

Section of teachers backs 4-year course, says UGC can only advise Delhi University, New Delhi: The confusion over Delhi University's Four-Year Undergraduate Programme is growing every passing minute. A section of teachers of the university have now backed Vice Chancellor Dinesh Singh and have come out in favour of the FYUP.

Former Delhi University Teachers' Association president Aditya Narayan Mishra said that the autonomy of the university was under a threat as the University Grant Commission can only advise DU. "This crisis is of grave concern for all of us. The UGC can only advise DU. DU's autonomy is being encroached upon under a conspiracy," Mishra said.

"A central university such as Allahabad University also has 4 years programme. Six centrally funded institutions are also running 4 year courses. Why is DU being made an exception," he asked. "UGC is doing what new HRD minister Smriti Irani wants," he added. Meanwhile, sources say that DU had also not taken the mandatory permission of the UGC before introducing the FYUP course. Sources say that DU has did not take the approval of the President of India for the FYUP Ordinance and therefore, the course has no legal validity.

The Congress had also questioned the UGC for telling DU to scrap it. Congress leader Manish Tewari questioned the UGC asking where it was when the university had implemented the FYUP. "Where was the UGC then if they had reservations? Why didn't they advise the DU not to implement it. Has the UGC become a scapegoat? What's going to happen to the students," Tewari asked. He also said that the university has become a laughing stock because of the issue. "This makes the university a complete laughing stock. It is reflective of the attitude of the NDA towards institutions. If they trifle and tamper with autonomy of the institutions it will not augur well for the country," he said. Hitting out at the BJP for waiting till the admissions to rake up the FYUP issue, Tewari said, "If the BJP wanted to do this then they should have done it the day they were sworn in. Why wait till this time and play with the future of students? My difficulty is with the manner and timing of the decision. Universities build reputations over decades. What kind of a message are you sending out? They wanted to implement a manifesto promise, they should have done it when they took over so that there is clarity."

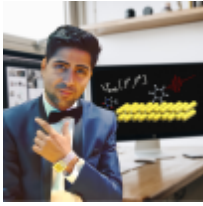
Former HRD Minister Pallam Raju has also said that the issue must not be politicised. "I feel it is a matter which is being sorted out between the UGC and the university and certainly the autonomy of universities must be respected and in the process the most important thing to keep in mind is the interests of students which must be protected. New initiatives like this ought to be supported. It's gone out of hands because of the politics surrounding the issue. The manner in which all political parties are focusing on this is not a healthy trend. While it is now up to the wisdom of the present government the matter should not be politicised and objectivity needs to be maintained," he said.

HRD Minister Smriti Irani has told CNN-IBN that she will not interfere in the matter. Sources within the ministry though say that the UGC's orders on scrapping the Four Year Undergraduate Programme is supreme and must be followed.

The DU Vice Chancellor is meeting college principals and trying to garner support for continuing the FYUP. But there are student protests outside his office demanding it be scrapped. Parallel protests are on at the DU campus by students who have already completed a year of their undergraduate course and by those who want the FYUP to be scrapped.

The students who have completed the first year of their undergraduate course are confused as to whether they will have to spend another three or two years for completing their course. Meanwhile, there are also students who have applied for admissions this year and are clueless about what is going to happen.

The UGC in its letter to DU colleges said that a contravention of the order could lead to serious action including withdrawal of grant facilities. In the letter to Delhi University colleges UGC Secretary Jaspal Singh Sandhu said, "I am directed to request that colleges shall admit students at the UG level for academic year 2014-2015 only to the 3 year UG programme which was offered by it prior to the introduction of the four year system and report compliance to the UGC soon after. Any deviation or contravention of this order shall be viewed seriously and may attract action including withdrawal of grant facilities."



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Manas Sharma

I'm a physicist specializing in computational material science with a PhD in Physics from Friedrich-Schiller University Jena, Germany. I write efficient codes for simulating light-matter interactions at atomic scales. I like to develop Physics, DFT, and Machine Learning related apps and software from time to time. Can code in most of the popular languages. I like to share my knowledge in Physics and applications using this Blog and a YouTube channel.

manas.bragitoff.com/

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