-teaching, and practice teaching spread over multiple semesters. This gradually scaffolded exposure to the school environment contributed to improved confidence, professionalism, and classroom readiness. The RIEs also promoted action research, peer collaboration, and reflective practice as part of their pedagogical approach, which enriched the professional identity of trainee teachers.

However, as Mandal and Mete (2023) observe, while these programs laid a strong foundation for integrated teacher education, several limitations persisted. First, their implementation remained restricted to a handful of RIEs, which limited accessibility and reach. The article highlights that the quality and structure of integrated B.Ed. programs outside RIEs varied widely, often lacking the institutional support, faculty expertise, and

school collaboration that characterized RIE offerings. Secondly, the curriculum, while balanced, did not always reflect contemporary priorities such as digital pedagogy, inclusive education, and interdisciplinary learning, elements now emphasized in global best practices.

Further, in the absence of a national regulatory framework to standardize such programs across teacher education institutions, integrated models failed to gain systemic traction. This disconnect was exacerbated by regulatory confusion and inconsistencies in recognition across states. The Justice Verma Commission Report (2012) similarly criticized the unregulated proliferation of sub-standard teacher education colleges and emphasized the need for structural reforms.

In summary, while traditional integrated B.A.B.Ed./B.Sc.B.Ed. programs provided a robust model of teacher preparation with an emphasis on academic depth and pedagogical practice, their limitations in accessibility, innovation, and scalability necessitated a more contemporary and policy-aligned alternative. ITEP thus emerges not as a replacement but as an evolution which refines and expands the foundational strengths of the integrated programs within a nationally regulated, future-ready teacher education ecosystem.

### **1.1.5 Emergence of ITEP under NEP 2020**

The introduction of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant paradigm shift in India's approach to pre-service teacher education. Conceptualized as a four-year integrated dual-major degree, ITEP is designed to prepare future educators through a structured, practice-oriented, and multidisciplinary framework that aligns with national priorities and global educational standards.

The NEP 2020 recognizes that fragmented and inconsistent models of teacher education have led to varied quality in the preparation of teachers across the country. According to the policy, “the teacher must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system” (NEP 2020, p. 22). It emphasizes that only professionally trained teachers, possessing not only content knowledge and pedagogical understanding but also values, ethics, and socio-emotional awareness, can drive the envisioned transformation in school education.

ITEP is the policy's flagship solution to streamline and elevate the quality of pre-service teacher education across India. As articulated by the National Council for Teacher Education

(NCTE) in its “Guidelines for the Four-Year ITEP” (2021), the program integrates general education (either in sciences, social sciences, humanities, or commerce) with rigorous and well-structured professional training in pedagogy, school-based practice, and values education. The ITEP is meant to replace older models, such as the B.Ed. pursued after graduation, and to bring coherence, depth, and national consistency to teacher preparation.

ITEP is designed with multiple objectives:

- To eliminate the divide between general and professional education
- To introduce prospective teachers to pedagogical thinking early in their academic journey
- To integrate theory and practice through sustained field experience
- To include 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, inclusive pedagogy, environmental consciousness, and social-emotional learning
- To foster an ethical and reflective mindset among future teachers.

The program is structured into eight semesters and encompasses four major components: foundational courses, discipline-based studies, professional education, and field-based practicum. As per the NCTE framework, the curriculum is aligned with the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), ensuring that learning outcomes are clearly defined and progression through levels is measurable and standardized.

In the first year, students undertake foundational courses that introduce them to education as a discipline, along with general university-level coursework. From the second year onward, students are exposed to curriculum and pedagogic studies, including the teaching of specific subjects, classroom management strategies, educational psychology, and instructional design. A major emphasis is laid on continuous and progressive school engagement, with a semester-long internship in the final year where students are embedded in schools under mentorship.

A distinguishing feature of ITEP is its strong emphasis on experiential learning. The program includes microteaching sessions, peer collaboration, reflective journals, action research, school observations, and lesson plan development. These components are systematically integrated to ensure that student-teachers are not just theoretically informed but also practically adept and confident to manage diverse classroom settings.

Another significant aspect is the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), environmental education, multilingualism, and digital pedagogy. These reflect the broader vision of NEP 2020, which advocates for a rooted yet forward-looking education system. Courses in yoga, arts integration, and community engagement further enrich the holistic development of the trainee.

ITEP also introduces mechanisms for continuous internal assessment and portfolio development to monitor student-teacher growth comprehensively. This is a shift from earlier evaluation systems that were largely summative and content-focused. The inclusion of formative assessment and feedback cycles supports self-regulated learning and fosters reflective teaching practices.

In terms of policy impact, ITEP is poised to address some of the key challenges identified in the Justice Verma Commission Report (2012), such as the oversupply of poorly regulated teacher education institutions, lack of uniformity in program delivery, and the absence of strong school-university partnerships. By institutionalizing ITEP across multidisciplinary universities and colleges, NEP 2020 envisions the establishment of a standardized and respected pathway for teacher preparation.

The phased implementation of ITEP began in 2022, with select Central and State universities approved by the NCTE initiating pilot batches. The plan is to make ITEP the mandatory qualification for all new teachers by 2030. Institutions seeking to offer the program are required to meet rigorous criteria in terms of faculty qualification, infrastructure, and linkage with schools, thereby ensuring that quality is maintained from the outset.

