



Introduction of Choice Based Credit System in Higher Education in India -An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

The aim of education is the all-round development of the students. The institutions of higher education are in need of an infusion of a new model of education in order to keep the curriculum in pace with changing environment which includes technology adoption, changing industry requirement, changing aspiration of students and changing expectations of society . There is lack of an 'Interdisciplinary Approach' and neglect for 'value based courses'. The solution for such a problem is provide a choice for students to study multiple subjects and specialize in interdisciplinary areas. Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) has been introduced as a major reform in higher education in India. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has initiated several steps to include innovation and improvement in course-curriculum, various types of examination, evaluation & assessment system. With a view to allow the flexibility in education system, so that students depending upon their interests and aims can choose interdisciplinary and skill-based courses, choice based credit system (CBCS) is adopted. The traditional education system has many disadvantages like non-uniform course curriculum, low flexibility in choosing subject combinations, low mobility of students among the institutions, time bound manner, non-uniform assessment system and teacher centric approach. The choice based credit system not only offers opportunities to learn core subjects but also opportunities discipline unrelated subject and explore additional avenues of learning beyond the core subjects for holistic development. Quality is the major concern of the present higher education which could be judged and assessed only by the universally acclaimed system of evaluation and this could be possible through the CBCS. CBCS is essential for Higher Education as this system increases the sincerity among the students as they are preferring to learn the subjects of their choice. Thus, the present seminar paper aims to highlight the analytical study of Choice-Based Credit System.

Keywords- Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), Core Course, Evaluation, Higher Education, Interdisciplinary, UGC.

I.INTRODUCTION

Education is meant for all-around development of a person. It's not meant to produce only specialists and professionals. It is development of moral, social, aesthetic as well as rational capacity. Education beyond secondary level (10+2) especially education provided by a college or university is called Higher Education. The

meaning of higher education incorporates an ordered progression of foundations and projects.

Undoubtedly, education plays very important role in the process of nation building. Among all the sectors of education, higher education is considered as the backbone of the nation. As, all the sorts of discoveries and innovations took place within the premises of higher education. At present, research activities got

much attention that is why it has become necessary to reform the higher education system and put it on the path of academic efficiency, efficacy and excellence.

As part of New Education Policy in India, Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) has been introduced in the field of higher education. This step has been taken to bring equity, efficiency and academic excellence in national higher education system. In Choice Based Credit System, learner-centric approach has been adopted as a means of education delivery mechanism instead of teacher-centric approach of the traditional higher education system. In the traditional higher education system, marks or percentage-based evaluation process has been followed. This obstructs the flexibility of the students to study the subjects or courses of their own choice and their mobility to change the institution of learning. To bring this flexibility in the education system, Choice Based Credit System has been introduced in our country by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. This allows the students to choose inter-disciplinary, intra disciplinary and skilled based courses depending upon their interests and scope of employment. CBCS is an internationally acknowledged system in the field of higher education. It offers opportunities and avenues to learn core subjects and also allows to explore additional avenues of learning beyond the core subjects for overall development of an individual and to transform them into human resource.

Concept of CBCS system in India :

The 11th Five Year plan of India proposed various measures for academic reforms in higher education. The National Knowledge Commission (Sam Pitroda) report to the nation in 2008-2009 on higher education and Yashpal Committee Report in 2009 recommended revamping of higher education through academic and administrative reforms. Keeping in view the challenges of the changed times and make the higher education in Indian Universities compatible with the universities in developed nations, the UGC (11th plan, March 2009) stressed on the following recommendations has to be put on CBCS system in Higher Education:

- CHOICE BASED - Choice of multiple courses.
- GRADING - Marks secured is in letter grade format.
- SEMESTER - Learner- Teacher Engagement Quotient can be measured semester-wise.

- CREDIT - Class hours per week carries additional importance in credit system.
- ASSESSMENT - In the form of class room attendance, Mid Term Tests etc; is continuous and wide-ranging.

Vision of CBCS system:

The vision of Choice based credit system in Higher education in India is:

- To evolve a higher education system that is suitability blended with provision for knowledge values and skill practice where every student learns in without sacrificing his/her creativity.
- To development curricula that would facilitate student centric learning.
- To develop Examination reforms in higher education system in India.
- To the ultimate vision is to bring reforms in higher education, so that student's develop thinking as well as analytical ability, he/she gets equipped with necessary skills ultimately making his/her suitable for an employment and to integrate values.

