



Double the Degrees, Double the Opportunity: A Study on Students' Awareness of Dual Degree Programmes

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study examines student awareness of dual degree programmes (DDPs) under India's NEP 2020 and University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines, addressing gaps in understanding their structure, benefits, and challenges. **Methodology:** A convenience sample of 101 students from Jamia Millia Islamia and Delhi University completed a self-administered questionnaire. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) and thematic analysis of open-ended responses. **Results:** This study shows that high nominal awareness (81%) but significant misconceptions: only 11% correctly identified dual degree programme as pursuing two distinct majors, while 75% conflated them with concurrent degrees. Institutional communication was inadequate, with social media (33.66%) and peers (28.71%) being primary information sources, compared to universities (21.78%). Students recognized benefits like multidisciplinary expertise (71.95%) and career advancement (48.78%) but cited major challenges including time management (53.66%) and academic workload (28.05%). While interest was notable (56%), particularly in hybrid learning models (78%), 44% declined due to practical concerns and unclear regulations. **Conclusion:** Universities must enhance policy dissemination, clarify eligibility, and provide tailored support (e.g., flexible scheduling, counselling) to align DDP implementation with NEP 2020's objectives. The study suggests that universities should launch awareness campaigns, assign advisors for dual degree programs, provide academic-flexible components, and streamline administrative processes. There should be clear guidelines of UGC and gazette notifications are also needed. Policymakers should integrate dual-degree models within national skill development initiatives and incentivize universities to adopt scalable, quality-assured structures. Future research should focus on multi-institutional studies, AI-driven counselling tools, and evidence-based best practices for dual degree programs in India.

Keywords: Dual Degree, Students, Awareness, Benefits, Challenges, UGC, Education, Degree

INTRODUCTION

The [National Education Policy \(NEP\), \(2020\)](#) emphasises flexibility, diversity, and holistic education to cater to the evolving needs of learners, which has a major influence on the changing scene of higher education in India. A cornerstone of this reform is its endorsement of dual-degree programmes—a model

enabling students to pursue two distinct academic degrees concurrently, either from the same or different institution in physical + ODL/online modes (UGC, 2022; NEP, 2020).

Dual degrees involve two distinct qualifications (e.g., B.A. Economics + B.Com), differing from double majors (two specialisations within one degree, e.g., B.A. Economics and Sociology) at the same time from different institutions ([Culver et al., 2012](#)). Usually in complementary or related fields, this programme lets students pursue two different academic fields in less time than if they were pursuing the degrees separately ([Staff, 2024](#)).

The NEP 2020's main recommendation is to let students study multiple academic programs concurrently, thus broadening the boundaries of knowledge and meeting the rising demand for higher education in a time when professional and academic interests increasingly interact ([Kaur and Kaur, 2024](#)). The [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#) has operationalized this mandate, permitting dual enrolment to every student the chance to diversify their academic portfolio and develop skills in a range of disciplines since it acknowledges their unique qualities (UGC, 2022). The students' study two majors within the span of a single degree ([Dual Degrees: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Higher Education, 2023](#)).

Research highlights several advantages of dual degree programmes such as Dual-degree programs help promote greater knowledge in many different sectors ([Borsetto and Saccon, 2023](#)). Students could acquire knowledge in two fields to equip themselves with a more educated perspective in terms of interdisciplinary subjects and a comprehensive standpoint. By bridging the gap across many academic fields, students in dual degree programs develop beneficial analytical and critical thinking skills. It also increases student enrolment ([American Council on Education, 2014](#)). Since they are qualified in more than one sector, graduates with dual degrees often have a competitive advantage in the employment scene.

Moreover, Employers see dual-degree holders as flexible individuals with a diverse skill set that fit various professions and have greater pay possibilities than their counterparts who just have one degree ([Dual Degrees: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Higher Education, 2023](#)). Dual degree programs have one of their main benefits, in terms of time and cost efficiency. Two degrees can be earned by students in less time than it would take to get each separately. For many students, this expedited learning path also lowers tuition fees and other academic expenses, therefore providing a more affordable choice ([University of Bridgeport News, 2023](#)). Students pursuing dual degrees have access to more resources from both fields, professors, and colleagues, which enlarges the academic and professional network.

The demands of two separate courses, they sometimes deal with more homework and academic pressure ([Borsetto and Saccon, 2023](#)). According to [Pineda's study, \(2024\)](#), students in dual degree programs often face significant challenges, including frustration with university bureaucracy, delays in graduation, and unmet job expectations. Furthermore, this study reports many people experiencing emotional and physical exhaustion due to workload, lack of time for personal development, and declining mental health. Some feel underchallenged academically, citing low intellectual rigour, while others experience loneliness and social isolation from peers and faculty. Success in such programs depends mostly on time management and adaptation ([Dual Degrees: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Higher Education, 2023](#)). The faster speed of learning can also overwhelm certain students and cause burnout ([University of Bridgeport News, 2023](#)). Prof. Rupamanjari Ghosh, a member of the governing council at the Raman Research Institute, expressed concerns that a dual degree could marginalise already underprivileged students. She pointed out that the aspirational value attached to dual degrees could force students to compete for them, therefore increasing inequality. Comparatively, Charanpreet Singh, Director and Co-founder of Praxis Business School,

underlined the ambiguity about whether individuals with multiple degrees are clearly more competent for particular employment tasks than those who have completed a single degree entirely ([Mathur, 2022](#)).

