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Internship in Teacher Education: A Study of B.Ed. Students' Experiences, Challenges and Learning Outcomes

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Abstract

Teaching internship constitutes a critical component of teacher education, serving as a bridge between theoretical preparation and classroom practice. In the context of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes experiential and competency-based teacher education, examining the effectiveness of internship programmes has become increasingly important. The present study aimed to examine B.Ed. students' internship experiences, specifically focusing on how theoretical knowledge acquired in the B.Ed. classroom is implemented during the teaching internship, identifying the challenges encountered in the practical application of this knowledge and eliciting suggestions to address these challenges. A descriptive survey research design was adopted and data were collected from 30 B.Ed. Semester III students of Tezpur University, Assam, using a self-developed, validated questionnaire. Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency, percentage and standard deviation, were used for data analysis. The results indicate that the internship was largely perceived as transformative (46.6%), rewarding (43.3%) and motivating (36.6%), reflecting notable professional growth among B.Ed. students. However, the direct applicability of B.Ed. coursework to classroom teaching was perceived as limited, with 46.7% remaining neutral and 30.0% disagreeing, while only 23.3% agreed. Key challenges reported during the internship included time management, classroom management, student engagement and the translation of theory into practice. The study underscores the importance of structured mentoring, reflective practice, strengthened digital pedagogy training and improved college–school coordination. The findings have important implications for enhancing internship design in alignment with NEP 2020 to prepare competent, reflective and future-ready teachers.

Keywords: B.Ed. Programme; NEP 2020; Professional Preparedness; Teaching Internship; Theory–Practice Integration.

Introduction

Teacher education occupies a central position in the educational system, as the quality of teachers largely determines the quality of schooling and student learning outcomes (1, 2). In recent decades, increasing attention has been directed towards strengthening pre-service teacher education in response to changing curricular demands, technological advancements and evolving learner needs (3, 4). Among the various components of teacher preparation programmes, the teaching internship has emerged as a crucial experiential phase that bridges theoretical knowledge and classroom practice (5, 6). It provides prospective teachers with opportunities to translate pedagogical concepts into classroom action, develop professional competencies and internalize the ethical and social responsibilities of the teaching profession (5-8). Through this structured experience, student teachers engage in authentic settings, receive mentoring, reflect on their practice, develop instructional and classroom management skills and perceive their own readiness to respond to unpredictable classroom realities (6-8).

NEP 2020 and the Rethinking of Internship in Teacher Education

In the Indian context, teacher education has undergone significant reforms aimed at addressing long-standing concerns related to the theory-practice gap, limited classroom exposure and inadequate professional preparedness of novice teachers (9, 10). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a paradigm shift by emphasizing teacher quality as the cornerstone of educational transformation (11, 12). The policy advocates for integrated, practice-oriented and competency-based teacher education programmes, underscoring the need for meaningful field engagement, reflective practice

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and continuous professional development (11, 13, 14). Within this framework, the internship programme is no longer viewed as a mere formal requirement but as a foundational process for shaping reflective, adaptive and professionally competent teachers (14, 15).

NEP 2020 reconceptualizes the teaching internship as a sustained, immersive and mentored professional experience that enables student teachers to engage meaningfully with school realities, pedagogical decision-making, learner diversity and contextual challenges (14). It positions the internship as a key site for experiential learning, professional socialization and the development of competencies required for effective teaching in diverse contexts (11, 12). However, it is still unclear how far these policy goals have been implemented in actual institutional practices, which makes empirical research on internship experiences both relevant and essential. (12, 16, 17).

Internship in the B.Ed. Programme: Purpose and Challenges

The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme plays a vital role in preparing secondary and senior secondary school teachers in India (10, 18). Its internship component exposes student teachers to real classroom settings, school culture and diverse learner contexts, facilitating the development of skills in classroom management, lesson planning, assessment, instructional strategies and ICT integration (19-21). However, studies indicate that the effectiveness of internships varies considerably across institutions due to structural, pedagogical and contextual challenges (16, 17). Studies reveal that B.Ed. interns face challenges such as insufficient placement duration, lack of structured mentoring, limited reflective practice opportunities and a gap between college pedagogy and school expectations. These issues point to a deeper systemic concern i.e., the absence of a feedback-driven internship model that adapts to evolving academic demands and practical realities (10, 13, 16). Against this backdrop, examining B.Ed. students' internship experiences is essential to assess alignment with NEP 2020 objectives. Exploring students' experiences, challenges, learning outcomes and theory–practice integration can reveal the strengths and limitations of the existing internship model and inform evidence-based improvements in teacher education reforms.

Need and Significance of the Study

This study is informed by NEP 2020, which emphasizes quality teacher preparation and highlights gaps such as limited practical exposure, weak theory–practice integration and inadequate mentoring. While NEP 2020 advocates strengthening internships through immersive and reflective experiences, challenges including time constraints, classroom management difficulties and theory–practice disconnects persist. Existing research has largely focused on institutional frameworks and policy prescriptions, with comparatively fewer studies foregrounding the voices and lived experiences of student teachers themselves (3, 4, 16). Understanding their perspectives can provide grounded, practice-based insights that policy documents alone cannot capture (2, 5). This study adds fresh perspectives by foregrounding the lived experiences of student teachers rather than relying solely on institutional viewpoints, providing ground-level evidence of how NEP 2020's internship provisions translate into practice. It offers a multi-dimensional analysis by simultaneously examining experiences, theory-practice integration, challenges and suggestions within a single framework. Unlike earlier studies focused primarily on educational outcomes, this study extends the discourse to psychological, social and policy implications. It also captures contemporary concerns around digital pedagogy and ICT readiness that pre-NEP 2020 studies could not address. By bridging the gap between policy aspiration and ground reality, the study provides actionable insights for reforming internship design, mentoring and curriculum alignment.

Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute a more reflective and responsive form of teacher preparation that focuses the professional development of the student teacher and aligns institutional practice with national policy goals (11, 14,15). Hence, the present study aims to examine the experiences of B.Ed. students during their internship programme and assess the practical utility of theoretical knowledge acquired during the B.Ed. course in real classroom settings. It further seeks to identify the key challenges faced by students during the internship and explore their suggestions for improving the overall quality and effectiveness of the internship programme.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopted a descriptive survey design with an exploratory approach to examine the experiences and perceptions of B.Ed. students regarding their internship programme.

A descriptive survey was chosen as it aims to systematically describe the existing conditions and phenomena as they are (22, 23). The exploratory orientation was adopted because the implementation of the internship programme under NEP 2020 is a relatively recent development and limited empirical evidence exists on students' experiences within this specific policy framework (24).

Population and Sample of the Study

The population comprised all B.Ed. students enrolled at Tezpur University, Assam, India, located approximately 26.7047° North latitude and 92.8494° East longitude. The sample consisted of 30 Semester III students from the Department of Education, selected through purposive sampling.

The sample is restricted to only one institute because the study does not intend to generalize the findings to all B.Ed. students across India; rather, it seeks to generate context-specific evidence that may contribute to understanding the practical realities of internship implementation in teacher education institutions.

Sampling Procedure

A purposive sampling technique under the non-probability sampling method was employed to select the sample for the study.

Data Collection Procedure

The students of the B.Ed. programme were approached and informed about the objectives and anticipated outcomes of the study. Informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to data collection. After obtaining their willingness to participate, the questionnaire was administered to the respondents, who duly completed and returned it. Participants were informed about their voluntary participation in the study.

Instruments Used

The study used a self-developed questionnaire as the main data collection tool to assess B.Ed. students' internship experiences, challenges and suggestions for improvement. The questionnaire was comprehensive and consisted of six sections: Section A covered demographic and socio-academic details (10 items), while Sections B–F addressed internship experiences (6 items), challenges (7 items), application of theory in practice (5 items), suggestions (6 items) and lessons learned (9 items). Responses to Sections B–F were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree [1] to Strongly Agree [5]. Reliability was established using the test–retest method (r = 0.82) and face and content validity were ensured through expert review by five teacher education specialists.

Data Analysis

Initially, the collected data were entered into Microsoft Excel 2019 and subsequently analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 26). Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, were employed to summarize the demographic characteristics and address the objectives of the study. The analysed results and findings have been presented through tables and figures to facilitate clear visual representation and ease of interpretation.

Results

Nature of Sample

The B.Ed. students had a mean age of 24.23 years (SD = 1.98), with females comprising 60% of the sample. Most specialized in Arts (66.7%), completed internships in government schools (80%) and came from rural or semi-urban backgrounds. Assamese was the primary medium of instruction and most students delivered more than 10 lessons (83.3%). All respondents had prior teaching experience as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Factors

Socio-demographic Factors	Description	N	Percentage (%)
Age		M=24.23; SD=1.977	
Gender	Male	12	40
	Female	18	60
Subject of Specialization	Arts	20	66.7
	Commerce	2	6.7

	Science	8	26.7
Type of School for Internship	Government	24	80
	Government Aided	1	3.3
	Government Sponsored	5	16.7
Residencial Location	Rural	12	40
	Semi-Urban	10	33.3
	Urban	8	26.6
Medium of Instruction	English	8	26.7
	Hindi	2	6.7
	Assamese	15	50
	Bengali	5	16.6
Number of Lessons Delivered	Above 10	25	83.3
	Below 10	5	16.7
Prior Teaching Experience	Yes	30	100
	No	0	0

Note: N = Total number of participants, M = Mean age of participants, SD = Standard deviation.

Students-teachers Experience during Internship Program

The responses of the students depicted that nearly 50% (agree = 40%, strongly agree = 10%) of the interns felt adequately prepared before starting the internship, while 26.7% disagreed and 23.3% were neutral. A strong positive impact was observed on confidence in classroom teaching**,** with 80% (agree = 60%, strongly agree = 20%) agreeing that the internship increased their confidence; only 10% disagreed and 10% remained neutral. Regarding rapport with students**,** 66.7% (agree = 50%, strongly agree= 16.7%) agreed that they were able to connect effectively, whereas 26.7% were neutral and 6.7% disagreed**.** Improvement in lesson planning skills was reported by 66.6% (agree = 53.3%, strongly agree = 13.3%) of respondents, while 30% remained neutral and 3.3% disagreed. Opportunities for innovative/ICT-based teaching were rated moderately, with 50% (agree = 36.7%, strongly agree = 13.3%) agreeing, 30% neutral and 20% disagreeing**.** Finally, the internship strongly influenced career motivation, as 80% (agree = 53.3%, strongly agree = 26.7%) of respondents reported being motivated to pursue teaching as a profession as shown in Figure 1.

