



Teacher Education as a Site of Citizenship Formation: Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems in the India 2047 Vision

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ABSTRACT

Teacher education plays a critical role in shaping pre-service teachers' conceptions of citizenship, thereby influencing the development of democratic, ethical, and socially responsible citizens. In the Indian context, teaching has often been perceived as a vocation rather than a fully professionalised field, shaped by gendered expectations, uneven institutional standards, and limited engagement with critical pedagogies. These structural conditions significantly affect how future teachers understand citizenship and their role in fostering civic consciousness.

This paper examines teacher education as a formative site of citizenship formation, situating the discussion within the framework of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and the national vision of India 2047. Adopting a qualitative conceptual design, the study undertakes a thematic analysis of existing literature on teacher education, citizenship education, diversity, service-learning, and democratic pedagogy. The analysis identifies dominant patterns in how curriculum structures, pedagogical approaches, and experiential learning opportunities shape pre-service teachers' civic orientations.

Findings suggest that transmission-orientated pedagogy and curriculum constraints often reinforce passive or personally responsible models of citizenship, while experiential practices such as service-learning, reflective engagement and exposure to diversity promote participatory and justice-orientated citizenship. The study argues that integrating principles from Indian Knowledge Systems—such as ethical responsibility, *kartavya* (duty), and community well-being—can provide a culturally grounded framework for reimagining citizenship education within teacher preparation. By positioning teacher education as a transformative civic space, the paper contributes to contemporary debates on democratic education and highlights its significance in advancing the India 2047 vision.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Citizenship Education, Indian Knowledge Systems, Democratic Pedagogy, Pre-Service Teachers, India 2047 Vision

Introduction

India's aspiration to emerge as a developed nation by 2047 has renewed attention to the transformative role of education in shaping democratic, inclusive, and socially responsible citizens. Within this broader national vision, education is not confined to economic productivity or technological

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Email:- bushraali85234@gmail.com

Received:- 08 January, 2026

Accepted:- 20 March, 2026.

Available online:- 30 March, 2026

Published by JSSCES, Bareilly

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Janak: A Journal of Humanities

“An International, Open-Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed Journal”

(I S S N : 3 1 1 7 - 3 4 6 2) Volume: 02, Issue: 01, March, 2026

Available on <https://janakajournal.in/index.php/1/about>

advancement; rather, it is expected to cultivate constitutional morality, social justice, cultural plurality, and participatory citizenship. Teachers occupy a pivotal position in this process, functioning as mediators between policy, curriculum, classroom practice, and students' lived experiences. Consequently, teacher education programmes become critical spaces where meanings of citizenship are constructed, negotiated, and internalised.

Citizenship in the Indian context is a layered and dynamic construct shaped by historical struggles, constitutional commitments, social hierarchies, and deep cultural diversity. It extends beyond legal status to encompass belonging, participation, responsibility, inclusion, and contestation. Schools serve as important sites where these dimensions of citizenship are enacted. However, the enactment of citizenship in classrooms is significantly influenced by teachers' beliefs, values, and social locations. Teachers do not function as neutral transmitters of curriculum; they bring their own understandings of justice, diversity, nationhood, and social responsibility into pedagogical practice. These perspectives shape both the formal and hidden curriculum experienced by students.

Teacher education programmes, therefore, hold immense potential as formative spaces for cultivating culturally responsive and socially conscious educators. They are expected to prepare pre-service teachers to engage critically with diversity, address social inequities, and foster democratic participation among learners. Yet, existing research indicates that limited engagement with questions of diversity, controversial issues, and civic agency during teacher preparation can result in passive or uncritical orientations towards citizenship. In such contexts, teachers may inadvertently reproduce

dominant narratives rather than challenge structural inequities.

Despite growing scholarly attention to citizenship education in India, a significant gap remains in understanding how teacher education programmes shape pre-service teachers' own conceptions of citizenship prior to entering the profession. Much of the existing research focuses on curriculum reforms or classroom practices at the school level, while comparatively little attention has been paid to teacher preparation as a foundational site of civic formation. Examining how student-teachers conceptualise citizenship, how they interpret inclusion and exclusion, and how they position themselves within a diverse democratic society is essential for strengthening teacher education in alignment with constitutional and national aspirations.