Crucially, the success of this NEP-driven initiative hinges on stakeholder awareness. Without understanding of dual-degree structures, benefits, and pathways, students cannot leverage these opportunities. Therefore, the study intends to investigate the students' awareness of dual degree programmes approved by UGC under NEP 2020 and also examine how well these policies are adopted by students. This study might draw attention to knowledge gaps and offer ideas on how academic institutions might more effectively support dual degree possibilities. These insights can help identify knowledge gaps and guide institutions in effectively supporting dual degree opportunities, contributing to the broader goals of educational reform in India.

Research Questions

RQ1: How aware are students of DDP structure/benefits?

RQ2: What challenges influence enrollment intentions?"

Objectives

1. To study students' awareness and understanding of dual degree programmes.
2. To study the students' opinions regarding the benefits, challenges, and preferences associated with dual degree programmes.
3. To study students' interests and enrolment intentions in dual degrees.
4. To study the impact of suggestions and recommendations of dual degrees.

METHODOLOGY

This section details the data collection framework, instrument design, sampling strategy, and analytical approach for this exploratory study on student awareness of dual degree programmes (DDPs) under India's NEP 2020.

Sample

A non-probability convenience sample of **101 students** was drawn from:

- **Jamia Millia Islamia** (Central University; total student population: $\approx 30,000$).
- **65 affiliated colleges of the University of Delhi** (DU; aggregate student population: $\approx 250,000$).

Participants were enrolled in diploma, undergraduate, or postgraduate programmes. These institutions were selected for their urban location, academic diversity, and early adoption of NEP 2020 frameworks. **Gender distribution was not recorded**, limiting intersectional analysis—a constraint acknowledged in the *Limitations* section.

Instrument Design and Validation

A self-administered questionnaire, "*Awareness of Dual Degree Programmes*," was developed with four sections:

1. **Awareness and Knowledge** (e.g., "*Have you heard of dual degrees?*"; binary: Yes/No).

2. **Benefits and Challenges** (e.g., “*What challenges do you think students might face when pursuing dual degree programs?*”).
3. **Interest and Intention** (e.g., “*Would you enroll in a DDP?*”; nominal: Yes/No/Maybe).
4. **Future and Recommendations** (open-ended, e.g., “*How can universities improve DDP implementation?*”).

Validation and Reliability:

- **Pilot Testing:** 15 students assessed clarity and relevance; ambiguous items were revised.
- **Expert Review:** Three faculty (education policy specialists) confirmed content validity.
- **Reliability:** Cronbach’s α for multi-item constructs (e.g., benefits/challenges) ranged from **0.72–0.84**, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed via **Google Forms** over two months. The survey link was shared through university mailing lists, student forums, and social media groups. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Data Analysis

Given the study’s **exploratory scope** and small, non-random sample, analyses prioritized descriptive statistics:

1. Closed-ended Items:

- Closed-ended questions included a mix of binary, Likert-scale, and multiple-response items, all of which were tabulated and analysed using Microsoft Excel.
- Frequencies served as the primary metric across all item types, with percentages reported where relevant to illustrate response distributions.
- *Inferential statistics (e.g., chi-square, ANOVA) were avoided due to sampling constraints and the focus on baseline awareness patterns.*

2. Open-ended Items:

- Analysed via **thematic analysis** (Braun and Clarke, 2006):
 - Phase 1: Familiarisation with responses.
 - Phase 2: Initial code generation (e.g., “need for flexibility”).
 - Phase 3: Theme identification (e.g., “administrative barriers”).
 - Phase 4: Theme refinement (Table 9).

Justification for Analytical Approach

The use of **descriptive statistics** (not inferential tests) aligns with the study’s objectives:

- To *explore* awareness levels, misconceptions, and perceived challenges—not to establish causality or generalise findings.

- A small convenience sample (n=101) lacks power for regression/ANOVA.

Open-ended responses contextualised quantitative trends (e.g., *why* students conflated DDPs with blended learning).