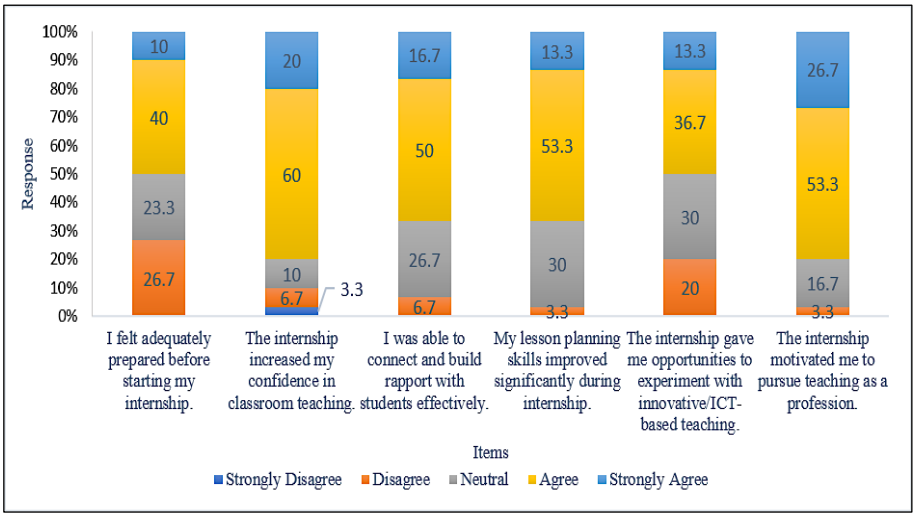

Figure 1: Experience of Students Teachers during Internship

Hence, the data show that the internship effectively enhanced teaching confidence, skills and professional motivation, though improvements are needed in initial preparation and ICT-based teaching exposure.

The survey revealed that B.Ed. students' internship experiences were largely positive and developmental. Nearly half of the respondents described the internship as transformative (46.6%), followed by rewarding (43.3%) and

motivating (36.6%), reflecting strong professional growth. Although some students found it challenging or overwhelming, very few reported negative experiences. Overall, the internship was perceived as a meaningful and growth-oriented experience depicted in Figure 2.

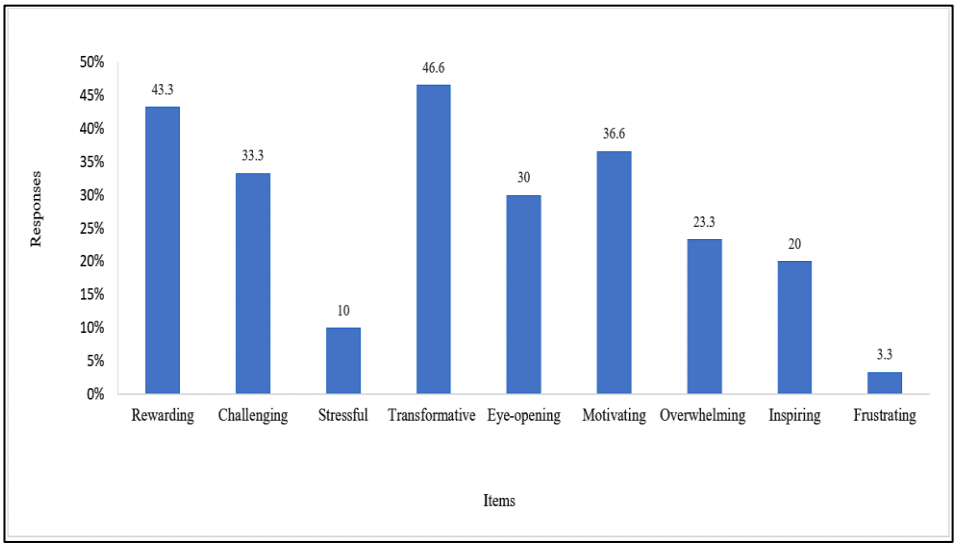

Figure 2: Overall Internship Experience of the B.Ed. Students

Application of Theoretical Content into Practical Classroom

The findings indicate mixed perceptions regarding the application of theoretical knowledge to practice. Nearly half of the respondents (46.7%) were neutral and 30.0% disagreed that B.Ed. theories and methods were directly useful in classroom teaching, while only 23.3% agreed, suggesting limited direct applicability of coursework. A clear theory-practice gap was perceived, as 60.0% of students agreed or strongly agreed that theoretical training differs from classroom realities, compared to only 20.0% who disagreed. Micro-teaching was viewed as moderately effective, with 46.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing that it prepared them for real classrooms, while 30.0% remained neutral. Internship played a key role in integration, as 60.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it helped them combine subject knowledge with pedagogy. Supervision and feedback were also effective in linking theory with practice, with 56.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing, while 36.7% were neutral as depicted in Table 2 and Figure 3. Hence, the data show that while theoretical courses alone were not strongly perceived as directly useful, practical components such as micro-teaching, internship and supervision significantly helped bridge the theory-practice gap.

Table 2: Application of Theoretical Content into Practical Classroom

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
The theories and methods learned in B.Ed. courses were directly useful in classroom teaching.	0 (0%)	9 (30.0%)	14 (46.7%)	7 (23.3%)	0 (0%)
There is a noticeable gap between theoretical training and classroom realities.	1 (3.3%)	5 (16.7%)	6 (20.0%)	13 (43.3%)	5 (16.7%)
Micro-teaching sessions in college prepared me for real classroom situations.	1 (3.3%)	6 (20.0%)	9 (30.0%)	13 (43.3%)	1 (3.3%)
Internship helped me integrate subject knowledge with pedagogy.	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	11 (36.7%)	15 (50.0%)	3 (10.0%)
Supervision and feedback linked theory with practice effectively.	1 (3.3%)	1 (3.3%)	11 (36.7%)	14 (46.7%)	3 (10.0%)

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA= Strongly Agree.