This paper positions teacher education as a transformative civic space and examines how it influences the formation of citizenship conceptions among pre-service teachers. By integrating insights from Indian Knowledge Systems—particularly ethical responsibility, *kartavya* (duty), and community well-being—the study seeks to reframe citizenship formation within culturally grounded and democratically orientated teacher preparation. In doing so, the paper contributes to ongoing debates on democratic education and highlights the centrality of teacher education in advancing the India 2047 vision.

Literature Review

1. Status and Professional Identity in Teacher Education

Scholarly literature highlights the historically marginal status of teacher education in India. Teaching has often been perceived as a vocation rather than a



fully professionalised field, shaped by structural, gendered, and institutional factors. Nayar (1988) and Batra (2005) argue that weak regulatory standards and uneven programme quality have contributed to the diminished professional standing of teacher education. The feminisation of primary teaching has further shaped societal perceptions of the profession. Sarohe (2005) notes that teaching is frequently viewed as compatible with domestic responsibilities, leading to its positioning as a semi-professional occupation rather than a career requiring sustained intellectual engagement.

Such structural conditions influence how pre-service teachers perceive their roles, potentially limiting critical engagement with broader social and civic responsibilities. When teacher education is framed as routine training rather than transformative preparation, its capacity to foster democratic citizenship becomes constrained.

2. Conceptions and Models of Citizenship

International research demonstrates that teachers' understanding of citizenship significantly shapes classroom practice. Goodman and Adler (1985) found that pre-service teachers often equate citizenship education with obedience, loyalty, and conformity, rather than critical engagement. Similarly, Leung and Print (2002) observed that nationalist orientations embedded within curricula shape teachers' civic perspectives.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) provide a widely cited framework distinguishing between three models of citizenship: personally responsible, participatory, and justice-orientated citizens. Their work demonstrates that educational programmes frequently privilege personally responsible

citizenship (e.g., obeying laws, volunteering) over justice-orientated engagement that interrogates structural inequities. This framework provides a useful lens for analysing how teacher education programmes position civic learning and whether they encourage critical or passive orientations.

3. Diversity, Inclusion, and Democratic Engagement

A substantial body of literature emphasises the importance of preparing teachers for culturally diverse classrooms. Studies by Larke (1990) and Milner and Paine (1990) suggest that limited exposure to diversity during teacher preparation can lead to hesitation or discomfort in engaging with difference. Banks (2001) and Nieto (2002) argue that culturally responsive pedagogy requires critical awareness of power, privilege, and systemic inequities.

Experiential and reflective components in teacher education—such as field experiences and structured reflection—have been shown to enhance sensitivity to inclusion and social justice (Cook & Cleaf, 2000; Lenski et al., 2005). However, transmission-orientated pedagogy and rigid curriculum structures often limit opportunities for such engagement (Hugh, Russell, & Martin, 2001). These tensions reveal that teacher education can either reproduce dominant narratives or function as a site for democratic transformation.

4. Service-Learning and Civic Formation

Research on service learning provides evidence of its potential to strengthen civic understanding among pre-service teachers. Wade (2008) and Catapano and Song (2006) demonstrate that community engagement fosters empathy, reflective practice, and participatory orientations. Service-



learning bridges theoretical knowledge with lived social realities, enabling future teachers to situate civic responsibility within community contexts.

However, the impact of such approaches depends on intentional pedagogical design. Without structured critical reflection, experiential learning may reinforce charitable rather than justice-orientated models of citizenship.

5. The Indian Context and Emerging Gaps

In the Indian context, scholarship on citizenship education has largely concentrated on curriculum reforms, constitutional values, and textbook representations of democracy. While these studies provide important insights into policy intentions and school-level practices, comparatively limited attention has been directed towards teacher education as a formative space where civic orientations are shaped prior to professional entry. The preparation phase is critical, as it is during this period that pre-service teachers develop foundational beliefs about nationhood, diversity, participation, and social responsibility.

