

Embarking on a New Era: Transforming Standalone B.Ed. Colleges into Multidisciplinary Institutions in Alignment with NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative moment in India's higher education landscape, emphasizing flexibility, interdisciplinarity, and holistic learning. One of its most significant directives is the conversion of standalone Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) colleges into multidisciplinary institutions by 2030. This mandate, further supported by the revised regulations of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), aims to enhance the quality and relevance of teacher education by embedding it within a broader academic and research framework. This paper presents a comprehensive and phased action plan to guide B.Ed. colleges through this transition.

The proposed five-phase framework encompasses: (1) **Foundational Groundwork and Strategic Planning**, which involves institutional auditing, stakeholder engagement, and vision-setting; (2) **Academic and Infrastructural Overhaul**, focusing on the introduction of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), curriculum redesign, and modernized infrastructure; (3) **Regulatory Compliance and Affiliation**, addressing accreditation, UGC/NCTE recognition, and affiliation strategies; (4) **Launch and Operationalization**, emphasizing admissions, marketing, and academic roll-out; and (5) **Continuous Improvement and Quality Assurance**, through the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) and ongoing curriculum and institutional evaluation.

The paper also highlights the importance of financial planning, policy alignment, faculty development, and community engagement to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the transformation. By following this structured roadmap, B.Ed. institutions can not only comply with NEP mandates but also thrive as dynamic, multidisciplinary centers for teacher education and beyond. This research contributes to policy implementation strategies and institutional reform in the Indian context.

Keywords: NEP 2020, NCTE, multidisciplinary institutions, Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), IQAC, teacher education, institutional transformation.

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of teacher education in India is undergoing a radical transformation under the influence of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. One of the key reforms is the requirement for standalone B.Ed. colleges to evolve into multidisciplinary institutions by 2030. This transition aims to integrate teacher education with a broader academic environment, promoting holistic learning, interdisciplinary knowledge, and research orientation. This paper proposes an actionable research-backed roadmap for this transformation.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the rationale behind the transformation of standalone B.Ed. colleges into multidisciplinary institutions.
- To present a phased, actionable transformation framework in line with NEP 2020 and NCTE regulations.

- To identify challenges, opportunities, and strategic responses to institutional transformation.

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts a qualitative approach based on document analysis and policy interpretation. It synthesizes guidelines from NEP 2020, NCTE regulations, and best practices in institutional development. The study also integrates SWOT analysis techniques and project planning principles.

Phased Action Plan for Institutional Transformation

Phase 1: Foundational Groundwork and Strategic Planning (First 12–18 Months)

The first phase in transforming standalone B.Ed. colleges into multidisciplinary institutions is the most critical, as it lays the foundation for all future developments. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes that teacher education should be embedded within multidisciplinary institutions to foster a more holistic and integrated academic environment (Ministry of Education, 2020). Accordingly, the transformation process must begin with meticulous planning and a participatory approach involving all key stakeholders. A High-Powered Transition Committee should be constituted to steer the change process. This committee must comprise representatives from the college management, senior faculty, administrative officers, financial and legal advisors, and ideally include external experts from higher education institutions and potential academic collaborators. Their collective responsibility is to interpret the regulatory framework set by NEP 2020 and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2021), ensuring that all strategic decisions align with policy mandates.

A crucial step in this phase is the execution of a comprehensive institutional audit, primarily through a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). This self-assessment will reveal internal capabilities and limitations, helping to identify core strengths such as qualified faculty, existing reputation in teacher training, and available infrastructure. At the same time, it will expose vulnerabilities like limited program diversity, inadequate infrastructure for expansion, and potential resistance to change. Opportunities could include introducing new undergraduate and postgraduate courses in liberal arts, sciences, commerce, and vocational education, as well as forming academic collaborations with neighbouring colleges or universities. Threats might arise from regulatory hurdles, competition from established multidisciplinary institutions, and funding limitations. Such a diagnostic exercise is endorsed by strategic planning literature as essential for evidence-based decision-making (Bryson, 2018).

Following the audit, a clear institutional vision must be formulated, outlining the future academic identity of the institution—whether it aspires to evolve into a liberal arts college, a technical-education hybrid, or a comprehensive multidisciplinary institution. The vision should be informed by local socio-economic needs, labor market trends, student interests, and faculty expertise. NEP 2020 recommends that institutions focus on "broad-based, multi-disciplinary, holistic education with flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education, and multiple entry and exit points" (NEP, 2020, p. 36). Accordingly, the roadmap should outline a phased plan for launching new programs, recruiting diverse faculty, and expanding infrastructure over a realistic timeline.

