

CHOICE BASED CREDIT SYSTEM AT HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL-AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

The higher education system in the present century has to meet the expectations of open global market. If economic and social challenges are not responded sufficiently by taking steps to look forward for a better education system, irrespective of the fact traditional education system has paved way for development in education system in India but with the growing demands of society and changes in education system at global level, UGC prepared a scheme of education (CBCS) for Universities and other institutions in 2014 and Government of India made it mandatory for all the institutions to implement it from 2015. 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. It provides opportunities to students to pursue core subjects as well as soft courses of other departments simultaneously. This system would help our students to match up with international educational pattern. This system is based on semester pattern and assessing students continuously and providing letter grades and grade points. As the CBCS system is implemented it has its advantages and disadvantages which need proper follow up for effective improvement.

Keywords: UGC, Traditional system, Choice Based Credit System, Assessment.

Introduction

Education in the present knowledge based society is in the flux and under tremendous pressure from the stakeholders. The fast changing society along with the technological revolution has made education a key to professional success. Research and innovation, which have direct bearing on economic development have gained utmost importance in higher education. The technological revolution has opened possibilities for new horizons, new modes of educational delivery system and what not. There is an ongoing concern that higher education is not able to respond sufficiently to the changing needs of economic and social challenges. The higher education system in the present century has to gear-up to meet the challenges of globalization and at the same time resist pressures of vested interests and yet to meet the expectations of open global market.

In the coming century such countries will be able to withstand international competition that have evolved better and effective means of knowledge generation. If this challenge has to be met one has to look forward to a kind of educational system which is less skewed in terms of access and of quality in terms of contents and processes. We must acknowledge the fact that so called conventional courses of studies and also conventional institutions

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need to re-appraise their effectiveness and demand. The Indian government recently made choice based credit system (CBCS) mandatory for all higher level courses viz undergraduate and post graduate level in 2015-2016. On the recommendations of 11th five year plan and national knowledge commission. The CBCS aims at ushering in a multi disciplinary approach to undergraduate and post-graduate curriculum by providing students a great diversity of opportunities for their mobility by allowing them to take credits earned in one institution to another institution to which they transfer. This system also facilitates student mobility across educational institutions within nation and outside.

The choice based credit system not only offers opportunities and avenues to learn core subjects but also exploring additional avenues of leaning beyond the core subjects for holistic development of an individual. It provides opportunities to students to pursue core subjects as well as soft courses of other departments simultaneously. The courses offered to students are of three types viz fundamental, elective and core. The fundamental / foundation courses may be compulsory fundamental and elective fundamental. The content of such courses are knowledge based and mandatory for all disciplines. While as elective fundamental courses are value based and are aimed at man-making education. The electives may be open generic electives based on generic proficiency of the students. This may be discipline centric or open elective chosen from an unrelated discipline from pool of papers which may be supportive to the discipline or may enable an exposure to some other discipline for nurturing students proficiency skill. The core papers again are compulsory for students in every semester to complete the requirement of the programme. Moreover Dissertation/ Project has been incorporated in CBCS at undergraduate and post graduate level which is designed to acquire special / advanced knowledge. In solving / analyzing / exploring a real life situation. This may be given to students in lieu of a discipline specific elective paper such as supplemental study/ support study to a project work and is purely on the choice of the students.

CBCS gives also emphasis upon continuous and comprehensive evaluation in which 40% weightage is given to internal assessment and 60% weightage to the final one. It not only focuses upon subjective assessment but gives weightage to overall performance of the students throughout the courses viz assignment, presentation, attendance, class participation and so on. CBCS has not only widen the student horizon by providing them varied subjects but also has reduced their obsession for marks with introduction of grading system. the emphasis on the computation of the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) based on the performance of the students in the examination. CBCS has also limited the traditional method of teacher centric education which used to focus upon rote memory learning and also was responsible for distancing students from using their cognitive abilities instead it follows inter disciplinary approach based on integration of concepts, theories , techniques and perspective from two or more disciplines to advance fundamental understanding of problem solving (Kelkar, 2014)

Features of Choice Based Credit System:

Semesters: CBCS has ended the traditional annual system of assessing students on subjective basis by including semester system. Annual course of the student is divided into two semesters on the basis of which his assessment is done. A student's progress is calculated on the basis of the credits taken from the course rather than the time to complete the course. Each semester comprises of 15–18 weeks of academic training and assessment which is equal to 90 days of teaching. There is flexibility in creating the curriculum and assigning credits based on the course content and hours of teaching.