Existing research suggests that teacher education in India continues to grapple with structural challenges, including uneven programme quality, limited opportunities for reflective engagement, and transmission-orientated pedagogical approaches. Such conditions may inadvertently reinforce passive or compliance-based notions of citizenship rather than critical, participatory, or justice-orientated orientations. Yet, systematic exploration of how pre-service teachers themselves conceptualise citizenship within these institutional contexts remains underdeveloped.

Simultaneously, contemporary policy discourse has renewed emphasis on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) as a

means of grounding education in indigenous philosophical traditions. Concepts such as *kartavya* (duty), ethical responsibility, collective well-being, and harmony with society offer a culturally embedded framework for understanding citizenship beyond legalistic or purely rights-based perspectives. However, there is limited scholarly engagement with how these principles can be meaningfully integrated into teacher education to shape civic dispositions among future educators.

This gap is particularly significant in light of the India 2047 vision, which positions education as central to building a democratic, inclusive, and developed nation. Without examining teacher education as a site of citizenship formation, efforts to promote democratic participation and social justice may remain fragmented. Therefore, there is a pressing need to explore how teacher education programmes influence pre-service teachers' civic understandings and how culturally grounded frameworks such as IKS can contribute to reimagining citizenship formation within Indian educational contexts.

Need of the Study

Existing scholarship establishes that teacher education plays a decisive role in shaping teachers' professional identities, pedagogical orientations, and civic dispositions. While curriculum reforms in India increasingly emphasise democratic values, constitutional morality, and inclusive education, research indicates that teachers' personal beliefs, unexamined biases, and internalised pedagogical norms significantly influence classroom practice. Without critically engaging these embedded orientations during teacher preparation, curricular reforms alone may not translate into meaningful transformations in citizenship education.



Janak: A Journal of Humanities

“An International, Open-Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed Journal”

(I S S N : 3 1 1 7 - 3 4 6 2) Volume: 02, Issue: 01, March, 2026

Available on <https://janakajournal.in/index.php/1/about>

Much of the available research on citizenship in India has focused on school curricula, policy reforms, or classroom-level practices. However, comparatively limited attention has been paid to teacher education as a formative site where notions of citizenship are shaped before teachers enter professional spaces. The perspectives of pre-service teachers—their understandings of belonging, participation, diversity, and social responsibility—remain under-explored in the Indian context. This gap is particularly significant given the diversity and social complexity of Indian society, where questions of inclusion, exclusion, equity, and justice are deeply embedded in educational processes.

Furthermore, in the context of the India 2047 vision, education is increasingly positioned as a foundational pillar for nation-building and democratic consolidation. Simultaneously, renewed emphasis on Indian Knowledge Systems foregrounds ethical responsibility, *kartavya* (duty), and community well-being as guiding principles for educational reform. However, limited scholarly work examines how these philosophical orientations can be meaningfully integrated into teacher education to cultivate reflective, justice-orientated, and socially conscious citizens.

Addressing this gap is essential for reconceptualising teacher education not merely as professional training, but as a transformative civic space. By examining how teacher education programmes influence pre-service teachers' conceptions of citizenship—and how these can be enriched through Indian Knowledge Systems—this study contributes to strengthening democratic and culturally grounded educational practices aligned with national aspirations.

Research Question:

- How does teacher education function as a formative site of citizenship formation among pre-service teachers in the context of Indian Knowledge Systems and the India 2047 vision?

Objectives

- To examine how teacher education programmes shape pre-service teachers' conceptions of citizenship through curriculum, pedagogy, and experiential learning.
- To analyse how principles of Indian Knowledge Systems can inform and strengthen citizenship formation within teacher education in alignment with the India 2047 vision.

Methodology

Research Design: This study adopts a qualitative, conceptual-analytical research design. Rather than generating primary empirical data, the paper undertakes a critical examination of existing scholarship to explore how teacher education functions as a site of citizenship formation. A conceptual approach is appropriate for synthesising diverse strands of literature and developing an integrative framework linking teacher education, citizenship models, and Indian knowledge systems within the broader India 2047 vision.