Equally important is financial planning. Institutions must prepare a comprehensive budget estimate, considering both capital expenditures (e.g., new buildings, laboratories, libraries) and operational costs (e.g., faculty salaries, course materials, digital tools). The Ministry of Education encourages institutions to leverage schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USA), previously RUSA, which supports higher education institutions in infrastructure development and program diversification (MoE, 2023). Additional funding sources may include internal reserves, loans, CSR initiatives, alumni donations, and public-private partnerships. Strategic financial planning, backed by diverse resource mobilization efforts, ensures institutional sustainability and regulatory compliance during the transformation process.

Phase 1 is a blueprint-setting phase that requires strong leadership, comprehensive self-evaluation, visionary planning, and strategic financial management. It aligns institutional efforts with national educational reforms,

positioning B.Ed. colleges as future-ready, multidisciplinary institutions that will play a pivotal role in shaping quality education in India.

a. Formation of a High-Powered Transition Committee

Institutions must form a transition committee consisting of management, faculty, external experts, and legal and financial advisors. Their task is to interpret NEP directives and craft a strategic transformation plan.

b. Institutional SWOT Analysis

A comprehensive audit will assess internal strengths (faculty, infrastructure), weaknesses (limited programs, financial constraints), opportunities (new programs, collaborations), and threats (regulatory complexities, competition).

c. Vision and Roadmap Creation

Colleges should define their future academic identity and map out a phased expansion plan. Potential models include liberal arts institutions, education-technical hybrids, or comprehensive multidisciplinary colleges.

d. Financial Planning

The budgeting process should estimate capital and operational costs. Institutions must diversify funding through internal reserves, government schemes like PM-USHA, bank loans, CSR contributions, and PPPs.

Phase 2: Academic and Infrastructural Overhaul (Next 18–24 Months)

The second phase of transforming standalone B.Ed. colleges into multidisciplinary institutions focuses on creating the academic and physical infrastructure necessary for delivering a diversified and integrated curriculum. In line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, this stage underscores the importance of redesigning curricula, launching new academic programs, modernizing teaching methodologies, and developing state-of-the-art infrastructure to support a multidisciplinary ecosystem (Ministry of Education, 2020). A key reform during this phase is the implementation of the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which will become the minimum qualification for school teachers by 2030. The ITEP integrates subject specialization with teacher training, offering dual-major undergraduate degrees in education and core subjects such as English, Hindi, Mathematics, Physical Science, Biology, and Social Studies (NCTE, 2021). This program not only aligns with NEP's vision of holistic education but also promotes early exposure to pedagogy, experiential learning, and field engagement.

The introduction of new undergraduate and postgraduate courses in disciplines like humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, commerce, and vocational studies is essential for achieving multidisciplinary status. These new programs must be designed to incorporate NEP's emphasis on critical thinking, flexibility, interdisciplinary learning, and the integration of technology in education (NEP, 2020, p. 35). Curriculum development should be faculty-led and guided by academic experts to ensure relevance to local and global contexts. Furthermore, credit-based systems, multiple entry and exit options, and skill-based learning components should be incorporated in line with the UGC's Learning Outcomes-based Curriculum Framework (LOCF) (UGC, 2021).

Faculty recruitment and professional development are equally pivotal during this phase. The institution must recruit qualified faculty across new disciplines, ensuring a diverse pool of educators with strong academic and research credentials. According to the University Grants Commission (UGC, 2022), quality in higher education is strongly linked to the availability of trained and research-oriented faculty. At the same time, existing B.Ed. faculty must undergo capacity-building through faculty development programs (FDPs), workshops, and cross-disciplinary seminars to enable effective collaboration and integration across subjects.

Infrastructure development must proceed concurrently. Institutions must invest in constructing new academic blocks, science and computer laboratories, seminar halls, faculty offices, and common learning spaces. A modern central library equipped with digital repositories, e-resources, and access to national and international academic

databases is essential to support research and multidisciplinary learning. Additionally, upgrading IT infrastructure, including campus-wide Wi-Fi, learning management systems (LMS), smart classrooms, and computer labs, is necessary to foster a tech-integrated learning environment (AICTE, 2022). Existing facilities should also be renovated to align with the enhanced institutional vision, ensuring accessibility, sustainability, and compliance with safety and quality norms.