RESULTS

The analysis of data is based on the objectives of the study:

1. *To study students' awareness and understanding of dual degree programmes.*

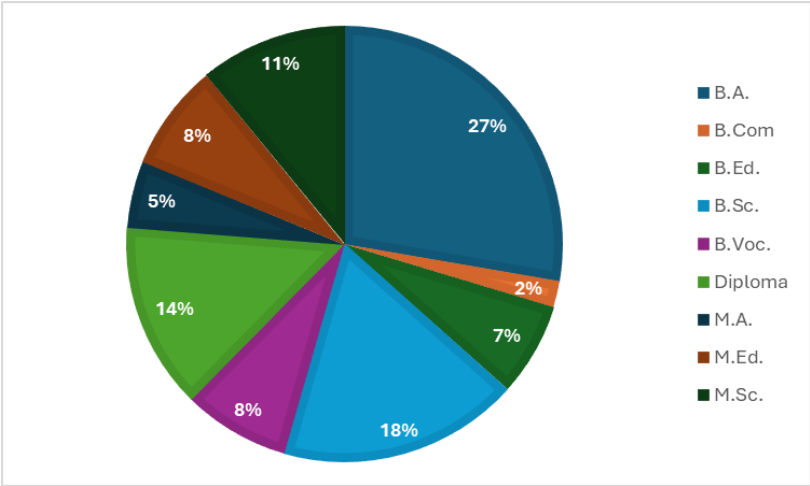


Figure 1: Shows Students Who are Pursuing Courses.

The students’ records extracted from 101 students registered in different types of education (diplomas / graduate / postgraduate) are reported in *Fig. 1*. It is significant to mention that 13.86% of the respondents were diploma students. The most frequent level for the undergraduate students was that of a B.A., which comprised about 27.72% of the sample. Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) was the next to be added, about 17.82%. The third-most students are pursuing Bachelor of Vocational Studies (B.Voc), 10.89% of them being students. Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students were represented in the sample moderately at 6.93%. Among the postgraduates, M.Sc. formed the majority of the respondents, recording the highest proportion, 10.89%, of the total sample. Next was Master of Education (M.Ed.) students at 7.92% and M.A. students at 4.95%. There was a response from all the participants on their knowledge concerning dual degree programmes.

Table 1: Students' Responses on the Awareness of Dual Degrees

Statement	Yes	No	Maybe
	(In Percentage)		
Have you ever heard of the concept of pursuing two academic programmes simultaneously?	81	10	10

Table 1 shows that 81% of students agree that they are aware of dual degree programmes. By contrast, just 10% said they had not heard of such schemes, and 10% did not know. This high

level of exposure translates to an encouraging indication for these institutions in the effort to spread word about dual degree choices.

Table 2: Learn about the dual degrees

How did you first learn about dual degree programmes?	Percentage
University announcements	21.78
Friends or family	28.71
Social media	33.66
Academic advisors	9.90
UGC Guidelines from their website	0.99
News	0.99

The data in Table 2 show that students' awareness of the dual degree programmes through social media is the most powerful information channel, which occupies 33.66%. Family or friends at 28.71% are next in the list of information sources. However, university announcements, while important, account for only 21.78% of the responses, suggesting that institutional communication may not be as effective as peer or social media interactions in reaching students. Academic advisors make less of a contribution, only 9.90% of respondents reporting that they learnt about dual degree programmes through this channel. Interestingly, UGC guidelines and news sources together account for a mere 1.98% of responses.

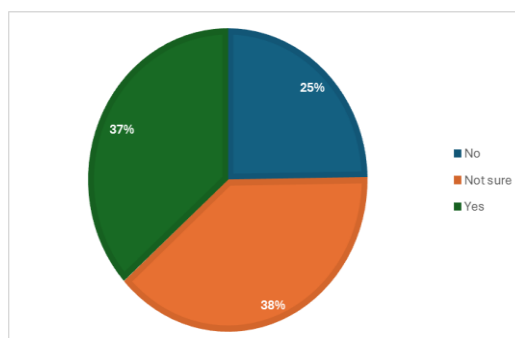


Figure 2: Students' Response on Their University Offering Dual Degree Programmes

In Fig. 2, around 37.3 percent of students responded yes regarding their university offering dual degree programmes, and the rest of the students said "no" and "not sure."

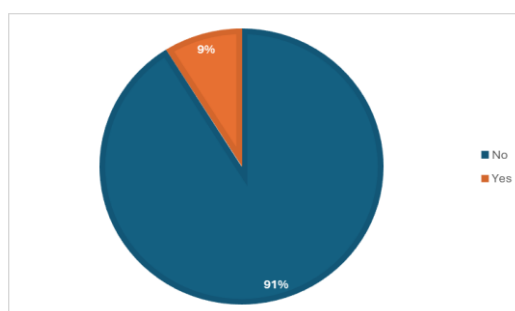


Figure 3: Students' Responses to Attending Any Seminars or Workshops About Dual Degree Programmes at their University

Fig. 3 shows that only 9 percent of students attended any seminars or workshops about dual degree programmes at their university. Even the researchers did not get any information regarding seminars or workshops organised by colleges.

