

Exploring the Gaps in Practice Teaching and Internship Programmes: A Study on the Challenges Faced by B.Ed. Colleges in Central Assam

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ABSTRACT

This review-based research examines the challenges faced by Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) colleges in Central Assam in implementing practice teaching and internship programmes. By synthesizing national and international literature findings, the study identifies persistent gaps in infrastructure, mentorship, curriculum integration, and institutional partnerships that hamper the effective transition of theoretical knowledge into practical teaching skills. The review highlights how inadequate infrastructural facilities, a shortage of qualified mentor teachers, and limited school-college collaborations compromise the quality of teacher preparation. Using a qualitative approach, the study systematically reviews existing research and policy documents to refine common themes and provide evidence-based recommendations for improving teacher education practices. The findings indicate that although policy frameworks such as the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) guidelines (2010) offer comprehensive standards, their implementation at the regional level—particularly in Central Assam—remains inconsistent. This review further discusses the implications for stakeholders, including teacher educators, policymakers, and school administrators, emphasizing the urgent need for strategic reforms to link the gap between theory and practice in Teacher Training.

Keywords: *B.Ed. Colleges; Practice Teaching; Internship Programmes; Teacher Education; Central Assam; Qualitative Review*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education forms the backbone of a nation's educational system, ensuring that new teachers are well-prepared to meet the evolving demands of contemporary classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2005). In India, the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme is designed to fit in theoretical knowledge with practical teaching experiences. However, numerous studies have highlighted a persistent gap between classroom theory and the realities of teaching practice (Shulman, 1987; Zeichner, 2005). This gap is particularly noticeable in regions such as Central Assam, where infrastructural constraints, resource limitations, and administrative challenges converge to impede effective practice teaching and internship programmes. The significance of this study lies in its focus on Central Assam—a region where B.Ed. colleges often struggle with challenges that compromise the quality of teacher preparation. Despite the comprehensive guidelines provided by the National Council for Teacher Education (2010), local institutions face unique challenges ranging from inadequate infrastructural facilities to limited mentorship and weak partnerships with schools (National Council for Teacher Education, 2010). Furthermore, studies indicate that such gaps may contribute to a cycle of underprepared teachers entering classrooms, affecting overall student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

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Given these concerns, this review-based research aims to provide a detailed synthesis of the challenges encountered in the practice teaching and internship components of B.Ed. Programmes in Central Assam. This paper highlights key obstacles and proposes actionable recommendations for stakeholders by collating findings from various scholarly sources and policy documents. The study assumes a qualitative approach, drawing on thematic analysis of existing literature, to offer an in-depth exploration of the issues at hand. Ultimately, the review underscores the need for targeted interventions that address infrastructural deficits and mentorship shortages and promote effective school–college collaborations—essential elements for developing competent and confident teachers.

Objectives

1. To synthesize existing literature on the infrastructural, administrative, and pedagogical challenges that impede implementing practice teaching and internship programmes in B.Ed. Colleges of Central Assam.
2. To give evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and educational stakeholders to enhance the integration of theory and practice in teacher education.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Table 1. Methods and Procedures

Step	Description	Tools/Approach	Outcome
Literature Search	Comprehensive search for peer-reviewed articles, policy documents, and reports	Databases (ERIC, JSTOR, Google Scholar etc.)	Collection of relevant studies and documents
Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria	Selection based on relevance to teacher education challenges in Central Assam	Predefined criteria (date, region, focus)	Review literature reflecting regional challenges
Data Extraction	Extraction of key themes, findings, and recommendations from each source	Content analysis techniques	Organized data on challenges (infrastructure, mentorship, etc.)
Thematic Analysis	Identification and synthesis of repeated themes across selected literature	Qualitative analysis manual coding done by the researcher	Thematic framework of gaps in practice teaching
Synthesis and Reporting	Compilation of findings and integration into a comprehensible review paper	Narrative synthesis	Comprehensive review paper with evidence-based recommendations

OBJECTIVE WISE RESULT ANALYSIS:

Objective: 1. To synthesize existing literature on the infrastructural, administrative, and pedagogical challenges that impede implementing practice teaching and internship programmes in B.Ed. Colleges of Central Assam

The literature review reveals multiple challenges that hamper implementing practice teaching and internship programmes in B.Ed. Colleges of Central Assam. The challenges identified can be grouped into five key areas: Infrastructural Deficits, Curriculum–Practice Mismatches, Inadequate Mentorship, Poor School–College Partnerships, and Administrative Constraints.