Phase 2 transforms the conceptual framework developed in Phase 1 into tangible academic and infrastructural realities. It operationalizes the NEP's ideals through innovative curriculum design, competent faculty recruitment, and modern infrastructure. This phase ensures that the institution evolves from a single-purpose teacher training college into a vibrant, multidisciplinary center of higher learning.

a. Curriculum Design and ITEP Launch

The Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), a four-year dual-major program, must be introduced. Curricula should incorporate NEP's emphasis on critical thinking, pedagogy, and interdisciplinarity.

b. Faculty Recruitment and Training

New faculty should be recruited across disciplines, while existing B.Ed. faculty must undergo reorientation to thrive in a multidisciplinary setup.

c. Infrastructure Development

The institution must invest in new buildings, labs, libraries, and digital infrastructure. Upgrades to current classrooms and admin blocks are equally essential.

Phase 3: Regulatory Compliance and Affiliation (Concurrent with Phase 2)

Phase 3 is a crucial pillar in the transformation of standalone B.Ed. colleges into multidisciplinary institutions, running concurrently with academic and infrastructural development. This phase focuses on navigating the complex regulatory framework laid down by national accrediting and affiliating bodies such as the University Grants Commission (UGC), the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), and other statutory agencies. According to the NEP 2020, higher education institutions must adhere to standardized regulatory norms to ensure quality, transparency, and accountability (Ministry of Education, 2020). The first major decision in this phase involves determining the institutional pathway—whether the B.Ed. college should merge with an existing multidisciplinary university, become a constituent college, or pursue autonomous status with the goal of achieving "deemed-to-be-university" recognition under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956 (UGC, 2021). Each of these options has distinct criteria involving infrastructure, academic diversity, faculty strength, and financial viability.

The regulatory compliance process begins with the preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR), which must articulate the institution's transformation vision, governance structure, proposed academic programs, faculty recruitment plans, financial strategy, infrastructural development, and timelines. This report is submitted to the NCTE, UGC, and in some cases the affiliating university. As outlined in NCTE's Revised Recognition Norms (2021), any institution seeking to offer the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) must demonstrate adequate infrastructure, qualified faculty, and curriculum frameworks aligned with NEP 2020. In parallel, UGC's Guidelines for Establishing New Higher Education Institutions mandate that institutions should offer a minimum of three disciplines (arts, science, commerce, etc.) to qualify as multidisciplinary (UGC, 2021).

In case a college opts to merge with a university or join a cluster of colleges under a common management, the affiliating university's approval and a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) are essential. NEP 2020 explicitly encourages institutional consolidation to ensure economies of scale, inter-departmental collaboration, and academic synergy (NEP, 2020, p. 34). Alternatively, colleges with the capacity to function independently can apply for "deemed-to-be-university" status, provided they meet the eligibility criteria, which include having at least five postgraduate departments, strong research output, and adequate endowment funds (UGC, 2021).

Compliance also includes meeting teacher-student ratios, land area requirements, library resources, and lab facilities as per NCTE and UGC norms. Institutions must undergo inspections by expert committees appointed by these bodies to validate their readiness. Furthermore, all institutions are expected to implement accreditation mechanisms such as the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) or the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), which evaluate the overall quality and sustainability of educational offerings (NAAC, 2022).

To ensure smooth execution, it is advisable for institutions to appoint dedicated liaison officers or compliance teams to interact with regulatory bodies and handle documentation and inspections. In essence, Phase 3 legitimizes the transformation, enabling the institution to operate within the legal and academic frameworks of Indian higher education. Proper compliance guarantees credibility, funding eligibility, and academic recognition, thus laying the foundation for long-term sustainability and institutional excellence.

a. Affiliation or University Status

Institutions may opt for mergers with existing universities or seek "deemed-to-be-university" status via the UGC, depending on their capacity.

b. Regulatory Approvals

Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) must be submitted to NCTE and UGC, followed by strict compliance with prescribed norms on staffing, infrastructure, and academic standards.