Background of the study:

Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt. of India, has already initiated the process for developing New Education Policy (NEP) in our country to bring out reforms in Indian education system. University Grants Commission (UGC) participates more actively in developing National Education Policy, its execution and promotion of higher education in our country. The UGC has already initiated several steps to bring equity, efficiency and academic excellence in National Higher Education System. The important ones include innovation and improvement in course-curricula, introduction of paradigm shift in learning and teaching pedagogy, examination and education system.

The education plays colossally significant role in building of a nation. There are quite a large number of educational institutions, engaged in imparting education in our country. Majority of them have entered recently into semester system to match with international educational pattern. However, our present education system produces young minds lacking knowledge, confidence, values and skills. It could be because of complete lack of relationship between education, employment and skill development in

conventional education system. The present alarming situation necessitates transformation and/or redesigning of education system, not only by introducing innovations but developing learner-centric approach in the entire education delivery mechanism and globally followed evaluation system as well.

Majority of Indian higher education institutions have been following marks or percentage based evaluation system, which obstructs the flexibility for the students to study the subjects/courses of their choice and their mobility to different institutions. There is need to allow the flexibility in education system, so that students depending upon their interests and aims can choose interdisciplinary, intra-disciplinary and skill-based courses. This can only be possible when choice based credit system (CBCS), an internationally acknowledged system, is adopted. The choice based credit system not only offers opportunities and avenues to learn core subjects but also exploring additional avenues of learning beyond the core subjects for holistic development of an individual. The CBCS will undoubtedly facilitate us benchmark our courses with best international academic practices. The CBCS has more advantages than disadvantages. CBCS has also many Challenges.

ADVANTAGES:

- (i) Choice Based Credit System is essential for higher education in the present context.
- (ii) CBCS system of courses helps the students to improve the interdisciplinary approach in education.
- (iii) Freedom to choose subjects which is beneficial for students.
- (iv) Respect Learner Autonomy Allows learners to choose according to their own learning needs, interests and aptitudes.
- (v) Facilitates Learner Mobility: Offers the opportunity to study at different times and in different places. Credits earned at one institution can be transferred to another.
- (vi) In this system students need not to repeat the full semester if there is fail in one paper.
- (vii) More autonomy is given to the students in this system.
- (viii) CBCS provides a cross-cultural learning environment.
- (ix) CBCS provide develop quality education
- (x) Helps in working out twinning programs
- (xi) Beneficial for achieving more transparency and compatibility between different educational structures.

- (xii) It upgrades educational and occupational aspiration of the upcoming generation

DISADVANTAGES:

- (i) Implementation of CBCS has some practical limitations.
- (ii) It is complicated, especially in the view of shortage of teachers or infrastructures.
- (iii) One subject can be repeated three times, it makes the students irresponsible.
- (iv) Student cannot plan effectively their list of students.
- (v) It needs more punctuality from the student.
- (vi) There is no betterment system of evaluation in this system.
- (vii) Students can have only partial knowledge of any new subject chosen by the student as extra credit subject.
- (viii) Numbers of courses are imposed in the CBCS, which is an overburden for the student as well as teachers.
- (ix) Shortage of infrastructure facilities i.e. building, laboratory facilities, and practical class room affects CBCS.
- (x) Unfortunately, a large section of the society suffers from inertia and is, therefore, reluctant to accept any change.
- (xi) The new system which is planned for implementation has not been clearly explained.
- (xii) Most of the teachers, academic administrators and community at large are inattentive to the intricate technicalities of examinations which affect their reliability, validity & objectivity.
- (xiii) There are personal stakes that sustain the current practices.

Challenges for CBCS:

For any new system, usually there will be a strong resistance to change from every quarter of the academic world.

- (i) Accepting grade points in subject instead of marks and letter grade instead of exact total marks is difficult due to the fact that allotment of individual ranking is not possible by merely referring grade points and letter grades.
- (ii) Opportunity to take credits outside the core subject area may dilute the depth in core area of studies.
- (iii) Students may face dilemma in choosing the subjects due to their inexperience in predicting future demand.

- (iv) The workload of a faculty member may vary during different semesters of a year.
- (v) The college is compelled to provide good infrastructure, best faculty, and large number of elective at low fees to attract more students for a given course.
- (vi) For the institutions, the number of students in a give class is not constant due to the fact that students can take any subject in any college for a given course.
- (vii) Students cannot stay in a hostel of a particular college due to their study in different colleges.
- (viii) Students have to pay college fee for different colleges for their subjects taken in such a way that the sum of the fees paid will be always higher than the fee paid to an individual college.