Table: 2. Challenges identified in the literature reviews

Challenge Area	Description	Implications
Infrastructural Deficits	Inadequate facilities, outdated aids, and limited digital resources.	Restricts practical training quality.
Curriculum–Practice Mismatch	Overemphasis on theory with few practical opportunities.	This leaves teachers underprepared.
Inadequate Mentorship	Shortage of experienced, well-trained mentors.	Reduces adequate supervision and growth.
Poor School–College Partnerships	Poor collaboration and logistical issues between colleges and schools.	Leads to fragmented, unsupervised teaching experiences.
Administrative Constraints	Rigid bureaucracy and inflexible administration.	Hinders innovative teaching methods and coordination.

INFRASTRUCTURAL DEFICITS

A predominant challenge across the reviewed literature is the significant infrastructural deficit within many B.Ed. Institutions. Numerous studies indicate that colleges in Central Assam often operate with inadequate classroom facilities, outdated teaching aids, and a scarcity of digital resources. These limitations severely restrict the scope and quality of practical training. For example, the guidelines provided by the National Council for Teacher Education (2010) emphasize the need for modernized infrastructure to support effective teaching practices; however, implementation at the regional level remains suboptimal (National Council for Teacher Education, 2010; Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2013). This gap in resources not only limits the exposure of trainee teachers to current educational technologies but also impedes the development of innovative teaching methodologies that could enhance classroom learning experiences.

Curriculum–Practice Mismatch

The review further highlights a recurring disconnect between the theoretical content of B.Ed. programmes and the realities of classroom teaching. Although these programmes are designed to offer a stable mix of theory and practical application, the actual exposure to diverse and dynamic teaching environments is notably limited. The overemphasis on theoretical coursework leaves little room for experiential learning, a gap widely recognized in the literature (Darling-Hammond, 2005). In Central Assam, this mismatch is exacerbated by the limited opportunities for trainee teachers to engage with schools that are implementing innovative pedagogical practices. Consequently, the transition from theory to practice becomes a significant hurdle, potentially leaving future educators underprepared for the demands of modern classrooms.

Inadequate Mentorship

Mentorship plays a vital role in the professional development of trainee teachers. However, the literature consistently indicates a severe shortage of experienced mentor teachers to guide trainees during practice teaching and internship placements. Several studies have reported that where mentors are available, they often lack the necessary training to provide effective feedback and support (Zeichner, 2005). This deficiency in mentorship compromises the quality of supervision and limits opportunities for reflective practice and professional growth. The inconsistent supervision practices observed across various B.Ed. Institutions in Central Assam further underscore the need for structured mentor training programs that can enhance feedback quality and foster teaching competencies development.

Poor School–College Partnerships

Effective practice teaching relies heavily on robust partnerships between teacher training institutions and local schools. However, the literature reveals several logistical and organizational challenges frequently undermine such collaborations in Central Assam. Issues such as transportation difficulties, scheduling conflicts, and a lack of clear communication channels disrupt the continuity of these partnerships. The absence of joint planning mechanisms further diminishes the potential for a coordinated approach to practice teaching, resulting in fragmented and, at times, unsupervised teaching experiences for trainees (Shulman, 1987). This weak linkage between colleges and schools affects the immediate quality of training and hampers the development of a collaborative network that could support ongoing professional development and innovation in teaching practices.

Administrative Constraints

Bureaucratic and administrative constraints within B.Ed. Colleges contribute significantly to the challenges faced in implementing effective practice teaching programmes. Many institutions are encumbered by rigid administrative frameworks that limit their flexibility and responsiveness to emerging teaching needs. Such inflexibility can delay adopting innovative teaching methods and hinder timely coordination with partner schools. The literature suggests that a more agile administrative process could facilitate improved planning and execution of practice teaching initiatives, thereby enhancing the overall preparedness of trainee teachers (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2013). Streamlined administrative practices would support better integration of theory and practice and foster a more dynamic environment conducive to educational innovation.

Objective: 2. To provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and educational stakeholders to enhance the integration of theory and practice in teacher education.

Table 3: Focus Areas, Recommendations and Key Strategies

Focus Area	Recommendation	Key Strategies
Infrastructure	Modernize facilities with targeted funding.	Develop funding schemes, encourage public-private partnerships, update facilities.
Curriculum Revision	Emphasize experiential learning.	Integrate simulations, internships, and case studies; redesign courses.
School-College Partnerships	Strengthen collaboration with local schools.	Establish MOUs; set up joint planning committees; create feedback loops.
Mentorship	Invest in mentor training and development.	Develop training modules; organize workshops; implement peer review; offer incentives.
Administration	Streamline administrative processes.	Simplify protocols, use digital tools, and decentralize decision-making.