Phase 4: Launch and Operationalization (Final 6–12 Months)

Phase 4 marks the culmination of the transformative journey of standalone B.Ed. colleges into multidisciplinary institutions and involves translating strategic planning and infrastructural development into academic and administrative action. This stage is crucial for the official rollout of newly established programs, departments, and student services. According to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the transformation of teacher education must be embedded within the broader academic system to enable integrated, flexible, and holistic learning (Ministry of Education, 2020). Thus, the first major activity in this phase is the **development of a new institutional brand identity**. The rebranding process should reflect the institution's multidisciplinary nature and emphasize its academic diversity, inclusive ethos, and future-readiness. A new logo, motto, website, and promotional materials are essential to communicate the institution's revised vision to prospective students, faculty, and stakeholders.

An **aggressive outreach and marketing campaign** must be launched to generate awareness about the new programs and institutional model. As recommended by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE, 2022), the use of multi-platform marketing—print, digital, and community-based—is vital for reaching a wide audience. Special emphasis should be given to explaining the benefits of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which now serves as the baseline qualification for school teachers. Furthermore, colleges must also promote the additional courses in arts, science, commerce, and vocational streams, highlighting their interdisciplinary curriculum, skill development opportunities, and career prospects. Marketing should also be targeted at local communities, since NEP 2020 emphasizes the need for institutions to be rooted in their regional contexts while having a global outlook (NEP, 2020, p. 40).

Simultaneously, **admission processes must be streamlined** to accommodate new student cohorts across diverse disciplines. This includes upgrading the admission portal, defining eligibility criteria, creating program-specific brochures, and setting up student helpdesks. The University Grants Commission (UGC, 2021) recommends ensuring transparency and accessibility in admissions by adopting digital tools, grievance redressal mechanisms, and inclusive admission policies that promote gender, caste, and regional equity. Institutions must also prepare orientation guides and academic handbooks aligned with the new curriculum structure.

Once admissions are complete, the **official launch of new academic departments and programs** should be conducted with due ceremony. Inviting educational leaders, policymakers, and community stakeholders for inauguration events can enhance visibility and establish academic credibility. Student orientation programs

must be conducted to help the first cohort navigate the newly restructured institution. These programs should include sessions on the institutional vision, multidisciplinary learning approaches, curriculum structure, research opportunities, and available student support services. According to the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC, 2022), effective student induction plays a crucial role in improving student retention and academic satisfaction.

This phase also includes finalizing faculty timetables, operationalizing labs, libraries, and IT systems, and ensuring compliance with any pending regulatory conditions. The institution must ensure readiness in terms of academic delivery, logistical operations, and student support before the semester begins. In essence, Phase 4 is the operational heartbeat of the transformation—where vision meets reality, and the institution begins its new journey as a vibrant, future-ready, multidisciplinary hub of learning.

a. Branding and Admissions

Rebranding to reflect a multidisciplinary identity is crucial. Institutions should adopt robust marketing strategies and implement streamlined, transparent admission processes.

b. Academic Launch

Formal inaugurations, department openings, and orientation programs must be planned for newly admitted students and faculty.

Phase 5: Continuous Improvement and Quality Assurance (Ongoing)

Phase 5 is the final yet ongoing phase in the transformation of standalone B.Ed. colleges into multidisciplinary institutions, emphasizing sustained growth, academic excellence, and quality assurance. This phase ensures that the institution remains dynamic, responsive, and aligned with evolving educational standards, societal needs, and student expectations. As recommended by the *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020*, continuous improvement and institutional accountability are foundational for building high-quality educational ecosystems that promote excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement (Ministry of Education, 2020). The cornerstone of this phase is the establishment of an **Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)**, a mandatory body as per the guidelines of the *University Grants Commission (UGC)* and the *National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)*. The IQAC is responsible for institutionalizing quality enhancement measures, monitoring academic standards, and ensuring a culture of self-assessment and evidence-based decision-making (NAAC, 2022).

The IQAC's primary functions include designing institutional policies for curriculum review, research development, faculty improvement, student support services, and infrastructure enhancement. It conducts periodic audits of academic and administrative practices, ensuring adherence to performance indicators set by NAAC such as curricular aspects, teaching-learning evaluation, research output, and governance (NAAC, 2022). In addition, the IQAC fosters a feedback-rich environment by **soliciting input from students, faculty, alumni, and employers** through surveys, focus groups, and performance reviews. This feedback is systematically analyzed and used to implement changes in course design, pedagogical approaches, faculty development, and student services. Such practices are not only encouraged by NAAC but are also endorsed in the *Quality Mandate Guidelines* of the UGC (UGC, 2021), which recommend a participatory and data-driven approach to institutional quality management.