Credit System: Each course in CBCS is credit based hence the student is supposed to earn particular credit from the course to fulfill the demand of his/her CGPA. When a student passes a single course in a semester, he/she does not have to repeat that course later. CBCS facilitates students to earn credits according to their own pace by taking any amount of time.

Provision of Credit Transfer: Based on flexibility feature CBCS, it provides facility of credit transfer in certain cases when a student is unable to cope up with his/her study load or if he/she falls sick, there is a provision of credit transfer for him/her as they have the freedom to study fewer courses and earn fewer credits and then they can compensate this in the next semester. A student can also take the remaining credits in another college as there is a provision of mobility of credits.

Comprehensive Continuous Assessment: Formative and Summative assessment are two ways to evaluate a student's learning and has great importance in any examination system. There is a continuous evaluation of the student not only by the teachers but also by the student himself through assignments, open book exams along with semester end examinations.

Allotment of Grading: UGC has introduced a 10-point grading system in CBCS to allot grading as shown in the following

Allotment of Grading in CBCS as per UGC guidelines

| S.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 |

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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 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in Europe's universities, 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.

Advantages

- CBCS respects student autonomy as there is major shift from the teacher centric to learner centric education.
- CBCS helps self-learning as learner could pace their learning or course as per their habit and ability.
- CBCS allows students to choose inter-disciplinary courses, skill oriented papers even from other disciplines according to their learning needs, interests and aptitude. Learners can get exposure out of it.
- The system offers more flexibility from which slow learners can get advantage in choosing credits at one time.
- CBCS facilitates student mobility from one institution to another by transferring their credits. This system has taken education at par with the global standards. It allows students to pursue their courses at different times. Students also get better exposure and networking through attending the courses in different institutions.
- CBCS exercises maximum use of ICT as it puts emphasis on seminars, presentations, assignment, discussion, project based teaching etc.
- CBCS is also helpful in building favourable learning environment through which all round development of learners or multi- facet personality of learners can be promoted.
- CBCS also provides coping tendencies to learners and helps to reduce their stress and anxiety. work efficiency can also be improved through this system.
- Solution to un-employment as it improves the job opportunities for students.
- It promotes group work, research and community work as it has a greater scope for student participation.

Disadvantages

- Difficult to identify achievers
- Fluctuating workload of teachers
- Institution may lack infrastructure facilities for universal spread of education.
- Geographical and climatic conditions

- Difficult to know the exact marks obtained by the student as the report card reflects letter grades and grade points only.
- Most of the time will be consumed for setting papers for different examinations and evaluation.
- As 40% weightage is given to internal assessment there is maximum chance of subjectivity.
- Difficult to keep cumulative record of each student completing degree.

Suggestions:

- ❖ There should be correlation of subjects chosen by the students.
- ❖ In every college there should be a guidance and counseling cell which may guide students for right choice of subjects.
- ❖ In order to make teachers aware about various components of CBCS training programmes and Workshops should be organized at college level.
- ❖ Infrastructure should be provided to the institutions for effective implementation of courses
- ❖ Equalization of standard of education system should be maintained so that mobility of students could be checked.
- ❖ The Choice assigned should be realistic and not just for name sake.
- ❖ Academic calendar should be framed by the university well in advance and strictly followed.
- ❖ Non scholastic aspects should be given due weightage for holistic development of the students.
- ❖ Teachers should be made aware of various evaluation techniques.

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