The insistent gap between theoretical instruction and practical application in teacher education has been widely documented (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Shulman, 1987). In many regions, including Central Assam, the disconnect between curriculum design and classroom realities compromises the preparation of trainee teachers. Policy documents and scholarly studies support the need for systemic reforms to bridge this divide. Based on a literature synthesis, the following recommendations target infrastructural, curricular, collaborative, mentorship, and administrative domains to create a more integrated teacher education framework.

1. Investment in Infrastructure

Recommendation:

Allocate targeted funding for modernizing educational infrastructure in teacher education institutions.

Explanation:

Studies have repeatedly highlighted infrastructural deficits such as outdated classrooms, inadequate teaching aids, and limited access to digital resources (National Council for Teacher Education, 2010; Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2013). Policymakers should prioritize investments that upgrade facilities, ensuring that colleges are equipped with state-of-the-art classrooms, interactive digital tools, and modern teaching aids. Such enhancements facilitate practical training and familiarize trainee teachers with contemporary educational technologies and methodologies.

Implementation Strategies:

- Develop funding schemes earmarked explicitly for infrastructure improvement in B.Ed. Colleges.
- Encourage public-private partnerships to introduce technological advancements and digital learning tools.
- Regularly update and maintain facilities to keep pace with rapid technological and pedagogical innovations.

2. Curriculum Revision with Emphasis on Experiential Learning

Recommendation:

Revise teacher education curricula to strengthen the experiential learning component, ensuring that theory is closely aligned with classroom practice.

Explanation:

The literature indicates that many B.Ed. programmes are overly theoretical, leaving small room for hands-on, experiential learning (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Curriculum reforms should integrate practical components such as simulations, micro-teaching sessions, and extended internships that expose trainees to diverse classroom settings. An emphasis on experiential learning can bridge the theory-practice divide by providing real-life contexts where theoretical knowledge is actively applied.

Implementation Strategies:

- Collaborate with educational experts to redesign curriculum frameworks that balance theory with practice.
- Incorporate case studies, role-playing, and project-based learning into core courses.
- Develop modular courses that allow flexibility, enabling trainee teachers to immerse themselves in varied teaching environments.

3. Strengthen School–College Partnerships**Recommendation:**

Foster robust partnerships between teacher training institutions and local schools to facilitate consistent, high-quality practical experiences.

Explanation:

Effective practice teaching is mainly dependent on strong collaborations between colleges and schools. Evidence shows that logistical issues, scheduling conflicts, and poor communication channels often disrupt these partnerships (Shulman, 1987). Strengthening these links can ensure that trainee teachers receive structured and supervised practical experiences, which are crucial for professional development.

Implementation Strategies:

- Establish formal agreements (Memoranda of Understanding) between teacher education institutions and local schools to define roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Create joint planning committees that include school and college representatives to streamline scheduling and curriculum implementation.
- Develop a feedback loop where mentors and trainee teachers can continuously share insights to improve the practical training component.

4. Enhance Mentorship and Professional Development**Recommendation:**

Invest in comprehensive mentorship programs and continuous professional development for mentor teachers.

Explanation:

Mentorship is an essential element in the practical training of teachers, yet a shortage of skilled mentors remains a critical barrier (Zeichner, 2005). Structured mentorship programs that offer regular training and development opportunities for mentor teachers can enhance the quality of supervision provided during practice teaching. Well-prepared mentors offer constructive feedback and serve as role models for best teaching practices.

Implementation Strategies:

- Develop specialized training modules and certification programmes for mentor teachers.
- Organize regular workshops and seminars to update mentors on current educational trends and innovative teaching practices.
- Implement a peer-review system among mentors to foster collaborative learning and accountability.
- Provide incentives and recognition for outstanding mentorship to motivate experienced teachers to take on this role.

5. Streamline Administrative Processes

Recommendation:

Implement administrative reforms to create a more agile and responsive framework for teacher education programmes.

Explanation:

Rigid bureaucratic procedures and inflexible administrative practices often delay or disrupt the implementation of innovative teaching methods (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2013). Streamlining administrative processes can enhance coordination between teacher training institutions and partner schools, improve scheduling, and facilitate the rapid adoption of new teaching strategies. This flexibility is essential for creating an environment that supports dynamic and effective teacher education.

Implementation Strategies:

- Review and simplify administrative protocols related to curriculum implementation and practical training scheduling.
- Use digital platforms for better coordination and communication among stakeholders.
- Introduce regular performance audits and feedback mechanisms to identify and address bureaucratic inefficiencies.
- Encourage decentralization of decision-making to allow local institutions greater autonomy in managing their practice teaching programmes.