Furthermore, ITEP facilitates academic mobility and progression through the National Credit Framework (NCrF), allowing for lateral entry and exit with recognized certification at appropriate stages (e.g., Certificate after 1 year, Diploma after 2 years, Bachelor's degree after 3 years, and B.Ed. after 4 years). This makes teacher education more inclusive and accessible without compromising academic integrity.

It is also worth noting that ITEP integrates global pedagogical advances such as differentiated instruction, inquiry-based learning, and inclusive education practices that prepare future teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners, including children with special needs. The inclusion of courses on gender, equity, and human rights ensures that graduates are socially aware and capable of fostering inclusive classrooms.

In summary, the emergence of ITEP under NEP 2020 is a carefully calibrated response to long-standing systemic issues in Indian teacher education. It builds upon the foundational ideas of earlier integrated models while expanding their scope, modernizing their content, and embedding them in a larger policy vision for national educational transformation. If implemented with fidelity, ITEP has the potential to redefine the landscape of teacher preparation in India by producing not only competent professionals but also ethical, empathetic, and innovative educators.

## **1.2 Rationale of the study**

Teacher education plays an essential role in improving the quality of school education. The strength of any education system depends greatly on the quality of its teachers, and this quality is influenced by the way teacher preparation programs are designed and delivered. In India, teacher education is going through a major shift with the introduction of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme, also known as ITEP, as part of the National Education Policy of 2020. At the same time, the four-year integrated B.A. B.Ed. and B.Sc. B.Ed. programs, especially those offered by the Regional Institutes of Education under the National Council of Educational Research and Training, are also in operation. This overlap between the new and the traditional teacher education programs offers a valuable opportunity to study both models while they are active. Additionally, this research addresses a gap in existing studies. While many academic works focus on policy or theoretical aspects of teacher education, very few give importance to the voices of student teachers. By focusing on their experiences and reflections, this study is motivated by the need to bring student teachers' perspective and provide a ground level view of how policy intentions translate into teacher education curriculum.

While both models aim to prepare competent teachers, they follow different approaches and priorities. The traditional integrated programs are known for offering a structured combination of subject knowledge and teaching practice, with gradual exposure to classroom environments. On the other hand, the ITEP program introduces new features such as digital learning, inclusive education, Indian knowledge systems, and a strong focus on foundational learning. Exploring how student teachers experience curriculum integration of these differences is important for understanding how well these programs meet the needs of future educators.

In conclusion, the rationale for this study lies in the need to understand how student teachers perceive and experience two different models of teacher education at a time of major educational change. Their perspectives can help build stronger, more meaningful programs that not only follow policy goals but also support the real-life journey of becoming a teacher in today's diverse and demanding classrooms.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

A Comparative Study of ITEP and Traditional Integrated B.A.B.Ed./B.Sc.B.Ed. Programs: Student Perspectives

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

1. To explore the perceptions of students enrolled in the traditional four-year integrated B.A. B.Ed. and B.Sc. B.Ed. programs regarding various aspects of their course curriculum.
2. To examine the perceptions of students enrolled in the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) regarding various aspects of their course curriculum.
3. To compare the traditional B.A. B.Ed./B.Sc. B.Ed. and the ITEP course based on students' perceptions of various aspects of their course curriculum.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What are the perceptions of students enrolled in the traditional four-year integrated B.A. B.Ed. and B.Sc. B.Ed. programs regarding various aspects of their course curriculum?
2. What are the perceptions of students enrolled in the ITEP regarding various aspects of their course curriculum?
3. In what ways do the traditional B.A. B.Ed./B.Sc. B.Ed. programs and ITEP differ, as perceived by students?

### **1.6 Delimitations of the study**

1. The present study is confined to RIE Bhopal students only
2. In the present study four-year integrated B.A. B.Ed./B.Sc. B.Ed. tradition and ITEP students were included.
3. The scope of the study is restricted to various aspects of the course curriculum only.
4. In this study students' perceptions were taken only on various aspects of the curriculum.

## 1.7 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

- **Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP):** The Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) is a four-year dual-major undergraduate degree introduced under the NEP 2020. It combines a bachelor's degree in a disciplinary subject (such as Arts, Science, or Commerce) with a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree. ITEP is designed to prepare teachers for all stages of school education (Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary) by integrating subject knowledge with pedagogical training from the undergraduate level itself. The programme emphasizes a multidisciplinary approach, early exposure to school environments, and competency-based teaching methods.
- **Traditional B.A. B.Ed./B.Sc. B.Ed. Programmes:** These are four-year integrated teacher education programmes traditionally offered by institutions like the Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs) under NCERT. The B.A.B.Ed. programme integrates content from Social Sciences and Humanities with pedagogical training, allowing students to opt for subjects such as one language and two social science disciplines. Similarly, the B.Sc.B.Ed. programme combines studies in science subjects with education courses. Both programmes are structured over eight semesters and are recognized as equivalent to separate B.A./B.Sc. and B.Ed. degrees.
- **Perception:** In the context of this study, 'perception' refers to the student-teachers' subjective understanding, interpretations, and evaluations of their experiences within their respective teacher education programmes. This includes their views on curriculum relevance, teaching methodologies, practicum experiences, institutional support, and overall preparedness for the teaching profession.