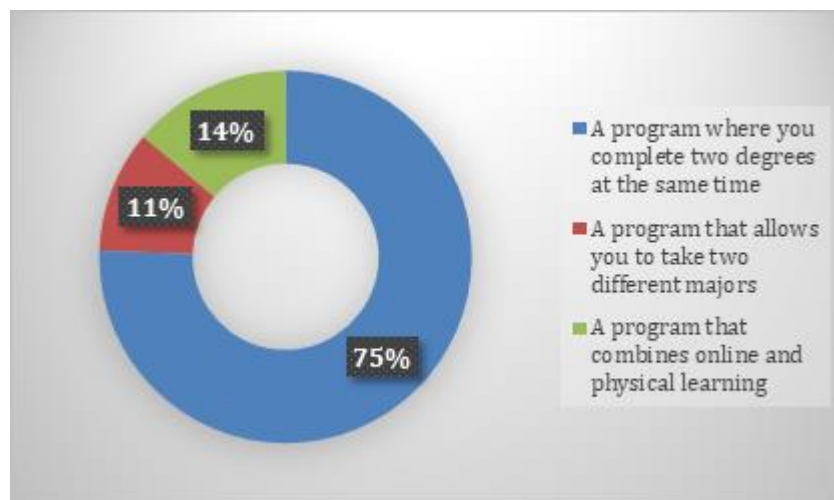


Figure 4: Responses of Understanding of Dual Degree

Fig. 4 shows that the majority, around 75 percent of students, respond that a dual degree is the combination of two degrees at the same time. Furthermore, 14 percent of students respond that a dual degree combines online and physical learning. Only 11 percent of students know that dual degree programmes are allowed to take two different majors.

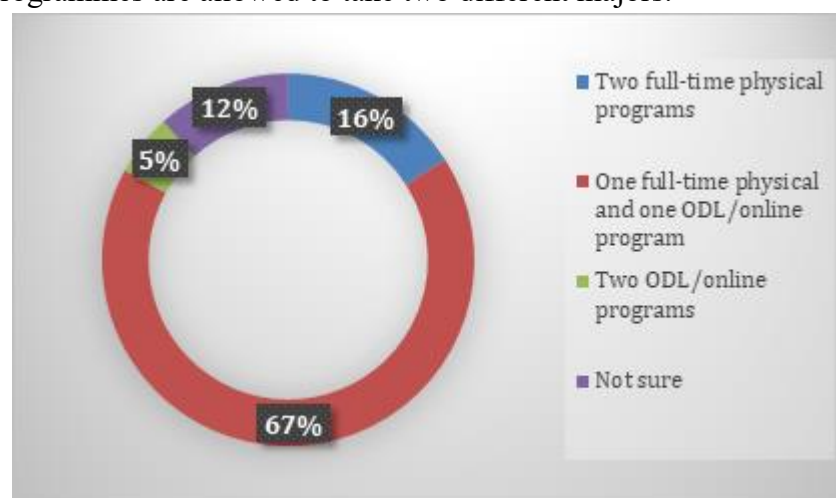


Figure 5: Awareness of Dual Degree Combinations

Fig. 5 shows that around 67 percent of the students are aware that a dual degree is the combination of one full-time physical and one distance/online programme. Around 16 percent are aware of two full-time physical programmes in a dual degree. Interestingly, 12 percent of students are not sure about the combination of dual degrees. Lastly, only 5 percent of students in two distance/online programmes have the combination of dual degrees.

Table 3: Students' Responses on Dual Degree Restrictions and Eligibility

Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
Do you know if there are any restrictions on the types of programmes you can combine?	39.02	21.95	39.02
Are you aware of any specific eligibility criteria for pursuing dual degree programmes?	29.27	41.46	29.27

The results in Table 3 indicate a notable lack of clarity regarding dual degree programmes among respondents. For the first statement about restrictions on programme combinations, approximately 39.02% of participants indicated they are aware of any restrictions, while an equal percentage reported being unsure. In terms of eligibility criteria for pursuing dual degree programmes, only 29.27% of respondents reported awareness, with 41.46% indicating they do not know the criteria.