To promote lifelong learning and remain competitive, the institution should also **establish mechanisms for benchmarking** against national and global best practices. Participation in national and international ranking frameworks such as *NIRF* (National Institutional Ranking Framework) and *QS Rankings* can provide external validation and identify areas for strategic investment. Additionally, institutions should focus on **digital innovation and research culture**, as highlighted in the NEP's vision for integrating technology and inquiry-based learning across disciplines (NEP, 2020, p. 45). Developing centers for excellence, incubators, and research clusters can further contribute to the institution's reputation and output.

Another vital aspect of this phase is the **regular updating of curriculum and teaching methods** to stay aligned with advancements in knowledge, technology, and pedagogy. Faculty must be encouraged to participate in Faculty Development Programs (FDPs), MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), and research collaborations. The AICTE (2022) and UGC (2021) both recommend regular skill enhancement for faculty as a critical driver of academic quality.

Phase 5 sustains the momentum generated during the earlier phases of transformation. Through structured quality assurance systems, stakeholder feedback, performance metrics, and adaptive reforms, institutions can ensure continuous improvement. This not only meets accreditation and regulatory expectations but also cultivates a vibrant academic culture, ultimately ensuring the success and sustainability of the multidisciplinary model.

a. Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)

An IQAC must be established to monitor academic quality, infrastructure, and learning outcomes through regular audits and assessments.

b. Stakeholder Feedback and Reforms

Continuous feedback loops involving students, faculty, and partners will help in refining academic programs and governance structures.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The transformation of B.Ed. colleges into multidisciplinary institutions is not merely a compliance exercise; it is an opportunity to reinvent the identity and academic ethos of teacher education in India. While challenges such as financial strain, infrastructural bottlenecks, and resistance to change are expected, the long-term benefits—such as improved teacher quality, academic integration, and employability—are significant. The NEP’s stress on research, flexibility, and interdisciplinarity makes this transformation not only timely but essential.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Challenge	Mitigation Strategy
Financial Constraints	Government schemes, CSR, PPP models
Faculty Shortages	Competitive hiring, in-house training
Regulatory Hurdles	Expert consultancy, phased compliance
Resistance to Change	Awareness programs, stakeholder involvement

CONCLUSION

The mandated transition of standalone B.Ed. colleges into multidisciplinary institutions under NEP 2020 offers a once-in-a-generation chance to reimagine teacher education in India. By following a well-planned, phased, and participatory approach, colleges can successfully align with national goals while enhancing their institutional credibility, academic quality, and student outcomes. This action plan serves as both a blueprint and a call to action for educational leaders committed to building India’s future through integrated, inclusive, and innovative education.

The transformation of standalone B.Ed. colleges into multidisciplinary institutions represents a landmark shift in India’s higher education landscape, driven by the visionary framework of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This comprehensive reform seeks to embed teacher education within a broader academic and research ecosystem, thereby fostering integrated learning, innovation, and improved educational outcomes. The five-

phase action plan outlined—beginning with foundational groundwork, followed by academic and infrastructural overhaul, regulatory compliance, operationalization, and culminating in continuous quality assurance—offers a structured and strategic pathway for institutions to undertake this critical journey.

Each phase plays a vital role in ensuring a smooth and effective transition. From forming a visionary roadmap and ensuring regulatory alignment to introducing the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) and establishing robust Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs), the plan emphasizes sustainability, inclusion, and excellence at every step. Furthermore, with proper planning, financial prudence, and stakeholder engagement, colleges can overcome challenges related to capacity, funding, and policy compliance.

By embracing this transformation, B.Ed. institutions can evolve into vibrant centers of multidisciplinary learning, empowering future educators not just as subject experts, but as holistic professionals capable of addressing the complex demands of 21st-century classrooms. Ultimately, this reform is not only about institutional restructuring but also about redefining the purpose and potential of teacher education in India. Successful implementation of this vision will contribute significantly to nation-building by nurturing educators who are reflective, research-driven, and globally competent, thereby upholding the spirit and goals of NEP 2020.

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