Data Sources and Selection Criteria: The study is based on secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, policy documents, and research reports related to:

- Teacher education in India and internationally
- Citizenship education and civic learning



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- Service-learning and experiential pedagogy
- Diversity and culturally responsive teaching
- Indian knowledge systems and ethical frameworks

Sources were selected based on relevance to the research question, conceptual significance, and contribution to debates on democratic education. Emphasis was placed on widely cited theoretical frameworks (e.g., models of citizenship) and empirical studies examining pre-service teachers' civic orientations.

Analytical Approach:

The selected literature was analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, tensions, and conceptual linkages across studies. The analysis proceeded in three stages:

Identification of Key Themes:

Literature was grouped around core themes such as professional identity, models of citizenship, diversity and inclusion, experiential learning, and civic engagement.

Comparative Synthesis:

Thematic findings were compared across international and Indian contexts to identify similarities, gaps, and contextual differences.

Conceptual Integration:

Insights from the literature were synthesised to develop an interpretive argument positioning teacher education as a transformative civic space. Principles from Indian Knowledge Systems—particularly ethical responsibility (kartavya), community well-being, and social harmony—were integrated into the analysis to propose a culturally grounded framework for citizenship formation.

This analytical process enabled the study to move beyond descriptive

summarisation toward a critical synthesis of scholarship, highlighting gaps and offering conceptual contributions relevant to the India 2047 vision.

Findings

1. Teacher Education as a Structurally Constrained Professional Space

The review indicates that teacher education in India continues to operate within structural and cultural constraints that shape pre-service teachers' professional and civic orientations. The persistent perception of teaching as a vocation rather than a fully professionalised field influences the seriousness with which civic responsibilities are internalised during preparation. Gendered expectations and uneven institutional standards further contribute to a limited conceptualisation of teaching as transformative social engagement.

These structural conditions affect how pre-service teachers perceive their roles—not merely as educators, but as civic actors. When teacher preparation emphasises procedural competence over critical reflection, citizenship formation remains implicit rather than intentionally cultivated.

2. Dominance of Personality Responsible Models of Citizenship

Thematic analysis of the literature suggests that pre-service teachers frequently adopt personally responsible conceptions of citizenship. These orientations emphasise obedience, moral conduct, and compliance with societal norms, while placing less emphasis on participatory engagement or structural critique.

Drawing on established citizenship models, it becomes evident that teacher



education programmes often prioritise behavioural responsibility over justice-orientated civic agency. Such emphasis risks reproducing passive democratic participation rather than fostering critical engagement with inequality, exclusion, and social justice.

3. Curriculum and Pedagogy as Determinants of Civic Orientation

Curriculum design and pedagogical approaches play a decisive role in shaping civic dispositions. Transmission-orientated pedagogy, lecture-based instruction, and limited engagement with controversial issues restrict opportunities for reflective dialogue. In such contexts, citizenship education becomes informational rather than transformative.

Conversely, programmes incorporating social studies education, dialogic pedagogy, and structured reflection demonstrate greater potential to cultivate participatory and justice-orientated citizenship. Exposure to diverse perspectives encourages pre-service teachers to interrogate assumptions and reconsider their own social positioning.

4. Experiential Learning and Service-Learning as Catalysts for Civic Development

Experiential components, particularly service-learning and community engagement, emerge as significant contributors to citizenship formation. These practices bridge theoretical knowledge and lived social realities, fostering empathy, critical awareness, and contextual understanding.

However, the impact of experiential learning depends on intentional critical reflection. Without structured analysis of social power relations, service-learning risks reinforcing

charitable or paternalistic attitudes rather than justice-orientated engagement. Thus, reflective integration remains essential for transformative civic outcomes.

5. Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems for Culturally Grounded Citizenship

A significant finding of the review is the limited integration of culturally grounded frameworks within teacher education discourse on citizenship. While international models provide valuable analytical tools, they may not fully capture the ethical and relational dimensions embedded within Indian philosophical traditions.