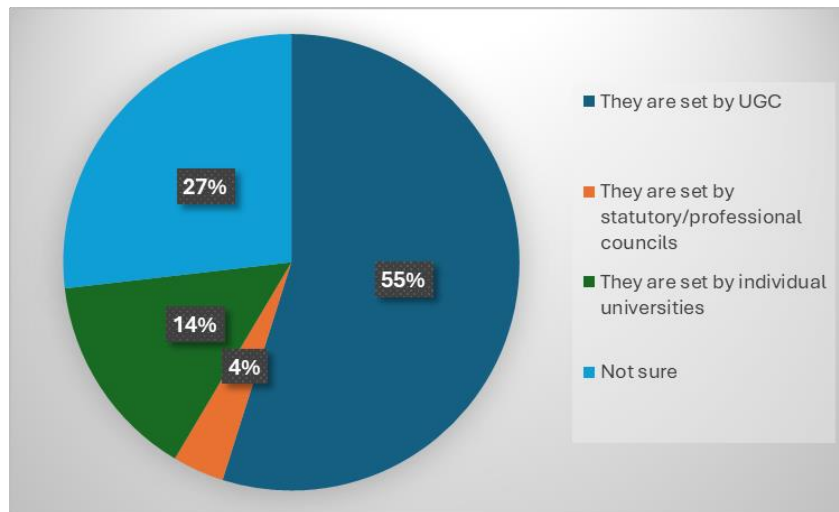


Fig. 6: Guidelines Related to Dual Degrees

The data shown in Fig. 6 shows that the majority of participants (54.88%) believe that these guidelines are established by the [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#). In contrast, only 3.66% of respondents attribute the establishment of these guidelines to statutory or professional councils. Additionally, 14.63% of participants think that individual universities set their own guidelines. A significant portion of respondents (26.83%) indicated that they are unsure about who governs these guidelines.

2. To study students' awareness and understanding of dual degree programmes.

Table 4: Benefits of Dual Degree

Benefit	Percentage (%)
Enhanced personal development	9.76
Gaining expertise in multiple fields	71.95
Not at all, in my opinion	1.22
Improved job prospects	14.63
People who have less time to study can maximise the output from that same time	1.22
Productivity enhanced; more academic specialisation at the same time	1.22

Table 4 shows that most respondents (71.95%) believe that gaining expertise in multiple fields is the main benefit of pursuing dual degree programmes. Furthermore, it enhanced personal development and received significantly lower support (9.76%). Also, its improved job prospects were noted at 14.63%.

Table 5: Challenges of Dual Degree

Challenge	Percentage (%)
Academic workload	28.05
Do not personally think there would be a difficulty; it's manageable	1.22
Financial cost	13.41
If a person wants to pursue a dual degree programme, he/she will manage all challenges	1.22
There are many challenges; lack of Gazette notifications affects recruitment	1.22
Time management	53.66
Time management, financial cost, academic workload, and mental health impacts	1.22

Whereas table 5 shows the challenges of dual degrees, such as time management, as the most significant challenge, highlighting this issue by 53.66% of students, which indicates a recognition that balancing multiple programmes can be demanding and stressful. Academic workload (28.05%) and financial cost (13.41%) were also noted as significant concerns, but much lower than time management.

3. To study students' interests and enrolment intentions in dual degrees.

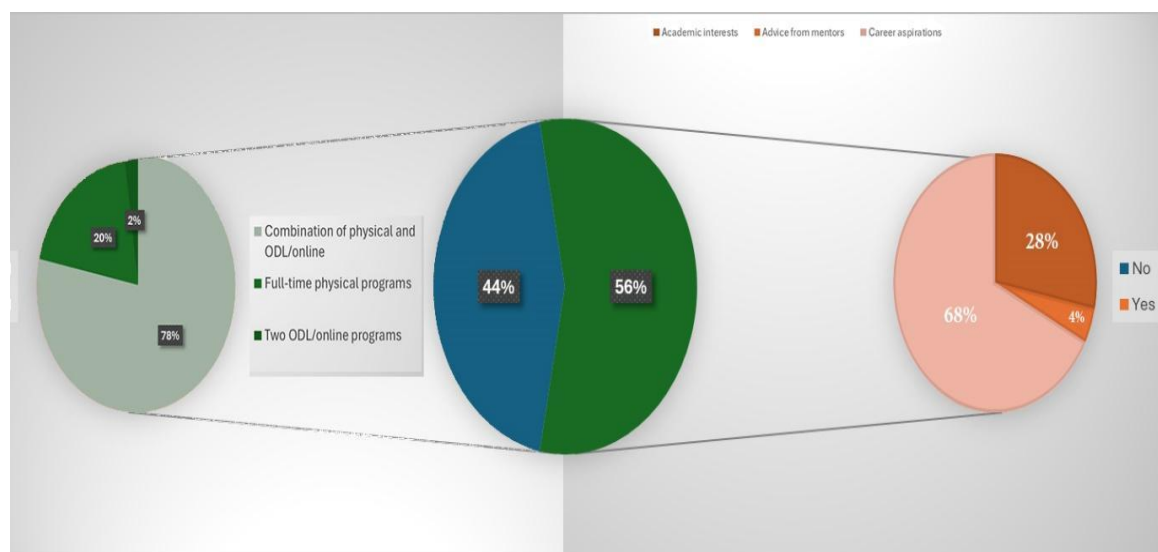


Figure 7: Responses of students' interest and enrolment intentions in dual degrees

Fig. 7 shows that among 82 students, 46 students (56%) are aware of and personally interested in seeking admission in dual degree programmes. The motivations behind this interest are primarily career aspirations, with 68% of respondents indicating this as their main reason. Additionally, 28% were influenced most by advice from mentors, while only 4% show their interest based on academic pursuits. When it comes to preferred learning modes, approx 78% of those considering dual degrees favour a combination of physical classes and online distance learning (ODL) showing a big appetite for flexible education choices. In comparison, 20% of

students prefer full-time physical programmes, and only 2% favour entirely online programmes. Notably, 36 students (44% of the total surveyed) indicated that they are not considering any dual degree enrollment.

