I J C R M
International Journal of Contemporary Research In Multidisciplinary

*Research Article*

# Implementation of the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme Under NEP 2020 In Indian Universities

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**DOI:** https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23938792

## Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes (UGC) 2022 introduced a four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP/FYUGP) with multiple entry and exit points, multidisciplinary course baskets, an Academic Bank of Credits, and a research-oriented fourth year. The first full cohorts were at that fourth year in 2025–26 for the first time, and so it was possible to take a first look at the effect of the reform on students and teachers.

The aims are: (i) to map the current status of FYUP in Indian universities with regards to penetration and speed; (ii) to understand student perception and preference on the programme and the optional fourth year; (iii) to understand faculty perception of preparedness, workload and quality; and (iv) to understand implementation gaps between the student perception and faculty perception.

Design: Qualitative – descriptive, secondary data only. Thirty-three documents were analysed, including policy and regulatory texts, Ministry of Education statistics and Parliamentary replies, peer-reviewed documents, documents produced by the universities (IQAC) and verified documents from education-press surveys. Quantitative data was tabulated and crosschecked from one source to another and qualitative data was coded using thematic synthesis method.

Findings: Adoption increased to approximately 200 universities within a few months of the announcement, but was uneven: In July 2026, 20 of 46 central universities either did not implement the provision or were not in year 4. The picture painted by surveys is broadly positive with students indicating a positive attitude towards flexibility and multidisciplinarity, but the picture shown by behavioural data is far less positive: out of the first 75,948 students, 47.3% managed to graduate in 4 years; more than 60% of this cohort failed to do so in 2026. The various issues on faculty evidence can be summarised under two headings: approval of the curriculum from within college and anxiety about load, examination load, capacity to supervise research, and often changing rules.

Core Point: There is significantly more agreement with the design of FYUP than there is with the delivery of FYUP. The fourth year's value is related to supervision capacity, well-defined progression pathways to postgraduate study and constancy of regulations. The paper suggests that the fourth year be delivered in clusters, faculty be hired based on the number of credits they teach, and that there be national consistency in tracking student opt-in selections.

## Manuscript Information

- **ISSN No:** 2583-7397
- **Received:** 06-08-2026
- **Accepted:** 29-10-2026
- **Published:** 04-11-2026
- **IJCRM:**5(6); 2026: 16-25
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- **Plagiarism Checked:** Yes
- **Peer Review Process:** Yes

## How to Cite this Article

Pritam B P, Kirti J. Implementation of the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme Under NEP 2020 In Indian Universities. Int J Contemp Res Multidiscip. 2026;5(6):16-25.

## Access this Article Online

www.multiarticlesjournal.com

**KEYWORDS:** NEP 2020; Four-Year Undergraduate Programme; FYUGP; multiple entry and exit; Academic Bank of Credits; student perception; faculty perception; higher education policy implementation; India.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

India's undergraduate system has for decades been organised mainly around a three-year bachelor's degree in arts, science and commerce. The National Education Policy 2020 proposed a structural departure: an undergraduate degree of either three or four years with multiple exit points, in which a certificate, diploma, or degree is awarded after one, two, or three years respectively, and a four-year programme leading to an honours degree, or an honours degree with research, is described as the preferred option (Ministry of Human Resource Development [MHRD], 2020). The policy also called for an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) so that credits earned in one institution could be stored and transferred to another.

The University Grants Commission translated these provisions into the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes, launched on 12 December 2022, replacing the earlier Choice Based Credit System and asking all higher education institutions to implement the revised framework (Parthiban, 2022). The draft version of that framework had already proposed a 160-credit, four-year structure and direct admission to doctoral programmes for students with a CGPA of at least 7.5 in the four-year programme with research (Radhika, 2022).

The reform was not entirely new. Delhi University introduced a four-year undergraduate programme in 2013, which the largest section of its teachers opposed; the Delhi University Teachers' Association unanimously rejected it in May 2013 (Study Team, 2013), and the programme was withdrawn in 2014 after intervention by the UGC. That history makes the present round of implementation a natural case for studying how a major structural reform is received by the two groups who must make it work in the classroom: students and faculty.