Objectives of the study:

- To study the basic features of Choice based credit system (CBCS) in Higher Education in India.
- To study the various types of courses in Choice based credit system (CBCS).
- To study the elements of Choice based credit system (CBCS).
- To study the Grading system- As per UGC Guideline for Choice based credit system (CBCS).
- To study the Impact of Choice based credit system (CBCS) in Higher Education in India.
- To study the suggestion for Embodiment of Choice based credit system (CBCS) in Higher Education in India.

Basic Features of CBCS system:

The CBCS provides an opportunity for the students to choose courses from the prescribed courses comprising core, elective/minor or skill based courses. The courses can be evaluated following the grading, which is considered to be better than the conventional marks system. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce uniform grading system in the entire higher education in India. This will benefit the students to move across institutions within India to begin with and across countries. The uniform grading system will also enable potential employers in assessing the performance of the candidates. In order to bring uniformity in evaluation system and computation of the Cumulative Grade Point

Average (CGPA) based on student's performance in examinations. Some basic features of CBCS system are mentioned below, Students can learn at their own pace.

- Adopt an interdisciplinary approach in learning.
- This is a uniform CBCS for all central and state and other recognized universities.
- There are three main courses: Core, Elective and Foundation.
- There are also non-credit courses available which will be assessed as 'Satisfactory' or "Unsatisfactory". This is not included in the computation of SGPA/CGPA.
- Enhance skill/employability by taking up project work, entrepreneurship and vocational training.
- All the three main courses will be evaluated and accessed to provide for an effective and balanced result.
- Credits can be transferred if the student changes his/her branch of study.
- CBCS is a step towards moving away from numerical marking to grading.
- Grading minimizes the stigma of "fail".
- The credit based grading system is considered desirable because it facilitates student mobility across institutions within the country and across other countries. Potential employers can thus assess performance of students, judicially.

Types of Courses in CBCS System:

Under CBCS, students will study the following types of courses:

Core Course: A course, which should compulsorily be studied by a candidate as a core requirement is termed as a Core course.

Elective Course: Generally a course which can be chosen from a pool of courses and which may be very specific or specialized or advanced or supportive to the discipline/ subject of study or which provides an extended scope or which enables an exposure to some other discipline/subject/domain or nurtures the candidate's proficiency/skill is called an Elective Course.

- **Discipline Specific Elective (DSE) Course:**
Elective courses may be offered by the main discipline/subject of study is referred to as Discipline Specific Elective. The University/Institute

may also offer discipline related Elective courses of interdisciplinary nature (to be offered by main discipline/subject of study).

- **Dissertation/Project:**

An elective course designed to acquire special/advanced knowledge, such as supplement study/support study to a project work, and a candidate studies such a course on his own with an advisory support by a teacher/faculty member is called dissertation/project.

- **Generic Elective (GE) Course:**

An elective course chosen generally from an unrelated discipline/subject, with an intention to seek exposure is called a Generic Elective. (A core course offered in a discipline/subject may be treated as an elective by other discipline/subject and vice versa and such electives may also be referred to as Generic Elective)

Ability Enhancement Courses (AEC)/Competency Improvement Courses/Skill Development Courses/Foundation Course:

*The Ability Enhancement (AE) Courses may be of two kinds: AE Compulsory Course (AECC) and AE Elective Course (AEEC). AE Compulsory Course (AECC) "AECC" courses are the courses based upon the content that leads to Knowledge enhancement. These are are mandatory for all disciplines and include (i) Environmental Science, (ii) English/MIL Communication.

AE Elective Course (AEEC)

These courses may be chosen from a pool of courses designed to provide value-based and/or skill-based instruction. Project work/Dissertation is considered as a special course involving application of knowledge in solving / analysing /exploring a real life situation / difficult problem. A Project/Dissertation work would be of 6 credits. A Project/Dissertation work may be given in lieu of a discipline specific elective paper.

Basic Elements of CBCS system:

CBCS system has the following basic elements:
Semesters: The assessment is done semester wise. A student progresses on the basis of the courses taken rather than time like three years for science, arts,

commerce or four years for engineering etc. Each semester will have 15–18 weeks of academic work which is equal to 90 teaching days. There is flexibility in creating the curriculum and assigning credits based on the course content and hours of teaching.

Credit system: Each course is assigned a certain credit. When the student passes that course, he earns the credits which are based on that course. If a student passes a single course in a semester, he does not have to repeat that course later. The students can earn credits according to his pace.

Credit transfer: If for some reasons, he cannot cope with the study load or if he falls sick, he has the freedom to study fewer courses and earn fewer credits and he can compensate this in the next semester.

Comprehensive continuous assessment: There is a continuous evaluation of the student not only by the teachers but also by the student himself.