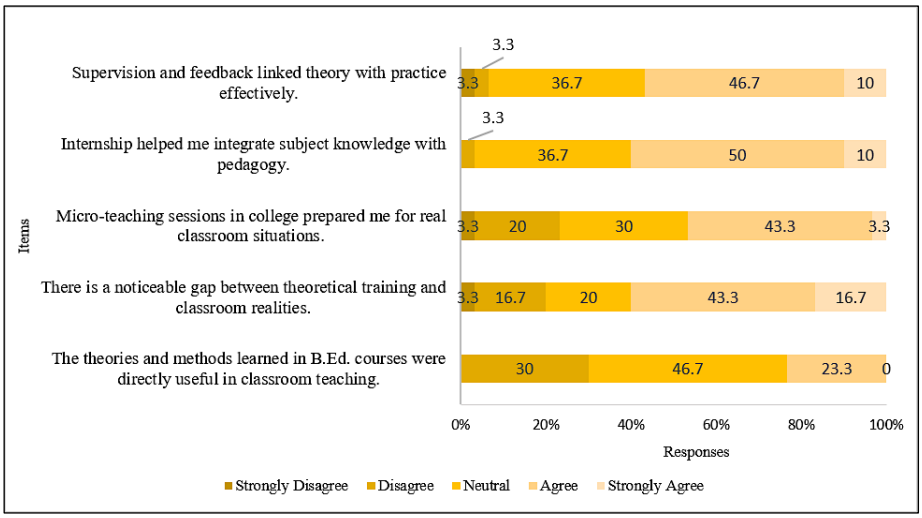

Figure 3: Application of Theoretical Content into Practical Classroom

Challenges Encountered During Internship

The findings indicate that B.Ed. students experienced several challenges during their teaching internship such as Managing large or diverse classrooms posed moderate difficulty, with 50.0% agreeing and strongly agreeing and 30.0% remaining neutral. Responses on teaching–learning materials were mixed, as 46.7% were neutral, while equal proportions (26.7%) agreed/strongly agreed and disagreed/strongly disagreed, showing that resource constraints affected only some interns. Time management was the most significant challenge, with 60.0% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that lesson delivery was difficult to manage within the allotted time. Student attentiveness and engagement also presented challenges, as 43.3% agreed or strongly agreed, while 36.7% were neutral. Similarly, adapting theoretical strategies to real classroom situations was difficult for many interns, with 40.0% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 30.0% neutral, highlighting a theory-practice gap. In contrast, limited guidance from mentor teachers was less problematic, as 46.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, compared to only 26.7% who agreed or strongly agreed. Assessing student learning outcomes was also relatively less challenging, with 40.0% disagreeing and 33.3% neutral, while just 26.7% perceived it as difficult, shown in Figure 4. Hence, time management, classroom management, student engagement and applying theory to practice were the most prominent challenges.

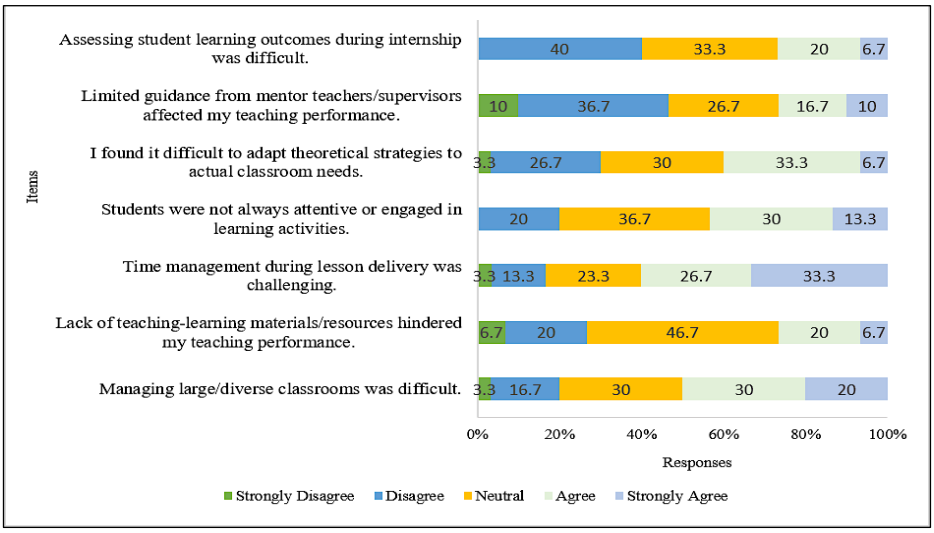

Figure 4: Challenges Faced by B.Ed. Students During Their Internship

Students-teachers' Suggestions for Improvement

The findings highlight clear suggestions to strengthen the internship programme. The data shows that support for extending the internship duration was moderate, with 50.0% agreeing or strongly agreeing, while 36.7% remained neutral and 13.3% disagreed. Strong agreement was observed for pre-internship orientation with school mentors, as 70.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, compared to only 13.3% who disagreed. Similarly, regular and constructive feedback from faculty supervisors was considered important by 53.4% of interns, though 36.7% were neutral. Training in digital pedagogy received strong endorsement, with 70.0% agreeing or strongly agreeing and no respondents disagreeing, emphasizing the need for enhanced digital teaching preparation. Reflection and peer-collaboration sessions were highly recommended, with 70.0% agreement and only 13.3% disagreement. The strongest consensus was on improving coordination between colleges and internship schools, as 80.0% of interns agreed or strongly agreed as depicted in Table 3 and Figure 5.