The timing of this study matters. Delhi University and Dr B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi adopted the FYUP in 2022–23, so their students became the first to complete the fourth year; several other universities introduced the programme in 2023–24 and expected their first fourth-year cohorts in 2026–27 (Ahmed, 2026). By October 2026 there is therefore, for the first time, a body of evidence on what students actually chose at the exit point and on how teachers experienced the extra year. This paper assembles and analyses that evidence using secondary data only.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 Policy design and regulatory framework

The CCFUP specifies the components of the four-year programme: major and minor disciplines, multidisciplinary courses, ability-enhancement, skill-enhancement and value-added courses, internships and a research project or dissertation. CHRIST (Deemed to be University), for example, adopted the UGC framework with 120 credits for a three-year single-major degree, 132 for a double major, and 160 credits for a four-year degree with honours or research, allowing up to 10% additional credits for programme needs (CHRIST University, n.d.). Exit after the first or second year requires completion of a four-credit vocational course. State systems adapted the framework at different speeds: Kerala University approved its own FYUGP curriculum framework and regulations for affiliated colleges from 2024–25 (University of Kerala, 2024), while Gauhati University reviewed and restructured its FYUGP in January 2025, reducing the number of core subjects for the 2023 batch (Gauhati University, 2025).

### 2.2 Empirical studies of student attitudes

Peer-reviewed empirical work on FYUP perceptions is still limited. Nadim and Baig (2025) surveyed 800 undergraduates selected randomly from 40 constituent colleges of Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga, using a researcher-developed attitude scale. A significant majority held favourable attitudes toward the FYUGP; female and urban students were more positive than male and rural students, and science students more positive than those in commerce and arts. The authors stress that sustained awareness programmes, academic counselling and infrastructural readiness are conditions for successful implementation.

A book-length study published by the Indian Council of Social Science Research captured the views of students, faculty and heads of institutions on FYUGP implementation across thirteen districts of Karnataka, focusing on how stakeholders understood and adapted to the change and on the critical implementation challenges (Ashok et al., n.d.). Institutional quality-assurance surveys, though not peer reviewed, add further detail. St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad, has included NEP-specific items in its Student Satisfaction Survey since 2023–24; its 2024–25 report found that while many students saw NEP as reasonably aligned with their goals, a considerable share remained neutral, and some reported that SWAYAM-based skill and value-added courses were poorly delivered online (St. Xavier's College, 2025).

### 2.3 Faculty perspectives

There are conflicting views in the literature about perspectives of faculty on feedback exercises and teachers' associations. A teachers' feedback survey conducted at ADP College, Nagaon (n = 26) revealed that majority of teachers agreed that the FYUGP was very effective in addressing the diverse learning requirements of students (61%) and was more comprehensive in terms of teaching, learning and evaluation than the CBCS (81%) (ADP College, 2025). From the responses of 72 teacher respondents of Fazl Ali College, Mokokchung, it was found that most teachers were satisfied with the curriculum (Fazl Ali College, 2025). Teachers from Bangalore and Mangalore universities, on the other hand, have criticized Karnataka's implementation of the new university in 2021 as rushed and ill-prepared, with no new research laboratories or trained faculty despite four years in existence (Krishna, 2024).

### 2.4 RESEARCH GAP

The existing studies are primarily attitude surveys conducted in a single institution before a point where the students were confronted with the choice of staying for the fourth year. They do not often pair up stated attitudes with behavioral information regarding actual choices, or student versus faculty views. This paper fills that void by combining data from attitude surveys, enrolment and exit data, data from the Parliament and


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documented faculty responses for the first few years of which the full four-year cycle has been observed.

## 3. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study pursues four objectives:

1. To document the scale, timeline and unevenness of FYUP adoption across types of Indian universities.
2. To analyse students' perceptions of the FYUP and the choices they have made at the exit point after the third year.
3. To analyse faculty perceptions concerning readiness, workload, assessment and research supervision.
4. To synthesise the implementation gaps that connect these perceptions and to propose policy measures.

