

Choice-Based Credit System in India: Pros and Cons

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Abstract

Education system of India is full of intricacies of different nature. Every ladder of education has its own problems and prospects. However, attempts have been taken to lessen complexities. From ages, time to time commissions have been constituted to improve and remove the anomalies of Indian education system especially, ensuring quality and uniformity in India education system. Idea of Quality assurance cell has not only been mooted out but also implemented across the national level. Ensuring uniformity in Education System, especially at Under-Graduate level, Choice-Based Credit System has been confirmed mandatory. But the nature of Indian education system is much diverse and encompasses inherent problems of diversity in implementing the uniform system of evaluation. Present education system of India has got spread across the country in the form of Primary Education, Secondary Education and Tertiary Education. The last one of education sector has much importance in the process of developing nation. Major inventions and innovations have direct bearing on the quality of higher education. So, 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. Thus, the present article aims to highlight the merit and demerit of Choice-Based Credit System.

Keywords: Choice-Based Credit System, MHRD, UGC

1. Introduction

Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), Government of India, has already been taken initiative for making ground to the formulation of New Education Policy. The logic behind it to bring out reforms in Indian Education System as well as to ensure the quality of Indian higher education and make it as par the world level. University Grant Commission is sole responsible in making progress to develop the National Education Policy. Execution of policy and promotion of higher education comes under the responsibilities of University Grant Commission. Time to time, several initiatives are taken by UGC in order to bring academic efficiency, excellence, ensuring equity, landing the norms for recruitment of teachers and administrators at different levels of relevant posts in Higher Education. But the important and recognisable one is the innovation, reformation and improvement in curriculum, pedagogy of teaching and learning, examination and evaluation system.

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.

In India, Higher education is imparted largely through Universities and Colleges. Majority of universities and colleges, particularly central universities, have adapted semester system to make higher education more compatible. However, present Indian education system producing graduates who are lacking in knowledge, skills, values, confidence and academic efficiency as a whole. The current pathetic conditions of Indian higher education system calls the necessary reformation and transformation of higher education system by introducing and devising innovations, and also by developing learner centre approach as well as globally claimed evaluation system.

Most of the Indian Universities and Colleges have been following marks or percentage based evaluation system, which is acting as a barrier for students' mobility and not letting them to move from institutions to another one to pursue the desired subjects or courses. This calls that there should be a flexible system of education so that students could pursue different nature of professional and non- professional courses according to their choice and desired. That why, after a prolonged debate among the educationists and experts of concerned fields, University Grant Commission (UGC) has made it mandatory to be implemented choice based credit system(CBCS) in all the undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) courses under the XI plan of Higher Education. (Kelkar, A.S & Ravishankar, L. 2014) revealed in their study that many universities/autonomous institutions have already implemented the same, Mumbai University made it compulsory in 2011. By 2013, the entire UG and PG programmes became credit-based. The main objectives of introducing such programmes by UGC are: Need for reforms in higher education; enhanced learning opportunities; ability to match learners' scholastic needs and aspirations; interuniversity transferability of learners; improvement in quality of education and excellence; greater flexibility to complete the course; standardization and comparability of educational programmes across the country.

Undoubtedly, CBCS has added a new vista in the existing system of higher education. It provides full

opportunity to the learners to pursue courses as per their choice. It is a system of evaluation which offers maximum opportunities and avenues to the learners to learn core subjects with the provision of additional soft courses for the holistic their development. It will prove as an instrument to bridge the gap between the two students of various courses as it has a provision of offering core subjects with the addition of different soft courses. It means students have an opportunity to pursue core subjects as well as soft courses of other department simultaneously. CBCS gives emphasis on the continuous and comprehensive evaluation. It gives 40% weightage to the internal assessment and remaining 60% to the final exam. Internal evaluation consists of one test for 20 marks, one assignment for 10 marks and 10 marks: 5 marks for the active participation in the class and 5 marks for over all conduct of the learners during class hours.

The efficacy of CBCS can be understood by findings of (Kelkar, A.S & Ravishankar, L. 2014) who have conducted a research that revealed, 42% of the teachers agreed that the objective of CBCS was achieved, 39% felt that they were not met and 18% were uncertain. In response to the question whether CBCS emphasizes on only teaching or evaluation, or both, the feedback was mixed – majority (62.5%) felt that the emphasis is on evaluation only, while 20% felt that the emphasis was on teaching only and 15% felt that both teaching and evaluation were given equal weightage in the CBCS system. (Roy, Khanam & Trribeni (2013) found in their study that science background students and boys are having higher level of positive attitude towards CBCS in comparison to Arts and Girls students. However, there are certain issues which have to be addressed through the merit and demerit of CBCS. These are as follows-

1.1 Pros of Choice-Based Credit System

Following points can be said the pros or advantage of credit based choice system.