Counting of Credits in Credit System: One credit per semester is equal to one hour of teaching, which includes both lecture (L) or tutorial (T) or two hours of practical work/field work (P) per week. A study course can have only L component or only T or P component or combination of any two or all the three components. The total credits earned by a student for each semester is L+T+P.

In compliance with the Global Grading System: All the major higher education institutions across the world are implementing this credit system. For instance, the 'National Qualifications Framework' in Australia, the Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits the UK Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) and even in the US system, Japan system, etc. are based on credit system.

Grading system of CBCS system- As per UGC Guideline:

UGC has introduced a 10-point grading system in CBCS to allot grading as shown in the following table 1.

Table 1: Grading system in CBCS as per UGC guidelines

Sl. No	Letter Grade	Grade	Grade Point
1	O	Outstanding	10
2	A+	Excellent	9
3	A	Very good	8
4	B+	Good	7
5	B	Above Average	6
6	C	Average	5
7	P	Pass	4
8	F	Fail	0
9	Ab	Absent	0

Impact of CBCS system in Higher Education in India:

- 1) Shift in focus from the teacher-centric to student-centric education.
- 2) Students may undertake as many credits as they can cope with (without repeating all courses in a given semester if they fail in one/more courses).
- 3) CBCS allows students to choose inter-disciplinary, intra-disciplinary courses, skill oriented papers (even from other disciplines according to their learning needs, interests and aptitude) and offer more flexibility for students).
- 4) CBCS makes education broad-based and at par with global standards. One can take credits by combining unique combinations. For example, Physics with Economics, Microbiology with Chemistry or Environment Science etc.
- 5) CBCS offers flexibility for students to study at different times and at different institutions to complete one course (ease mobility of students). Credits earned at one institution can be transferred.
- 6) Students get better exposure and networking through attending the course in many college.

Suggestion for Embodiment of CBCS system in Higher Education in India:

The implementation of CBCS system can prove beneficial for Institutes. Student-centric approach of Education creates interest and applicability in the scope of study. Our solution enables easy Choice Based Credit System in Educational Campuses. Master Soft has customized this solution keeping in mind the growing need to automate credit courses of higher education.

Following points could be considered as the suggestions for Embodiment for the CBCS system:

- Undoubtedly, Choice based credit system is students friendly but things are yet to be needed to justify the efficacy of it. Class room teaching should be given importance.
- Seminars, Conferences and debate should be organized to discuss its merits and demerits in detail.
- Professional training should be given to the teachers to handle it effectively.
- Provision of both Percentage and grading system should be maintained.
- Its adaptation should be optional or choice based rather than mandatory.
- All the P.G college of India should also be brought under the CBCS, as they also catering the responsibility of Higher Education on a large scale.
- Selection of papers and choosing credits should be governed by the concerned department/institution.
- To make it more effective, guidance and counseling services should be arranged for the teachers and students while choosing soft core papers.
- The University can have multiple users. The user can view his/her profile as well as change password.
- Student has the mobility to register, apply, keep track of courses selected and examination schedule through our Solution.
- Faculty has the flexibility to manage student data, create courses and schemes, offer courses, allot curriculum and assign/ transfer teachers.
- Through this solution the teacher can prepare teaching plans, mark attendance and prepare assignments for students.
- Solution for CBCS system is holistic, easy to use and provides comprehensive management.

CONCLUSION:

Choice Based Credit System is essential for Higher Education. This system increases the sincerity among the teacher as well as the students. In the current economic crisis, innovation is seen as a key strategy for institutions and companies not only to recover but to prosper and to sustain growth into the future (World Economic Forum, 2010). To conclude it can be said that education is not an end but an integral process in building the youth of a nation and subsequently at a global level. A well designed system of evaluation is a powerful educational device. CBCS have been efficient in eliminating rote learning and memorizing introducing critical thinking and analysis which leads to creativity and innovation in education system. From the empirical evidence students perceive the CBCS to be student centric which provides student freedom and has clarity in evaluation with clear syllabi and adequate college resources providing all round development of students. It is concluded that the significant factors. Thus CBCS will enable the smooth transition from a teacher-centric system to a student-centric system.

The UGC has always initiated measures to bring efficiency and excellence in the Higher Education System of India. The basic motive is to expand academic quality in all aspects, right from the curriculum to the learning-teaching process to examination and evaluation systems. However, so far multiple methods are followed by different universities across the country towards examination, evaluation and grading system. Considering this diversity, the implementation of the choice based credit system seems to be a good system in assessing the overall performance of a student in a universal way of a single grading system.

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