Correspondingly, the research questions are: How widely has the FYUP been adopted? How do students evaluate it, and does their behaviour match their stated attitudes? How do faculty evaluate it? Which institutional factors explain the gap, if any, between acceptance of the design and confidence in its delivery?

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Research design

The study design is qualitative – descriptive with secondary data analysis which involves documentary analysis and descriptive quantitative tabulation. There were no primary data collected and no human subjects were involved – all sources are accessible to the public.

### 4.2 Data sources and selection

The search of the sources was done by using the following key words in combination with each other in structured web search and database search which were done in October 2026: 4 year undergraduate programme, FYUP, FYUGP, NEP 2020, perception, attitude, faculty, workload, fourth year, opt out. Documents were included if they contained (a) data from the NEP-era FYUP or regulation or documented views of stakeholders on the NEP-era FYUP; and (b) a verifiable author, institution or publisher and date, and were accessible in full or an authoritative summary. Any opinion pieces that lacked data were not included. A total of 33 documents was selected to form the final corpus, which are organized in Table 1.

**Table 1**. Categories of secondary data used in the study

| Category | Examples | No. of documents |
|---|---|---|
| Policy and regulatory texts | NEP 2020; university FYUGP frameworks and regulations (Kerala, Gauhati, CHRIST) | 4 |
| Official statistics | AISHE 2021–22; PIB backgrounder on ABC–APAAR (July 2026) | 2 |
| Peer-reviewed and scholarly studies | Nadim & Baig (2025); ICSSR Karnataka study; *Social Scientist* (2013) | 3 |
| Institutional (IQAC) survey reports | St. Xavier's College Ahmedabad SSS 2024–25 and 2025–26; ADP College; Fazl Ali College | 4 |
| Verified education-press reports | Careers360, ThePrint, The Wire, Deccan Herald, PTI, British Council, reporting UGC, university or ministry data (incl. the July 2026 Rajya Sabha reply) and named stakeholder statements | 20 |
| **Total** | | **33** |

Source: Compiled by the author.

### 4.3 Method of analysis

Numerical data (adoption counts, enrolment, exit and application figures, survey percentages) were extracted into comparison tables. Where different sources reported different values for the same quantity, all values were retained with their dates so that discrepancies could be analysed rather than hidden; ratios were recomputed by the author from the reported counts. Qualitative statements by students, teachers, principals and officials were coded inductively, and the codes were grouped into themes (clarity of rules, supervision capacity, workload and assessment, progression to postgraduate study, access and equity). The themes were then mapped against the objectives the NEP set for the programme.

### 4.4 Reliability considerations

Press reports were used only where they reported official data, documents or attributed statements, and key figures were confirmed in at least two independent outlets where possible. Institutional surveys are reported with their sample sizes and are treated as indicative, not representative. These limitations are discussed in Section 8.

## 5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Scale and pace of adoption

Table 2 traces the adoption of the FYUP. The UGC reported that 105 universities would begin four-year programmes in 2023–24, comprising 19 centrals, 40 deemed-to-be, 18 state private and 22 state universities (Careers360, 2023). The British Council estimated that this represented around 9% of India's 1,113 universities (British Council, 2023). By late October 2023 the UGC Chairman reported that 200 universities had adopted the programme (Radhika, 2023).

**Table 2.** Milestones in FYUP adoption and supporting infrastructure, 2020–2026

| Date | Milestone/indicator | Source |
|---|---|---|
| July 2020 | NEP 2020 approves 3- or 4-year UG degrees with multiple exits | MHRD (2020) |
| Dec 2022 | UGC launches CCFUP; asks all HEIs to implement | Parthiban (2022) |
| 2023–24 | 105 universities start FYUP (19 central, 40 deemed, 18 state private, 22 state) ≈ 9% of 1,113 universities | Careers360 (2023); British Council (2023) |
| Oct 2023 | 200 universities reported to have adopted FYUP; > 2 crore students on ABC | Radhika (2023) |



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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mar 2024 | 1,855 institutions on ABC; > 4 crore registrations, but only 45 lakh academic records uploaded | Chettri (2024) |
| 2024–25 | Karnataka withdraws the four-year honours option; reverts to 3-year degree | Belur (2024) |
| July 2026 | 26.35 crore APAAR IDs; about 450 universities allow up to 40% credits via SWAYAM | PIB (2026) |
| July 2026 | 20 of 46 central universities have not implemented FYUP or have not yet reached the fourth year | Chettri (2026) |

Source: Compiled by the author from the documents cited.