Hence, the data indicate strong intern support for better preparation, enhanced feedback, digital pedagogy training, reflective practices and stronger institutional coordination to improve the internship experience.

Table 3: Suggestions for Improvement in B.Ed. Internship Program

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Internship duration should be extended for better exposure.	0 (0.0%)	4 (13.3%)	11 (36.7%)	11 (36.7%)	4 (13.3%)
Orientation programmes with school mentors should be organized before placement.	1 (3.3%)	3 (10.0%)	5 (16.7%)	11 (36.7%)	10 (33.3%)
Faculty supervisors should provide regular and constructive feedback.	0 (0.0%)	3 (10.0%)	11 (36.7%)	11 (36.7%)	5 (16.7%)
Training on digital pedagogy should be strengthened prior to internship.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (30.0%)	15 (50.0%)	6 (20.0%)
Reflection and peer-collaboration sessions should be included during internship.	1 (3.3%)	3 (10.0%)	5 (16.7%)	18 (60.0%)	3 (10.0%)
Stronger coordination is needed between the college and internship schools.	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.3%)	5 (16.7%)	16 (53.3%)	8 (26.7%)

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA= Strongly Agree.

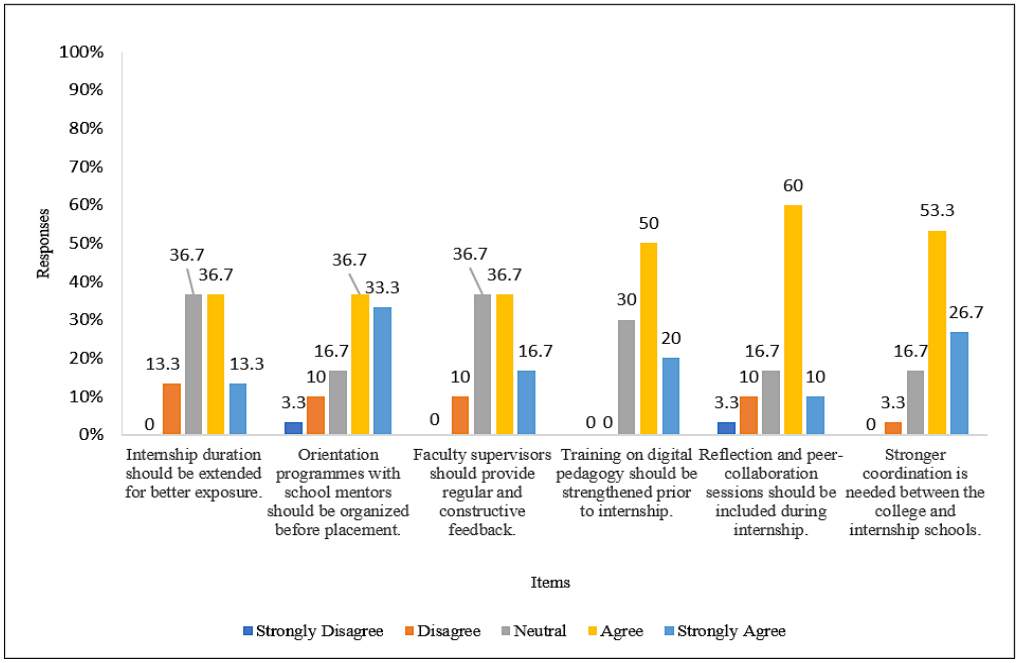

Figure 5: Suggestions for Improvement in B.Ed. Internship Program

Discussion

Challenges Encountered during the B.Ed. Internship

The present study sought to identify the major challenges faced by B.Ed. students during their internship programme. The findings reveal that despite the overall positive value of the internship, student teachers encountered several structural and pedagogical difficulties these are:

Difficulty Associated with Teaching Practices

A major challenge reported by interns was managing time during lessons, as limited instructional periods hindered effective teaching. This aligns with past studies highlighting that internship schedules often restrict practice, reflection and feedback (5, 6, 25). Despite NEP 2020's emphasis on extended field engagement, time constraints persist, limiting opportunities to experiment with teaching strategies and potentially reducing internships to procedural rather than developmental experiences (15).

Many interns reported difficulty applying theoretical strategies in real classrooms, reflecting a persistent theory–practice gap (10, 26). Student teachers also felt that theoretical coursework often lacked direct relevance to classroom practice, supporting critiques of teacher education as overly academic (26, 27). The findings highlight the need for guided practice, reflective supervision and redesigning theory courses using practice-based approaches, classroom examples, case studies and problem-solving tasks, in line with NEP 2020's emphasis on linking theory with internship experiences.

Difficulties in Classroom Management, especially in large and diverse classes, was a major challenge for interns, echoing past studies on novice teachers' struggles with behaviour management and inclusive teaching (20, 28). Effective management requires technical skills, emotional intelligence and adaptability, which develop through practice and mentorship (27, 29). The findings suggest teacher education programs need more real-world exposure, aligning with NEP 2020's emphasis on socio-emotional competencies and inclusive pedagogies (30, 31).