4. To study the impact of suggestions and recommendations of dual degrees

Table 6: Students' Responses Regarding The Dual Degree in Terms of Future And Recommended

Statement	Yes(%)	No (%)	Maybe (%)
Do you believe dual degree programmes will become more common in the future?	75.61	1.22	23.17
Would you recommend dual degree programmes to your peers?	69.51	12.20	18.29

Table 6 shows the majority (75.61%) of respondents thought that dual degree programmes will become more popular in the future. The relatively small proportion of respondents (1.22%) who do not think these programmes will become more common indicates a strong consensus on their potential growth. In terms of recommendations, 69.51% of respondents would recommend dual degree programmes to their peers. However, 12.20% were unwilling to recommend them. The 18.29% who answered "maybe" reflects a degree of uncertainty.

Table 7: Students' Responses – Impact of Dual Degree

Impact Statement	Percentage (%)
Greater emphasis on student autonomy	2.44
Increased opportunities for interdisciplinary studies	46.34
It creates more degree holders among unemployed youth	1.22
More diverse career paths	48.78
Not sure due to confusion related to dual degree programmes and lack of gazette notifications	1.22

Table 7 shows the highest percentage of respondents (48.78%) believe that dual degree programmes can result in varied career opportunities. Also, 46.34% of students say that a dual degree program will give them more chances to study across different fields. Also, only a small number of people (2.44%) think that dual degree programmes will focus on student-led autonomy. Only 1.22% of people thought that dual degrees could help more unemployed young people get degrees. About 1.22% of people who answered said they weren't sure because they were confused about dual degree programmes.

Table 8: Students' Responses and Suggestions for Improvement

Suggested Improvement	Percentage (%)
Better communication of benefits	26.83
Clearer guidelines	40.24
Government of India must release gazette notification	1.22
More flexible options	31.71

Table 8 shows that the majority of the respondents who responded (40.24%) want clearer rules for dual degree programmes. Moreover, a considerable percentage of respondents (31.71%) believe that more flexibility should be incorporated in dual degree programmes. Additionally, 26.83% of participants stressed the need for better communication about the benefits of dual degree programmes. Merely 1.22% of the respondents stated that the Government of India should send out a gazette notice about dual degree programmes.

Table 9: Open-Ended Responses

Theme	Key Points	Percentage
Awareness and Information	Many responses highlighted the need for better communication about dual degree options, including clear guidelines from universities and awareness campaigns.	22.39
Flexibility and Time Management	Students expressed concerns about managing time and workload, suggesting that universities should provide flexibility in schedules and workload adjustments.	17.91
Career Guidance	There is a desire for career counselling and guidance to help students choose the right combinations of degrees and understand their career implications.	10.45
Quality vs. Quantity	Some respondents raised concerns that the emphasis on dual degrees might lead to a compromise in the quality of education, focusing on enrolment numbers instead.	5.97
Support from Universities	Responses indicated that universities should offer more support, including leniency in attendance requirements and financial assistance for students in dual programmes.	11.94
Benefits of Dual Degrees	Many acknowledged the potential benefits of dual degrees, such as enhanced knowledge and skills, better career opportunities, and time savings.	14.93
Administrative Issues	Some comments pointed to the need for better coordination among institutions and clearer eligibility criteria for dual degree programmes.	7.46
General Support for Programmes	A number of responses reflected a general enthusiasm for dual degree programmes, emphasising their potential for personal and professional growth.	8.96

Table 9 shows a significant number of respondents outlined a strong need for improved awareness and information about dual degree programme which indicates a significant gap that could act as a barrier to student enrolment. Many highlighted the need for time and workload flexibility, as juggling two or more degrees is challenging. Additionally, the need for career guidance also came through strongly with students seeking support to make informed decisions about their course combinations and future career paths. Concerns about the quality of education versus the quantity of enrollment were also noted; some respondents worried that an emphasis on increasing enrollment figures might compromise the academic integrity of programmes. Support from universities is seen as crucial; students desire more institutional backing, including financial assistance and flexible attendance policies, to facilitate their participation in dual degree programmes. While many acknowledged the potential benefits of dual degrees—such as enhanced knowledge and improved career prospects—the overall sentiment underscores the necessity for universities to address practical concerns, streamline administrative processes, and provide robust support systems.

DISCUSSION

This study provides crucial insights into student awareness, perceptions, and concerns regarding dual degree programmes (DDPs) within the Indian higher education context, directly addressing our research questions concerning levels of awareness, perceived value, challenges, and institutional communication effectiveness.

1. Superficial Awareness and Institutional Communication Gaps:

While 81% of students reported having heard about dual degree programmes (Table 1), this awareness often appears superficial. A significant majority (75%) understood DDPs involve earning two degrees simultaneously, but only 11% correctly associated them with pursuing two distinct majors (Fig. 4, Fig. 5).