Two features stand out. First, the infrastructure of the reform moved faster than its academic content: registration on the ABC grew rapidly, but in March 2024 only 45 lakh academic records had been uploaded against more than four crore registrations, about 11% (Chettri, 2024). Second, adoption has been reversible and politically contested. Karnataka, the first state to adopt NEP in 2021, withdrew the four-year honours option from 2024–25, arguing that a four-year degree could reduce access for poor and socially disadvantaged students, women and rural learners (Belur, 2024).

The capacity context is also relevant. AISHE 2021–22 recorded 4.33 crore students and 15.98 lakh teachers in higher education, with a pupil–teacher ratio of 24 for universities and colleges in regular mode (Ministry of Education, 2024). Adding a fourth year, more courses per semester and individual dissertations raises demand on this teaching base without, by itself, adding to it.

### 5.2 Student perceptions: stated attitudes

Survey evidence on students *stated* attitudes is broadly favourable but conditional (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Secondary evidence on student perceptions of the FYUP

| Study / report | Sample | Key finding |
|---|---|---|
| Nadim & Baig (2025), LNMU Darbhanga, Bihar | 800 students, 40 colleges | Significant majority favourable; females, urban and science students more positive; calls for counselling and infrastructural readiness |
| St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad, SSS 2024–25 | 491 responses | Many saw NEP as aligned with their goals but a considerable share were neutral; complaints about online delivery of SWAYAM-based SEC/VAC courses |
| St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad, SSS 2025–26 | 657 responses (430 under NEP) | Perceived benefits of NEP not yet uniformly experienced across the student body |
| Ashok et al. (ICSSR), Karnataka | 13 districts; students, faculty, heads | Separate analysis of student, faculty and principal perceptions; identifies critical implementation challenges |
| Ahmed (2026), first cohorts at five universities | Class-level student accounts | Interest high where guidance was early (Visva-Bharati); low where guidelines were missing (Assam University colleges, BBAU) |

**Source:** Compiled by the author.

each case, students appreciate the concept of flexibility, multiple option and an honours or research programme, but they judge the programme on the basis of the clarity of the programme's explanation and the quality of the programme's components. The equity issue that came up later in the Karnataka government's perspective about the rural students being less favourable than the urban students (Nadim & Baig, 2025) is also seen in the Darbhanga study.

### 5.3 Student perceptions: revealed choices at the exit point

A student's perception of the choices they have made at the exit point is assessed. The extra year is available as an option, so it can be considered a behavioural test of perception, as students in the 4th year are deciding whether or not it is worth their time and money. Delhi University has the largest set of data. The first batch of UGCF students included 75,948 students in 2022-23, with 40,005 students completing their three-year course in 2025 and 35,943 students moving on to the fourth year (ThePrint, 2026). Based on the author's calculation, the continuation rate is 47.3% and the exit rate is 52.7%. Of those that stayed, 12111 applied for one-year postgraduate programmes for 2026–27 against 5857 available seats in 46 programmes (Careers360, 2026) which meant that approximately one-third of the fourth-year students opted for the one-year Masters route and less than half of the applicants were accommodated (Figure 1).