Difficulty Associated with Classroom Students

Students' lack of attentiveness and engagement in the classroom emerged as a significant concern during the internship period. Student teachers often struggled to sustain learner engagement because their teaching approaches did not adequately align with students' cognitive levels and socio-cultural contexts. In line with the observations a study mentioned that novice teachers found it difficult to transform subject knowledge into engaging, learner-centred instruction (7, 32). These findings underscore the need for focused training in active, contextualised and learner-centred pedagogies, as the experiential and competency-based approaches advocated by NEP 2020 are yet to be fully realised in teaching internships.

The study's challenges such as time constraints, theory–practice gaps, classroom management and student disengagement reflect systemic issues in teacher education (33, 34). Enhancing internships through extended duration, mentoring, curriculum integration and reflective practice, as envisioned in NEP 2020, is essential (35, 36).

Contribution of Internship to Teacher Education and Professional Preparedness

The B.Ed. internship plays a vital role in developing professional competence by integrating knowledge, skills and attitudes. Its key benefits include applying subject knowledge through practice and improving teaching through supervision and feedback.

Opportunities to Apply Knowledge in Practice

The study indicates that B.Ed. internships bridge the gap between theory and practice, enabling student teachers to integrate subject knowledge with pedagogy (10). Unlike micro-teaching, internships expose students to real classroom complexities, improving lesson planning, instructional delivery, learner engagement, confidence and student rapport (6, 26). The intensive nature of internships where student teachers' practices and experience unscripted classroom situations in a controlled micro-teaching settings cannot fully mimic real classroom, managing varied learning requirements, dealing behavioural disruptions and adjusting lessons in real time (29, 33). This progressive movement from simulated practice to authentic classroom immersion reflects the developmental continuum envisioned by NEP 2020, wherein teacher preparation is designed as a scaffolded process that gradually builds professional readiness through increasingly complex and reflective field experiences (26,

34).These findings support NEP 2020's focus on experiential, competency-based teacher preparation and underscore the need to strengthen internships and micro-teaching for effective theory–practice integration (12).

Enhancing Teaching through Supervision and Feedback

Another advantage of the B.Ed. internship is the role of supervision and feedback in enhancing teaching. Students reported that guidance from faculty and mentors helped link theory to practice and improve instructional performance. Constructive feedback fosters reflection, identifies areas for improvement and supports adaptive strategies for diverse classrooms. In addition to improving lesson design and delivery, regular and organized feedback helps student teachers develop the emotional fortitude and self-efficacy necessary to deal with the uncertainties of actual classroom settings (29, 37). It's also necessary to mention that collaborative environment rather than evaluative supervision fosters a secure place for experimentation, motivating interns to take pedagogical chances and build cutting-edge teaching strategies appropriate for a range of learner requirements (25, 38). In contrast to merely evaluating procedural compliance, NEP 2020 views mentoring as a growth process that fosters critically reflective practitioners (34, 36). Effective supervision thus mediates the theory–practice gap, shaping both pedagogical competence and professional identity (5, 8).

Mastering Classroom Soft Skills

Beyond pedagogical skills, the internship significantly contributes to the development of essential classroom soft skills, including patience, empathy, confidence, interpersonal communication and the ability to build meaningful relationships with students (39, 40). The findings indicate that sustained interaction with learners during the internship helps student teachers develop emotional intelligence, sensitivity to learner needs and an understanding of classroom dynamics (30, 41). Such soft skills are critical for effective teaching, as they enable teachers to create supportive learning environments, manage classrooms empathetically and respond to learners' socio-emotional needs (31, 35). Developing confidence and interpersonal connection with students also strengthens teachers' professional identity and commitment to the teaching profession (42).

Suggestive Recommendations for Improved Internship Programme

The study finds that while the B.Ed. internship boosts professional confidence and classroom competence, its impact is limited by factors like time constraints, uneven ICT exposure and inconsistent opportunities for reflection and collaboration. To address these, the following recommendations aim to enhance the internship's effectiveness and developmental value.

Recommendations for Improving Teaching Practice

The need for structured orientation and a meaningful internship duration is critical for effectively linking theoretical knowledge with classroom practice in B.Ed. programmes. Although internships are designed to bridge this gap, many student teachers enter school settings feeling underprepared and uncertain about their roles (43). A well-planned pre-internship orientation that actively involves faculty members and school mentors can clarify expectations related to assessment criteria, classroom responsibilities and strategies for addressing diverse learner needs, thereby reducing anxiety and enhancing readiness (44). Furthermore, an internship of meaningful duration, systematically organised into phases of observation, supervised teaching and reflective practice, enables student teachers to gradually assume instructional responsibilities, refine their teaching skills and build professional confidence. Research suggests that the quality and structure of internship experiences, rather than their length alone, play a decisive role in fostering sustained professional growth and effective classroom engagement (43).

Balancing heavy teaching loads with ICT-integrated pedagogy remains a significant challenge, as intensive classroom responsibilities often limit teachers' capacity to plan and implement technology-enhanced instruction (45). Research grounded in the TPACK framework emphasizes that meaningful ICT use depends not only on access to tools but also on adequate time and institutional support for developing pedagogical and technological competencies (46). Therefore, reducing instructional overload and providing structured support are essential for enabling teachers to integrate ICT in ways that

enhance learner engagement and instructional quality.