There is such confusion in dual degrees with blended learning (online and physical)—suggesting a lack of depth in knowledge, despite the widespread awareness. These students are exposed to the term but are not clearly educated on its definition, structure, or regulatory framework, highlighting a lack of depth in knowledge ([Asagar, 2024a](#)). This gap strongly suggests institutional communication channels are failing to effectively convey the definition, structure, and regulatory framework of DDPs ([Mordhorst and Gössling, 2020](#); [Yamutuale, 2017](#)). This aligns with broader challenges in educational policy dissemination where unclear terminology leads to confusion ([Zhou, 2022](#)).

The majority of information about dual degree programmes comes from social media (33.66%) and friends or family (28.71%) were dominant, far outpacing university announcements (21.78%) and academic advisors (9.9%) (Table 2). Reliance on such informal sources risks misinformation and incomplete knowledge ([Peprah et al., 2024](#)). Moreover, only 9% of students (Fig. 3) had attended any workshops or seminars, and the research did not uncover any such institutional efforts, thus suggestive a clear institutional silence or inaction on this front. This finding is consistent with critiques of passive policy implementation in higher education ([Gambhir, 2023](#)).

2. Regulatory Ambiguity and Uncertainty:

Crucially, over 70% of students expressed uncertainty or lack of knowledge regarding dual degree programmes eligibility and regulations (Table 3). While over half (54.88%) correctly linked guidelines to the UGC (Fig. 6), a significant 26.83% of respondents are unsure which reflects that institutional bodies are not communicating adequate policies. Qualitative feedback (Table 9) explicitly called for clearer guidelines, confirming current documentation lacks accessibility and clarity. This regulatory ambiguity mirrors challenges noted in the implementation of other new educational frameworks in India, where top-down policy mandates often lack effective grassroots communication and institutional adaptation mechanisms ([Aggarwal et al., 2025](#); [Dhokare, Jadhav and Gaikwad, 2012](#); [Rangarajan et al., 2025](#)).

3. Recognized Benefits and Latent Demand:

Students overwhelmingly recognized the potential benefits of dual degree programmes. Gaining expertise in multiple fields (71.95%) and career advancement (48.78%) were seen as key advantages (Table 4, Table 7). This perceived value is reflected in strong latent demand: 75.61% believed dual degree programmes will become more widespread (Table 6), and 69.51% would recommend them to peers. Furthermore, 56% expressed interest in enrolling (Fig. 7), primarily motivated by career prospects (68%) and a preference for flexible learning modes (78% favouring physical + online). This aligns with global higher education trends but poses logistical challenges for institutions reliant on traditional models of instruction ([Bashir and Lapshun, 2025](#); [Cheung et al., 2023](#)). However, ([Asagar, 2024b](#)) highlights students' growing acceptance of innovative pedagogies such as flipped learning. Even the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 which emphasizes the professional development of teachers to become digitally competent ([Asagar, 2025; 2025](#)).

4. Tempered Enthusiasm: Practical Challenges and Support Gaps:

Despite the enthusiasm, significant practical concerns temper student interest. Time management (53.66%) and academic workload (28.05%) were the predominant perceived challenges (Table 5). The perception that these challenges outweigh benefits for some students reflects a mismatch between their ambitious-in-theory dual degrees and what they can handle in practice from students and institutions to support those ([Sampaio et al., 2025](#)). Qualitative responses (Table 8, Table 9) consistently requested greater flexibility, better communication, and clearer rules, indicating the current structure feels inflexible, particularly for students

juggling academic and financial pressures. The 44% students not considering enrolling in dual degree programme cited workload, lack of clarity, and insufficient support as key deterrents.

5. Administrative Disconnect and Institutional Readiness:

A concerning administrative disconnect was evident. While students undervalued formal notification mechanisms (only 1.22% saw gazette notification as necessary, Table 8), qualitative feedback revealed concerns about recruitment and legitimacy *without* such official recognition. This suggests limited student understanding of real-world accreditation implications. Critically, feedback on university support (Table 9) indicates students feel inadequately supported by their institutions. The system does not seem ready to scale dual degrees responsibly: uncertain criteria for who is eligible and no tailored support (counselling, financial aid, academic flexibility), and weak administrative frameworks pose significant barriers (Johnson *et al.*, 2022; Rotar, 2022).

Limitations

This is a useful study that provides an understanding of student perceptions of dual degree programmes under the [National Education Policy \(NEP\), 2020](#); however, there are a number of limitations that require much attention. Firstly, convenience sampling limited the sample to 101 students from only Jamia Millia Islamia and the University of Delhi. This sampling method inevitably limits the generalisability of our results to other student populations, including students from different institutional types (e.g., private colleges, state universities, open and distance learning [ODL] institutions) and those from rural, economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Demographic variables like gender were not recorded, restricting intersectional analysis.