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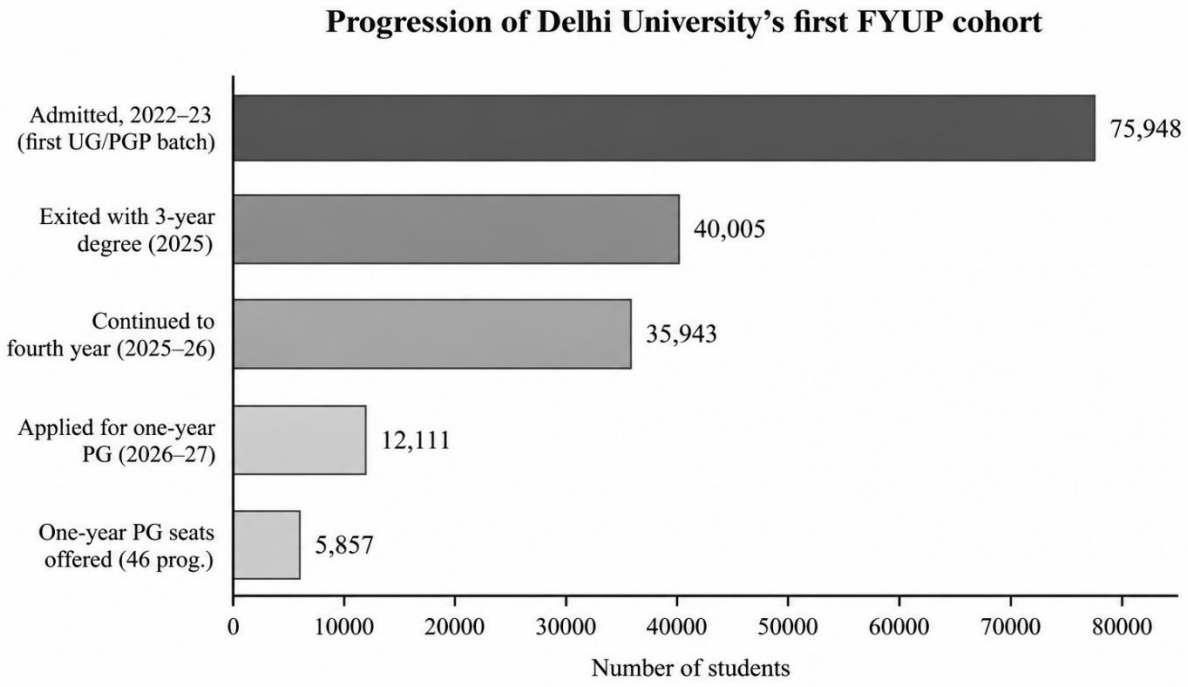


**Source:** Prepared by the author from The Print (2026) and Careers360 (2026).

**Figure 1.** Progression of Delhi University's first FYUP cohort

Reported figures for this cohort varied considerably over time and by source (Table 4). The Vice-Chancellor's interim figure in late July 2025 implied around 72% continuation; on 1 August 2025 he reported that about 31,004 of some 71,000 eligible students had opted out, i.e. over 55% continuing (PTI, 2025a). The university's later consolidated data put continuation at 47.3%, and the Delhi University Principals' Association put the figure at around 30% (Kumari, 2026).

**Table 4**. Reported fourth-year continuation at Delhi University, 2025–26 cohort

| Date of report | Reported figure | Source |
|---|---|---|
| July 2025 (interim) | 20,221 of > 72,000 opted out; ≈ 72% continuing | Dinamalar/PTI (2025) |
| 1 Aug 2025 | ≈ 31,004 of ≈ 71,000 opted out; > 55% continuing | PTI (2025a) |
| Aug 2025 | 30,014 of ≈ 66,000 third-year students (≈ 45%) opted out | The Wire (2025) |
| 2026 (consolidated) | 35,943 of 75,948 continued = 47.3%* | ThePrint (2026) |
| July 2026 (DUPA letter) | Approximately 30% opted for the fourth year | Kumari (2026) |

*Computed by the author. Differences arise from changing denominators (eligible students vs admitted cohort) and the timing of opt-out windows.

The second cohort shows a sharper decline. Ministry of Education data presented in the Rajya Sabha in July 2026 showed that more than 60% of Delhi University students opted out of the fourth year in 2026, and more than 47,600 students across central universities implementing the FYUP did so. Other central universities with large opt-outs included Manipur University (1,639), Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University (1,171), Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (394) and BBAU Lucknow (about 280 of 1,224 seats, or 23%). The Minister attributed exits to admission to professional programmes such as the MBA, employment after three years, and personal circumstances (Chettri, 2026).