Indian Knowledge Systems offer a complementary perspective by foregrounding *kartavya* (duty), ethical responsibility, and community well-being. Integrating these principles into teacher education can broaden the understanding of citizenship beyond rights-based or compliance-orientated models. When combined with critical pedagogy and experiential learning, IKS can support the development of reflective, socially conscious, and democratically engaged educators aligned with the India 2047 vision.

Discussion

This study positions teacher education not merely as a professional training mechanism but as a formative civic space where meanings of citizenship are constructed and internalised. The findings suggest that structural conditions within teacher education—such as its vocational framing, gendered perceptions, and transmission-orientated pedagogy—shape pre-service teachers' civic orientations in subtle yet significant ways. When teacher preparation prioritises procedural competence over critical reflection, citizenship formation remains implicit and often limited to personally



responsible models rather than participatory or justice-orientated engagement.

The dominance of compliance-based citizenship orientations reveals a broader tension within democratic education. While constitutional and policy frameworks emphasise democratic participation and social justice, institutional practices in teacher education may inadvertently reinforce passive forms of civic engagement. This disconnect highlights the importance of aligning pedagogical practices with democratic aspirations. Teacher education programmes that incorporate dialogic pedagogy, engagement with controversial issues, and structured reflective practice demonstrate greater potential to cultivate critical civic agency among pre-service teachers.

Experiential learning emerges as a significant site of transformation. Service-learning and community engagement provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to encounter social diversity and structural inequalities firsthand. However, the transformative potential of such practices depends on intentional integration with critical reflection. Without analytical engagement, experiential learning risks reinforcing charitable attitudes rather than fostering justice-orientated citizenship.

The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) offers a culturally grounded framework for reimagining citizenship formation within teacher education. Concepts such as *kartavya* (duty), ethical responsibility, and community well-being extend civic discourse beyond rights-based paradigms and situate citizenship within relational and moral dimensions of social life. When synthesised with critical democratic pedagogy, IKS can contribute to a model

of citizenship that is both culturally rooted and socially transformative.

In the context of the India 2047 vision, this discussion underscores that teacher education must move beyond technical training to embrace its role in shaping democratic consciousness. By intentionally designing curricula and pedagogies that integrate reflective practice, experiential engagement, and culturally grounded ethical frameworks, teacher education programmes can prepare pre-service teachers to foster inclusive, participatory, and justice-orientated classrooms. Thus, teacher education emerges as a central pillar in advancing democratic nation-building and socially responsible citizenship.

Implications

The findings of this study carry important implications for teacher education policy, curriculum design, and pedagogical practice in India.

1. Reframing Teacher Education as Civic Preparation

Teacher education must be reconceptualised as a civic and democratic project rather than merely a technical or vocational training programme. Policymakers and regulatory bodies should explicitly integrate citizenship formation within teacher preparation frameworks. This involves embedding democratic engagement, constitutional values, and social justice concerns into course structures rather than treating them as peripheral themes.

2. Curriculum and Pedagogical Reform

Teacher education curricula should move beyond transmission-orientated approaches toward dialogic and reflective pedagogies. Incorporating structured discussions on controversial issues, diversity, and inclusion can help pre-



service teachers critically examine their own beliefs and biases. Reflective journals, case analyses, and collaborative inquiry-based learning can strengthen justice-orientated civic dispositions.

3. Institutionalising Experiential and Service-Learning Components

Field experiences and service-learning should be systematically integrated into teacher education programmes with structured critical reflection. Experiential learning must move beyond charitable engagement to encourage analysis of power structures, inequality, and social responsibility. Institutional support mechanisms are necessary to ensure that such initiatives are meaningful and pedagogically grounded.

4. Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)

The inclusion of Indian Knowledge Systems within teacher education should not be symbolic or tokenistic. Instead, principles such as *kartavya* (duty), ethical responsibility, community well-being, and collective harmony should be critically engaged and contextualised within democratic frameworks. When integrated thoughtfully, IKS can provide a culturally grounded lens for understanding citizenship that complements participatory and justice-orientated models.