- ❖ It can be seen as a major shift from the teacher centre to learner centre education.
- ❖ Learners can offer as many credit as they can cope up the pressure of the examination.
- ❖ It permits learners to choose soft courses of different interdisciplinary and intra disciplinary subjects with the core subjects.
- ❖ It is also helpful to the learners to choose courses and papers as per their choice and interest.
- ❖ It promotes mobility of learners from one institution to another one.
- ❖ It would take education system as par the global standard.
- ❖ It also helps to the learners to pursue their courses at different times.
- ❖ It helps learners to realize their potentials through the flexibility in offering courses.
- ❖ It has broadened the base of education system.
- ❖ All round development of learners or multi facets personality of learners can be promoted. Through it.
- ❖ It is also helpful in employment, as knowledge of different soft courses may helpful for that.
- ❖ Stress and anxiety of learners can be reduced through it.
- ❖ Work efficiency can be enhanced.
- ❖ Development of professional skills can be possible.
- ❖ Helpful in ensuring the uniformity in education system in terms of evaluation and assessment.
- ❖ It puts emphasis on seminar presentation, assignment, discussion, project etc. based teaching.
- ❖ It stressed on exercising maximum use of ICT in class room teaching.
- ❖ It gives importance to the internal assessment too.
- ❖ Slow learners can get advantage from it, as it has the flexibility in choosing credits at one time.
- ❖ Equality among the learners can be ensured through it, as it has the grading system.
- ❖ Globally acclaimed education system can be maintained through it, as it has the provision of offering different courses at the same time.
- ❖ Learners could pace their learning or course as per their habit and ability.
- ❖ It is also helpful in building favourable learning environment, as everyone is supposed to take part in learning process as per their ability and competency.
- ❖ Cooperation and healthy work temperament can be ensured and developed among the learners.
- ❖ Habits of work commitment of learners can be strengthened.

1.1.1 Cons of Choice-Based Credit System

In spite having advantages, following could be the disadvantages of Choice-Based Credit System.

- ❖ It would be to-gh to measure or calculate the exact marks.
- ❖ Work load of teachers would be increased a lot.
- ❖ Regular teaching would be affected.
- ❖ Mobility or transferring of students from one institution to another one would be problematic.
- ❖ Maintaining compatibility among main subject's papers and soft papers would be challenging one.
- ❖ Offering more than one programme of different nature simultaneously would be challenging one.
- ❖ Extra burden would be experience by the institution as CBCS has the flexibility in taking or choosing

- credits.
- ❖ Mastery over concerned subject would be hampered.
- ❖ Problems of indiscipline would be happened as full liberty or choices of students are given maximum importance.
- ❖ Different nature and standard of institution will forced problem in maintain the equality in terms of mobility of students as everyone would desire to move from sub standard institution or university to standard one.
- ❖ It may pose problems in maintaining the cumulative record of every student.
- ❖ Seriousness of students will go away from the examination as much weightage is given to continuous or internal assessment and evaluation.
- ❖ Most of the time will have to be consumed for setting papers for different type of examinations.
- ❖ It will call to increase the infrastructure to house or accommodate the students.
- ❖ Equalisation of performance through it may discourage the gifted and talented students.
- ❖ Research work and innovation would get hampered, as most of the time teachers have to be involved in setting papers and making arrangement for the examinations.
- ❖ Chance of subjectivity would be maximum, as internal evaluation has 40 % weightage.

1.1.2 Suggestions/Opinions

Following points could be considered as the suggestions/opinions regarding the CBCS.

- ❖ Undoubtedly, CBCS 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 organised 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.
- ❖ Equalization in standard of education system should be maintained so that mobility of students could be checked.
- ❖ Selection of papers and choosing credits should be governed by the concerned department/ institution.
- ❖ To make it more effective, guidance and counselling services should be arranged for the teachers and students while choosing soft core papers.
- ❖ Care should be taken about the gap between Central and state Universities in regard to quality of education as well as the availability of infrastructure at point.

1.1.3 Conclusion

Indian education system is expected to go under reformatory process. Keeping it in mind, UGC has sought the feedback from the experts in relation to the formulation of New Education Policy. However, UGC has confirmed compulsory that CBCS to be implemented across the National level. Undoubtedly, it would cast positive effect on the higher education system. But, India is a giant country in terms of education system which is consisted of primary, secondary and tertiary education, i.e. higher education. The last one is considered more complex because it houses different nature of courses and streams. Therefore, maintaining harmony, among all the courses and streams, is a tough task. However, it has been assumed that implementation of CBCS would have been succeeded in equalising the higher education system through the uniform evaluation system. Flexibility in choosing credits, opting different soft course, mobility of students and common syllabi are the major features of CBCS. But the existing variability and differences between Central University, State University and Colleges in terms of efficient teachers, academic environment, infrastructure etc would pose problem in the success of it. Therefore, it should be better for educationists and policy makers to go with the having open debates, seminars and conferences as well as go through the basic nuances of CBCS and its implications to the broader perspectives.

1.5. Acknowledgement

The present article is written on the basis of personal experiences and observations. Therefore, it is not necessary to be agreed with the authors' opinions being discussed in the paper. To have more clarity over the effectiveness of CBCS, empirical and data base study should be carried out in the different situations.

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