Outside Delhi, first-cohort intentions in 2026 varied widely by institution (Figure 2). In a Patna College geography class of around 70, nearly 90% planned to continue; at Visva-Bharati, 23–25 of about 27 economics students intended to continue. By contrast, only two or three of 20 BSc Chemistry students at an Assam University affiliated college, and four or five of around 47 zoology students at BBAU, were considering the fourth year (Ahmed, 2026).


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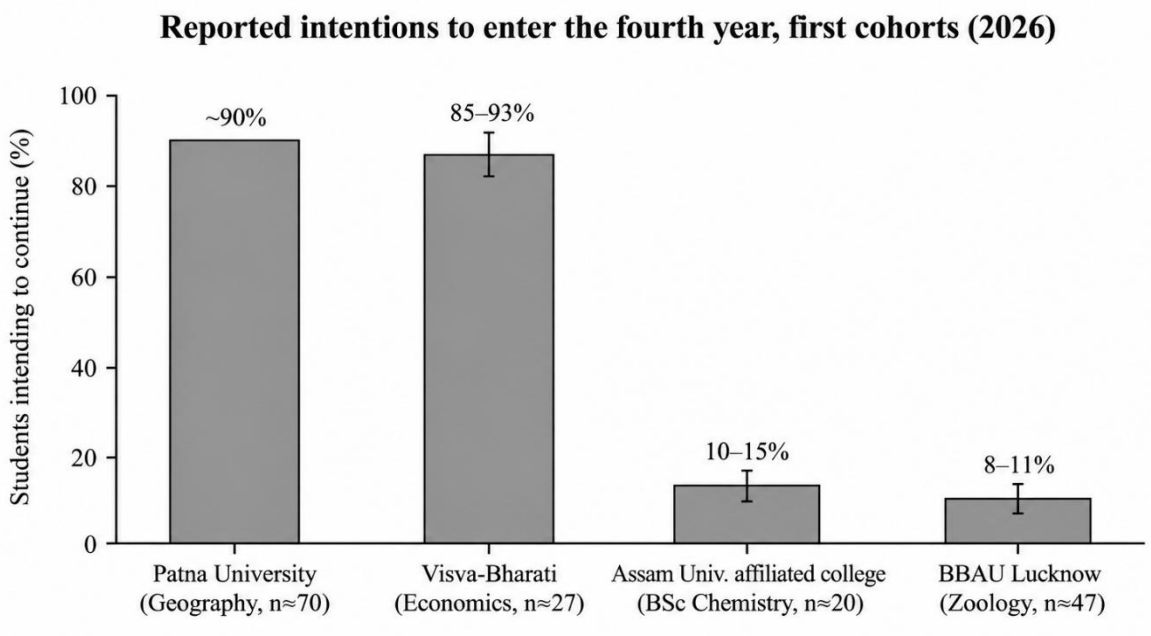


**Source:** Prepared by the author from student accounts reported in Ahmed (2026). Ranges reflect the counts given; values are indicative, not representative samples.

**Figure 2**. Class-level intention to continue into the fourth year at four universities (2026)

Students' own explanations point to institutional factors rather than rejection of the programme. At Visva-Bharati, the syllabus and course structure were shared at the outset and every student was assigned a faculty mentor; at BBAU, a student reported that there was no workshop or orientation explaining the research requirements or future opportunities; at Assam University's affiliated colleges, students cited the absence of research centres and supervisors and the lack of detailed regulations (Ahmed, 2026). Delhi University students in the fourth year described rules that changed mid-session; Delhi University issued yet another notification in November 2025 for students on the research, translation and entrepreneurship tracks (Careers360, 2025).

### 5.4 Faculty perceptions

Table 5 summarises the faculty evidence. It falls into two clusters.