5. Alignment with the India 2047 Vision

As India advances toward the 2047 vision of a developed and inclusive nation, teacher education institutions play a foundational role in shaping democratic consciousness. Strengthening teacher preparation to cultivate reflective, socially responsible, and culturally sensitive educators is essential for long-term

nation-building. Aligning curriculum, pedagogy, and experiential learning with civic and ethical goals can ensure that teacher education contributes meaningfully to democratic consolidation.

Conclusion

This study has argued that teacher education functions as a formative civic space where pre-service teachers' conceptions of citizenship are constructed, negotiated, and internalised. Through a thematic synthesis of existing scholarship, the analysis demonstrates that the structural positioning of teacher education, dominant pedagogical practices, and the nature of experiential learning opportunities significantly influence civic orientations. While transmission-orientated approaches tend to reinforce personally responsible and compliance-based models of citizenship, dialogic pedagogy, reflective engagement, and service-learning create conditions for participatory and justice-orientated civic formation.

The paper further highlights that in the Indian context, teacher education remains an under-examined yet critical site for nurturing democratic consciousness. Integrating principles from Indian Knowledge Systems—particularly ethical responsibility, *kartavya* (duty), and community well-being—offers a culturally grounded framework that can expand citizenship discourse beyond rights-based or procedural understandings. When synthesised with critical democratic pedagogy, these principles can contribute to the development of reflective, socially conscious, and culturally responsive educators.

Positioning teacher education within the broader India 2047 vision underscores its transformative potential.



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Preparing teachers is not merely a matter of professional competence; it is a long-term investment in democratic nation-building. By intentionally aligning curriculum, pedagogy, and experiential learning with civic and ethical objectives, teacher education programmes can cultivate educators capable of fostering inclusive, participatory, and justice-orientated classrooms.

Ultimately, strengthening teacher education as a site of citizenship formation is essential for shaping a democratic future grounded in both constitutional values and culturally embedded ethical traditions.

Limitations

This study adopts a qualitative, conceptual-analytical approach based on a thematic review of existing literature. As such, it does not generate primary empirical data from pre-service teachers or teacher education institutions. The findings and interpretations are therefore limited to the scope, depth, and diversity of the selected scholarly sources.

Second, the analysis relies primarily on published academic literature, which may not fully capture regional variations, institutional differences, or informal pedagogical practices within Indian teacher education programmes. The absence of field-based data restricts the ability to examine lived experiences of pre-service teachers across diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Third, while the study integrates principles from Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) as a conceptual framework, it does not empirically evaluate how these principles are currently implemented within teacher education institutions. The proposed integration remains theoretical and would benefit from future empirical validation.

Finally, the focus on citizenship formation within teacher education may not account for broader systemic influences such as policy implementation gaps, institutional constraints, or socio-political dynamics that shape educational practices.

Future research incorporating interviews, classroom observations, or case studies across different teacher education programmes would provide deeper insights into how civic orientations are formed and enacted in practice.

Future Research Directions

While this study provides a conceptual understanding of teacher education as a site of citizenship formation, several areas warrant further investigation.

First, empirical studies are needed to examine how pre-service teachers interpret and internalise civic values during their teacher education programmes. Qualitative research involving interviews, reflective journals, and classroom observations could provide deeper insight into how democratic dispositions are actually cultivated in practice.

Second, comparative case studies across different teacher education institutions—government, private, and central universities—would help identify institutional variations in approaches to civic education. Such studies could explore how curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and practicum experiences influence civic orientations.

Third, future research may empirically investigate the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) within teacher education curricula. Experimental or action research designs could examine whether embedding concepts such as



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ethical responsibility, community engagement, and culturally rooted knowledge frameworks enhances participatory and justice-orientated citizenship.

Fourth, longitudinal studies following pre-service teachers into their early years of professional practice would offer valuable insights into whether civic dispositions developed during training are sustained and translated into classroom practice.

Finally, interdisciplinary research linking teacher education, policy studies, and democratic theory could further strengthen the theoretical foundations of citizenship formation within the India 2047 vision. Such research would help bridge the gap between policy aspirations and pedagogical realities.

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