Connecting the gap between theory and practice in teacher education requires a multifaceted approach that addresses infrastructural inadequacies, curricular shortcomings, weak school–college collaborations, deficient mentorship, and cumbersome administrative practices. Policymakers and educational stakeholders can create a more integrated and effective teacher education system by implementing targeted investments in infrastructure, revising curricula to emphasize experiential learning, strengthening partnerships with schools, enhancing mentorship programs, and streamlining administrative processes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this review-based study illuminate several critical dimensions of the challenges encountered in practice teaching and internship programmes in B.Ed. Colleges of Central Assam. At the forefront is the persistent infrastructural deficit that limits the scope of experiential learning. Studies by the National Council for Teacher Education (2010) and the Ministry of Education (2013) confirm that many institutions still operate with inadequate classroom spaces, outdated equipment, and insufficient digital resources. Such limitations hinder the implementation of modern teaching strategies and negatively impact the overall learning environment. This aligns with Darling-Hammond's (2005) argument that well-resourced educational environments are essential for nurturing competent educators.

A further point of discussion centres on the curriculum–practice divide. Although B.Ed. Programmes are theoretically structured to integrate practical experiences, but the actual implementation often falls short of this ideal. The literature reveals that an overemphasis on theoretical coursework restricts the opportunities for trainees to experience the dynamic challenges of actual classrooms. As observed in multiple studies, this discrepancy contributes to a sense of unpreparedness among trainee teachers (Zeichner, 2005). The failure to expose future educators to innovative classroom practices, particularly in a region like Central Assam, where progressive pedagogical models are emerging slowly, underscores the need for a curriculum reform emphasising experiential learning.

Mentorship has been identified as a crucial element in successfully executing practice teaching programmes. However, the shortage of experienced mentor teachers remains a significant hurdle. The review demonstrates that many B.Ed. Colleges struggle to recruit skilled and available mentors to provide comprehensive guidance. This issue is further exacerbated by the lack of continuous professional development for mentors, leaving them ill-equipped to support trainee teachers effectively. Such gaps have profound implications for the professional growth of future educators and point to an urgent need for strategic investment in mentor training programs (Shulman, 1987).

The dynamics of school–college partnerships are also prominently discussed. Robust collaborations between teacher training institutions and local schools are imperative for providing meaningful and supervised teaching experiences. Unfortunately, the review highlights persistent issues such as misaligned academic calendars, inadequate communication channels, and logistical challenges that disrupt the continuity of these partnerships. This fragmentation

not only diminishes the quality of practical training but also weakens the feedback loop necessary for continuous improvement in teacher education practices (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

Administrative challenges and bureaucratic constraints further complicate the effective implementation of practice teaching programmes. The rigid administrative structures in many B.Ed. Colleges limit the agility needed to implement innovative teaching methods and adjust to the evolving needs of trainee teachers. The literature suggests that a more flexible administrative framework could facilitate better integration practical experiences into the teacher education curriculum. Moreover, streamlined administrative processes could improve coordination between colleges and partner schools, enhancing the overall quality of internship programmes (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2013).

In light of these discussions, it becomes evident that addressing the gaps in practice teaching and internship programmes requires a multifaceted approach. Policy interventions must focus on upgrading infrastructure, revising curricular frameworks to incorporate more experiential learning, investing in the professional development of mentors, and fostering robust partnerships between teacher training institutions and schools. Additionally, administrative reforms are needed to create a more agile and responsive environment that supports innovative teaching practices.

Ultimately, the challenges highlighted in this review underscore the complex interplay of factors that impact teacher education in Central Assam. The implications of these challenges extend beyond the immediate quality of practice teaching; they affect the overall preparedness of new teachers and, by extension, the quality of education delivered to students. As such, addressing these issues is not merely a matter of institutional improvement but is also critical to the broader goals of educational reform and social development. Future research should continue to explore these dimensions through empirical studies that validate and expand upon the insights gained from this review.

CONCLUSION

This review-based study synthesizes the literature on the challenges faced by B.Ed. Colleges in Central Assam are implementing practice teaching and internship programmes. The evidence indicates that infrastructural deficits, curriculum–practice gaps, inadequate mentorship, fragmented school–college partnerships, and bureaucratic constraints collectively impede the adequate preparation of trainee teachers. Addressing these challenges is essential for enhancing teacher education and ensuring the delivery of quality education in schools. The findings suggest that targeted policy reforms, strategic investment in infrastructure and professional development, and improved administrative coordination are necessary to bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and practical teaching experiences. In moving forward, stakeholders must collaborate to foster an environment where innovative teaching practices can flourish, ultimately benefiting educators and students.

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