**Table 5.** Secondary evidence on faculty perceptions of the FYUP

| Source | Key finding |
|---|---|
| ADP College, Nagaon (n = 26), 2023–24 | 61% agreed FYUGP meets students' diverse needs; 81% rated it better than CBCS |
| Fazl Ali College, Mokokchung (n = 72), 2025 | Respondents mostly satisfied with the FYUGP curriculum |
| Karnataka teachers (Krishna, 2024) | Implementation hurried and unprepared; no new research labs or qualified faculty for the fourth year; constant policy changes create uncertainty |
| DU faculty (Parthiban, 2024) | Circular raising senior teachers' workload withdrawn after backlash; teachers alleged it compensated for FYUP instead of hiring staff |
| DU faculty (PTI, 2025b) | Syllabus for the fourth year still unclear before the session; shortfalls in infrastructure, budget and faculty; decisions passed despite dissent notes |
| DU faculty (Parthiban, 2025) | Question papers for over 35 courses failed to reach colleges; teachers linked this to a sharp rise in examinations under FYUP; dissertation guidelines called unreasonable |
| BAMU, Aurangabad (Ahmed, 2026) | Fourth year feasible only where colleges have PG programmes, qualified faculty and research centres; the challenge is institutional capacity rather than policy |
| DU Principals' Association (Kumari, 2026) | Not financially, academically or administratively feasible for every college to offer all fourth-year programmes; proposes a cluster model |

**Source:** Compiled by the author.

The first cluster, consisting of in-college IQAC surveys, is favourable toward the curriculum itself: teachers in Nagaon and Mokokchung judged the FYUGP broader and more flexible than CBCS. The second cluster, drawn from large affiliating universities and teachers' bodies, focuses on delivery conditions. Delhi University's attempt in October 2024 to raise the direct teaching load of associate professors and professors



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to the level of assistant professors was withdrawn within hours, and teachers accused the administration of using it to absorb the FYUP's load (Parthiban, 2024). Delhi University teachers reported in December 2025 that each college was conducting examinations in 30 to 70 discipline-specific courses for semester VII, and that FYUP had multiplied examination work (Parthiban, 2025).

The two clusters are not contradictory. Teachers who approve of the curriculum's breadth can at the same time judge that their institution lacks the staff, laboratories and supervision capacity to run it. Even a university administrator supportive of the reform at BAMU located the problem in institutional capacity, warning that students in subjects without research centres may be unable to pursue the fourth-year honours (Ahmed, 2026).

### 5.5 Thematic synthesis

Table 6 maps the themes emerging from student and faculty evidence against the objectives that NEP 2020 set for the four-year programme.

**Table 6.** Thematic synthesis: policy intention versus reported experience

| Theme | NEP/CCFUP intention | Student evidence | Faculty evidence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Flexibility and choice | Multidisciplinary baskets; multiple exits | Valued in attitude surveys; online SEC/VAC delivery criticised | Viewed as broader than CBCS in college surveys |
| Research orientation | Honours with research; 7.5 CGPA route to PhD | Topics limited by lack of supervisors; uncertainty about requirements | Insufficient labs and qualified supervisors in many colleges |
| Clarity and stability of rules | Uniform national framework | 'Figuring things out as we go'; late notifications | Syllabi and guidelines delayed; frequent revisions |
| Progression to PG study | One-year master's after FYUP | One-third of DU fourth-years applied; fewer than half accommodated | — |
| Workload and assessment | Continuous evaluation; more courses | — | Sharp rise in examinations; workload disputes |
| Equity and access | Exit options protect students who leave | Rural students less favourable; exits for jobs/MBA | Karnataka government cited access risks for disadvantaged groups |

**Source:** Author's synthesis of Sections 5.1–5.4.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The central finding is a design–delivery gap. The students and teachers who are asked about the principles of the FYUP – Flexibility, Multi-disciplinary learning, Honours/ Research Degree – respond positively (Nadim & Baig, 2025; ADP College, 2025). A more tempered picture emerges when they are asked to invest their time in the fourth year, or to give it: fewer than half of the first generation of students at Delhi University are staying on and more than 60% of the second generation are dropping out, while teachers in various states report that they lack the capacity to teach or provide supervision.

There seem to be three reasons that account for this difference. Uncertainty increases the cost of staying. Those who completed the fourth year first weren't sure how dissertations, internships or exams would work, and many opted for the tried-and-tested three-year bachelor's degree and two-year masters. At the more institutional places, such as Visva-Bharati, where the requirements were communicated early, and mentors had been provided, the intention to continue was high. Secondly, the value of the fourth year is determined by the subsequent year. The one-year master's track is one of its major incentives, but Delhi University was able to admit less than half of the applicants for its one-year programmes, and, in some cases, it took five to six years for students to make the transition from undergraduate to master's, according to ThePrint (2026). Third, credits were no longer correlated with resources. The fourth year of dissertations, higher course load per semester and ongoing assessments create a greater need for teaching and supervision; the faculty evidence consistently holds that problems with the reform are related to workload and the lack of infrastructure.