Recommendations for Continuous Guidance and Collaborative Opportunities

Institutionalizing continuous feedback and mentoring is essential for effective teacher preparation, as regular, constructive feedback supports reflection, skill improvement and professional confidence among student teachers (28). Ongoing mentoring provides guidance, emotional support and practical insights, enabling interns to refine instructional practices and navigate classroom challenges more effectively. Embedding systematic feedback and mentoring within internship programmes ensures consistent professional growth and improved teaching quality (47).

Strengthening peer collaboration and reflective practice is essential for deepening professional learning during teacher education and internships. Collaborative interactions among peers provide opportunities for sharing experiences, co-constructing knowledge and developing problem-solving strategies for classroom challenges (48). Reflective practice, when supported through peer discussion and feedback, enables student teachers to critically examine their instructional decisions, classroom management approaches and learner responses, thereby promoting continuous improvement (35). Research indicates that structured peer reflection enhances self-awareness, professional confidence and adaptive teaching practices, making it a vital component of effective teacher preparation programmes (49).

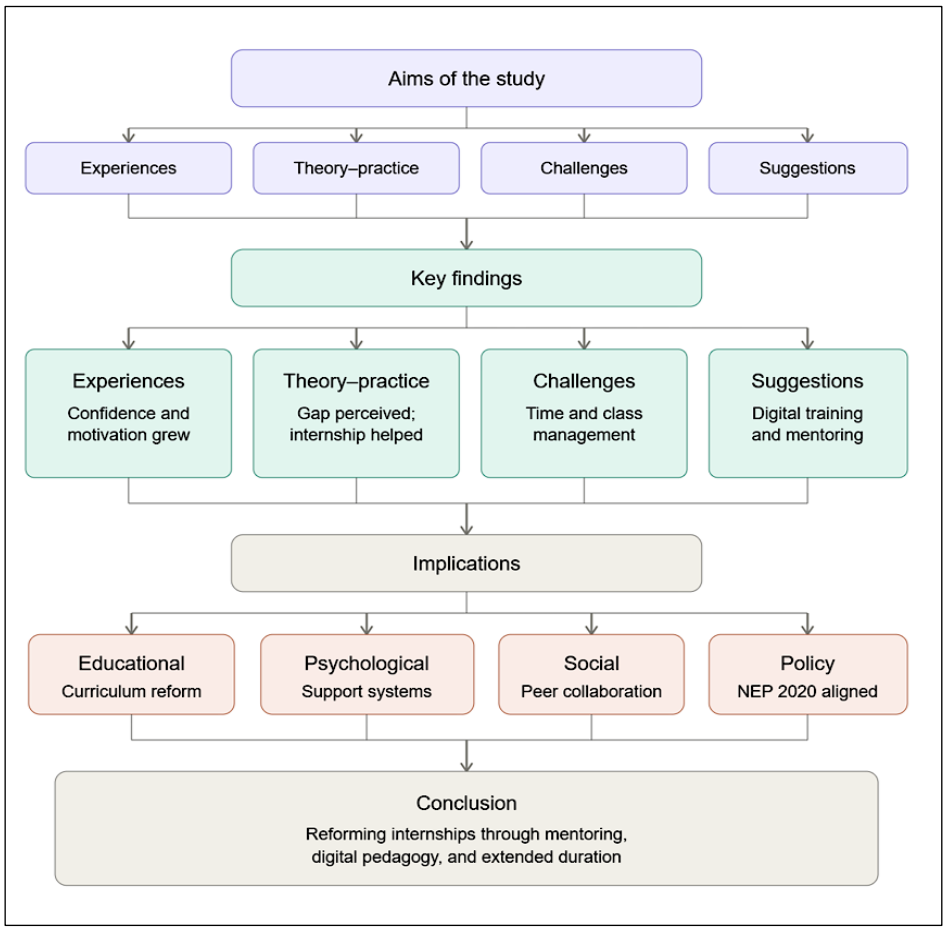

Figure 6: A Schematic Diagram Summarizing the Key Points of the Study

Recommendations of the Study

The findings of the present study yield significant recommendations across educational, psychological, social, professional and policy dimensions. Each point has been drawn directly from the reported experiences, challenges and suggestions of B.Ed. students, ensuring that the recommendations are empirically grounded and practically relevant.

Recommendation in Educational Field

The finding indicates that although internship aids lesson planning yet students reported difficulty in time management and teaching, revealing a gap

between planning and classroom implementation. Hence, time-bound planning exercises and graduated lesson delivery tasks that progressively mirror real classroom conditions before the internship begins should be provided. The students' endorsement of micro-teaching as a helpful preparatory tool suggests that institutions should expand micro-teaching sessions to cover diverse classroom scenarios including multi-level classrooms, disruptive behaviour management rather than a one-time prerequisite.

The reported gap between theoretical learning and classroom application suggests that the current B.Ed. curriculum must restructure pedagogy courses to include case-based learning, school-based problem-solving assignments and theory-application workshops that require students to demonstrate how theoretical knowledge translates into instructional practice. The finding indicated the need for greater access to teaching materials as schools are inadequately equipped. Institutions should establish dedicated resource centres, both physical and digital, providing access to lesson plan repositories, subject-specific teaching aids and open educational resources to support preparation and instructional quality. The strong demand for digital pedagogy training reflects a growing disconnect between contemporary classroom expectations and student teachers' digital preparedness. Hands-on training in educational technology tools, digital content creation and ICT-integrated pedagogy should be embedded as a compulsory component of the pre-internship curriculum.