Second, our research was based on self-reporting using structured questionnaires. Although this approach rendered data collection efficient, the method is susceptible to response biases and may not capture true attitudes and hesitations about dual degree programs, especially in the case of respondents' beliefs that such data could be deemed as socially desirable. The lack of qualitative features (e.g., interviews, discussions, focus groups) suggests that the data is less rich and that we have a superficial understanding of the complex reasons and concerns that students have when considering study choices. Furthermore, we limited our research to the student perception, and as such, the views of other important stakeholders (e.g., faculty members, university administrators, regulatory agencies) were overlooked. This narrow focus constrains the comprehensive consideration of institutional preparedness, implementation barriers and policy recommendations.

The findings are also affected by timing limitations of the study. The data were collected in one month, and consciousness and interpretations of NEP 2020 might have evolved. Student attitudes are likely to change as policies are enacted, and institutions adapt. Thus, the picture presented by the snapshot is not adjusted for trends over time or time-varying changes in student engagement and take-up of the programme. In addition, the study assessed awareness and intent to participate in dual degree programmes without monitoring enrolment outcomes, academic results, job prospects, or long-term skills retention. Therefore, the analysis does not go to the extent of evaluating the real-world impact and effectiveness of dual degrees in attaining the goals of NEP 2020.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals a critical gap in India's implementation of dual degree programmes: while student awareness is high (81%), understanding remains superficial and often conflated with blended learning.

Crucially, informal channels (social media, peers) dominate information dissemination, underscoring institutional communication failures. Students recognize dual degree awareness potential for multidisciplinary expertise (71.95%) and career advancement (48.78%), and 56% express interest—particularly in flexible (online + physical) modes. However, concerns about workload (53.66%), regulatory ambiguity (>70% unsure of eligibility), and inadequate support hinder adoption.

To bridge this gap, the following actionable steps are recommended:

1. **Enhance Institutional Outreach:** Universities should integrate DDP details into orientation programs, advisement sessions, and digital portals.
2. **Simplify Regulatory Communication:** UGC and institutions must disseminate clear, accessible eligibility guidelines via infographics, FAQs, and workshops.
3. **Build Support Infrastructure:** Implement academic counselling, flexible scheduling, and mental health resources tailored for DDP students.
4. **Leverage Preferred Learning Modes:** Scale hybrid (online + physical) delivery models to align with student demand (78%).

Without urgent attention to communication clarity and robust support systems, the transformative potential of DDPs under NEP 2020 risks remaining unrealised.

Future Scope

Future research could build upon these findings by including more diverse demographics, such as students across different types of colleges or under-represented groups of students, such as those from more rural or lower SES backgrounds. Longitudinal studies are required to monitor the impact of awareness campaigns and institutional preparedness on real enrolment and success of students over time. A comparative study of various types of double degrees, from face-to-face to face-to-face-ODL or performed on internet forms, could support the identification of the good practices for the work share and academic performance. Furthermore, adding input from both faculty, professional staff, and employers would provide a greater depth of understanding when considering the systemic support and industry acceptance that are necessary for successful dual degree delivery. Longitudinal cohort studies examining the academic and career paths of dual-degree graduates compared with those of their single-degree counterparts would provide hard data on whether such programs offer additional value. Further, such a study would help in understanding the degree of effectiveness of policy instruments – gazette notification, UGC guidelines and institutional rules – in engendering confidence among students and the legitimacy of the programmes and help refine the policy.

Recommendations

A number of practical suggestions can be drawn from the results of the study. For universities and colleges, specific awareness campaigns – such as workshops, webinars and dedicated webpages – should be initiated to remove the aura around the details of dual degree programmes and eligibility and the benefit in career growth. Universities may wish to assign advisors for dual degree programmes to provide individualised academic and career advice to students. This led them to make decisions and balance workloads efficiently. Academic-flexible components like blended learning and evening classes and strong support structures

including mental health resources and peer mentoring would also help to mitigate the extra academic burden of a dual degree. Furthermore, streamlining dual enrolment and credit transfer administrative processes can improve access and address student demand.

Clear and multilingual UGC guidelines not only enlarge but also make accessible platforms that watch out for the students across the globe. Universities should also be required to provide clear-cut dual degree structures, eligibility norms, and related gazette notifications to enhance the legitimacy of the program. There would be a need for inbuilt quality processes to prevent academic standards from being watered down. In addition to providing institutional grants to build academic counselling frameworks as well as digital infrastructure for blended learning, the delivery of programs can be greatly improved.

At the policy level, integrating dual-degree models within the broader national skill development initiatives would align interdisciplinary learning with industry demands. Policymakers could incentivise universities to adopt scalable, quality-assured dual degree structures by linking institutional funding with NEP 2020 implementation benchmarks. Finally, future research efforts should prioritise multi-institutional studies to validate initial findings, explore the use of AI-driven counselling tools in academic advice, and develop evidence-based best practices for the design and delivery of dual degree programs in India.

Conflict Of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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