Because of these results, it is not possible to interpret these opt-out rates as an outright opposition to the reform. Multiple exit itself is a planned facet of NEP 2020 and the Ministry has termed MBA and employment as a valid application of that flexibility (Chettri, 2026). The policy issue is that the special benefit of the fourth year, which is research training, is not uniformly available and so students' decision to remain is strongly dependent on their institution and discipline. That inequity is also an equity issue, in that sense it connects with the access issue that was raised in Karnataka in relation to rural students.

Lastly, the lesson to be learned from 2013-14. The previous attempt at creating a new set of regulations under the FYUP system at the Delhi University (DU) collapsed due to strong opposition from faculty members (Study Team, 2013). The present reform has survived so far at national level and is accompanied by a regulatory framework and digital infrastructure, but we have heard concerns of faculty regarding consultation, workload and preparedness are at the forefront. Whether these concerns can be resolved by means of resources, rather than administrative instruction, will likely be a key determinant in sustainable implementation.

## 7. Policy Implications and Recommendations

1. Clusters of provision in the 4th year. Let colleges with research centres and post-graduate departments as well as having adequate faculty provide each fourth-year discipline with credit transfer facility via ABC so that students in other colleges are not deprived of it.
2. Assign faculty sanction to credit load. Make teaching posts based on the actual courses, dissertations and examinations in the FYUP, not the three-year plan, and do not include the additional year in increased workloads.


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3. Elaborate and final regulations by the fifth semester of each cohort. Eligibility, credit norms, dissertation and exam norms of semesters VII-VIII should be known to the students in advance and there should be no mid-session change if any.
4. Increase and streamline pathways. Link 1 year master's to 4-year enrolment and clearly define PhD entry for 4-year graduates—accountability for the additional year.
5. Make orientation and mentoring compulsory. There seems to be a relationship between student confidence and institution-wide orientation and individual faculty mentors as found in Visva-Bharati.
6. Enhance online and skill elements. Track the quality of SWAYAM skill enhancement and value-added courses identified by the students as lacunae.
7. Create a national monitoring dashboard. Make sure that standardised data are published on continuation, exit, re-entry and credit uploads by university and discipline to avoid discrepancies such as those in Table 4 and monitor equity effects.

### 8. Limitations and Scope for Further Research

The data used in this study are secondary data and the limitations of this study should be noted. There are very few studies on perceptions of FYUP in a peer-reviewed format, and a lot of the evidence is found in institutional IQAC reports and in education-press reporting, the latter of which may be subject to institutional self-selection and/or institutional involvement in implementing the reform. Figure 2 contains class level data, estimated by the students, and not a systematic sample. Delhi University is over represented, as it was the first large university to complete the cycle and the most published data is available for it. Finally, reported numbers vary from year to year and this is illustrated in Table 4.

Future studies should include multi-university, representative surveys of fourth year students and those who dropped out of universities, follow students' cohorts longitudinally for post-graduate study and employment, and research state systems like Kerala, Assam, and Karnataka which have followed different courses.

## 9. CONCLUSION

The four-year undergraduate programme is being implemented at a brisk pace from the policy into the practice, but there are mixed responses. Its design principles are generally embraced by both students and teachers, but there is some doubt at the beginning of the fourth year as well as significant concerns regarding workload, supervision capacity and the clarity of rules for this first complete cycle of implementation, evidenced by behavioural and institutional reactions. The success of the implementation of the goals of NEP 2020 will be assessed on the basis of resourcing instead of further regulations, which includes faculty, research infrastructure, stable guidelines, and credible progression routes. Without these the multiple-exit is probably going to be a pathway to the three-year degree.

### Declarations

**Conflict of interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

**Funding:** No funding was received. **Ethics:** The study uses publicly available secondary data only and did not involve human participants.

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