Recommendations in Psychological Aspects

The finding indicated contain challenges such as time management, managing a large classroom and theory-practice gaps which may become source of anxiety and self-doubt in the absence of sufficient assistance. Therefore, the internship framework should incorporate psychological support mechanisms including frequent mentor check-ins, peer support groups and stress management courses. Unfavorable teacher-to-student ratios made it difficult to manage huge classrooms developing feeling of powerlessness and negatively impacting professional self-concept. Hence, pre-internship orientation sessions that openly discuss common challenges, normalize initial struggles and frame difficulties as learning opportunities can help build the emotional resilience and growth-oriented mindset essential for sustained professional commitment.

Recommendations in Social Aspects

The emphasis on peer collaboration carries implications beyond the classroom. During the internship, collaborative activities can help interns develop a sense of shared purpose, professional community and accountability. To increase the social component of professional training, institutions should provide chances for joint action research and community-based teaching initiatives. The theory-practice gap also has social implications, as inadequately prepared teachers are less likely to address the diverse learning needs of students from marginalized backgrounds. Strengthening theory-practice integration can directly contribute to producing teachers equipped to deliver inclusive, contextually responsive and socially relevant education.

Recommendation in Policy Implications

Students' recommendation for extended internship duration directly supports NEP 2020's vision of immersive field placements, suggesting that NCTE should mandate minimum durations prioritizing professional development over procedural compliance. The demand for better teaching resources and digital pedagogy training calls for policy attention to resource allocation and infrastructure development across teacher education institutions. Additionally, the variation in mentoring and supervision experiences highlights the need for standardized quality benchmarks, mentoring protocols and outcome-based assessment criteria across all institution types to ensure consistency and accountability in teacher preparation.

Conclusion

The present study examined the experiences, challenges, learning outcomes and suggestions of B.Ed. students regarding the internship programme. The findings reveal that internship plays an important role in enhancing their confidence in teaching, lesson planning skills, classroom engagement and professional motivation. There are persistent challenges related to time management, classroom management and the theory–practice gap which require immediate attention. The study reaffirms that internships must be reconceptualized as transformative learning experiences, grounded in reflective

practice, collaborative mentoring, inclusive pedagogies and continuous professional development, rather than treated as mere supplementary programme components. In alignment with NEP 2020, strengthening digital pedagogy training, mentoring systems and school–college partnerships remain essential to preparing competent, critically reflective and future-ready teachers capable of addressing the diverse demands of contemporary Indian classrooms. Figure 6 summarises the complete trajectory of the study from aims to implications.

However, the findings of this study must be interpreted in light of certain limitations. First, the study was conducted with a small sample of 30 students, which limits the generalizability of the findings to broader populations of B.Ed. students. Second, the use of purposive non-probability sampling blocks every students' chance to be selected randomly. Third, the study used self-reported questionnaires, which may be influenced by social desirability bias which may affect accuracy and reliability of the responses. Fourth, the cross-sectional research design captured participants' responses at a single point in time, hence long-term professional competencies and perceptions is difficult to obtained. Fifth, the absence of qualitative data sources such as interviews, classroom observations and reflective journals restricted deeper exploration of students' lived experiences. Sixth, the study was limited to the perspectives of student teachers alone, excluding the voices of mentor teachers, faculty supervisors and school administrators, which would have provided a more holistic and multi-dimensional understanding of the internship process. Despite these limitations, the study provides a useful foundation for future research employing larger and more diverse samples, mixed-methods designs and multi-stakeholder perspectives.

Building upon the findings and acknowledging the limitations of the present study, several directions for future research are suggested. To begin with, the limited sample size and single-institution focus of the current study underscore the need for future investigations. Employ larger and more demographically diverse samples drawn from multiple teacher education institutions across varied geographical and socio-cultural settings. Furthermore, the quantitative nature of the study points to a significant methodological gap. Hence, mixed-methods research approaches focusing on in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, classroom observations and reflective journals, would enable researchers to explore the in-depth information. The study also suggests for longitudinal research designs that can trace the developmental trajectory of student teachers; professional competencies, pedagogical confidence and evolving professional identity during the internship period. Studies should also examine the influence of mentorship quality and supervisory practices on student teachers' learning outcomes. Comparative research across government, private and self-financing teacher education institutions would further provide valuable insights into the structural and resource-related disparities shaping internship quality. Lastly, consistent with NEP 2020's vision, future research should explore digital pedagogy integration, inclusive education practices, socio-emotional competency development and competency-based teacher training within the internship context, ensuring teacher education programmes remain responsive to the evolving needs of modern classrooms.

Abbreviations

B.Ed.: Bachelors of Education, NEP: National Education Policy.

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Author Contributions

Ratan Sarkar: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing original draft, Supervision, Guriya Sharma: Analyses, Data Interpretation, Review, Editing, Visualisation, Abhishek Das: Data Collection, Referencing.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The data is with the author which can be give on rational and genuine reason.

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assistance Process

Grammarly and Paperpal (Premium) were used solely for language refinement and improvement of readability. No AI tools were used for data analysis, interpretation, or content generation. The authors take full responsibility for the content's originality, interpretation and accuracy.

Ethics Approval

The study followed established academic and ethical standards. As it involved adult participants and a simple survey without sensitive issues or experimental procedures, formal ethics approval was not required. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and confidentiality and privacy were maintained throughout the study.

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