



## CHOICE BASED CREDIT SYSTEM (CBCS) - A NEW REFORM IN EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*The higher education system in India today suffers from many shortcomings. Moreover the enrolment ratio in Indian Higher Education is very much low as world perspectives. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is only 18.8% which is below the world average of 29%. In addition to very low access to higher education in general, there are wide disparities in various social groups, gender, and between rural-urban areas. As Higher Education plays a significant role in nation building, so our government has taken initiatives to achieve Indian Higher Education in World Class Level. The National Policy on Education (1986) set five main goals for higher education as Access, Equity, Quality and Excellence, Relevance, and Value based education. Similarly the eleventh as well as the twelfth educational plan have continued to lay emphasis on improving access, equity and excellence.*

**KEYWORDS:** Education, CBCS, Universities and Colleges

### INTRODUCTION

In India, higher education is largely imparted through universities and colleges. Most of the Indian Universities and Colleges have considered marks or percentage based evaluation system. 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 desire. This approach was first come in sight in the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012). In this plan the main issues regarding higher education were the improvement of GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio), Equity, Merit based student financing, Internationalization of education, Enabling a research environment, High quality faculty, Improved technology and making education industry relevant and practical.

Following these issues the MHRD and UGC jointly approach the reformations and innovations in the curriculum and evaluation system in higher education. However it is difficult to implement the CBCS in all colleges and universities.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the paper are to:

- Find out the nature of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS).
- Analyse the status of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in some selected universities in India.

### METHODOLOGY

This research paper is Qualitative in nature.

## NATURE OF CBCS

The traditional higher education system has a non-uniform performance assessment system putting all pressure on the student at the end of the year. To bring changes in the present system of education UGC has recommended an internationally accepted education system i.e. Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). CBCS is a curriculum development, transaction and evaluation system.

The Choice Based Credit System implemented by UGC, provide a paradigm shift in the national education policy seeking to bridge an increasing gap between undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and employability. The main objective of the programme is the uniformity and excellence in higher education and the proposed curriculum under this system endeavours to empower the students and help them in their pursuit for achieving overall excellence. That is why, in this curriculum emphasis are not only given on the core papers but on the elective papers also for the honours as well as general courses.

Following are the main features of the CBCS programme:

- **Uniformity:** CBCS provides a uniform higher education system to all central, state and deemed to be universities. It aims in removing all variations across colleges and universities.
- **Semesterization:** This programme allows semester system, which reduce the burden of students and accelerate learning opportunities.
- **Interdisciplinary approach:** This system adopts an interdisciplinary approach to learning. It enables integration of concepts, theories, techniques and perspectives from two or more disciplines. It cut down the boundaries of different disciplines.
- **Flexibility:** CBCS is a flexible programme. It provides greater flexibility to students as well as institutions in designing curriculum, assigning credit based on course content and hours of instruction.
- **Student centred education:** This system is based on student-cantered approach. Learners' ability, interest, capacity and needs are in primary concern of this programme.
- **Multidisciplinary curriculum:** CBCS provides multidisciplinary curriculum for all students of UG, PG, Certificate, Diploma and Degree courses in all universities. This approach will bring professional excellence in education.
- **Learning by earning credit:** Credit is the central point of this system. It is a systematic way of describing an educational programme by attaching credits to its components. Students have to earn these credits in terms of class hours. Normally one credit is equal to one class hour per week.
- **Continuous and comprehensive evaluation:** A continuous and comprehensive evaluation system is followed. According to UGC in this system

students will be assessed through internally as well as externally.

- **Transferability:** This system enables students to move from one institution to another by transferring credits. His/ her earned credits in one institution can be transferred to other institution. Even he /she can transfer his earned credit to next semester in case of any problem. This transfer may be horizontal as well as vertical.
- **Grade:** This system minimize the term "Fail" by adopting grade on the quality of the performance of students instead of marks. The grade system is followed internationally. According to UGC guidelines, grading methods will be of two types. They are:
- **Holistic approach:** For the academic excellence of students in higher education CBCS provides a holistic approach to education. This will foster creativity, research ability, values and ethics, leadership quality and social exposure in students. It will bring quality and excellence to institutions.
- **Cafeteria approach:** CBCS provides a "cafeteria" type of approach in which the students and their choices are at the central point.

## STATUS OF CBCS IN INDIA

Currently, higher education is drawing tremendous attention in the world. The countries which have more recently moved from a developing to a developed status, strengthening the education system, emphasis on Research and training of professionals have been the key ingredients of success, according to report submitted by Indian National Science Academy in 2006, countries like China have made substantial increases in their allocation of resources for higher education. India also cannot remain behind in keeping pace with the world.

Higher Education of India has undergone quite a lot of transformation over the years. After the report of Kothari Commission in 1966, discussions on college autonomy started and a few colleges became autonomous since 1978. Academic freedom under autonomy, helped many colleges innovate new curricula, design relevant courses, frame new syllabi and introduce new evaluation methods. But the required flexibility for the students is not available even in autonomous colleges; rather a rigid and compartmentalized system is perpetuated. To change the approach from teacher-centric to learner-centric, the higher authority of Indian Higher education (UGC) proposed a new innovation in the 11<sup>th</sup> plan which involved steps for reforms in higher education. UGC had set up a Committee on Academic and Administrative Reforms, with professor Gyanam as convener, and comprising several eminent educationists from a diverse range of disciplines. Based on the report of the committee, an action plan has been developed for the phase-wise introduction of the Choice Based Credit System in

the institutions of higher education of the country. This suggested a flexible curriculum development, transaction, and evaluation system for the students with their needs, interests and choice. It allows students mobility across the institutions and countries. This system is grade and credit based, which is followed by most of the countries across the world. To adopt this approach, UGC has taken initiatives and asked all the Central, State and deemed to be universities to implement choice based credit system in their institutions. UGC also has given necessary guidelines to the institutions in its draft regulations.

### **CBCS IN SOME SELECTED UNIVERSITIES OF INDIA**

After the recommendations of the UGC, different universities in India have implemented the Choice Based Credit System. Following are some recognised universities discussed below:

- **University of Mumbai:** In Mumbai University, CBCS became effective in undergraduate level from the academic year of 2011-2012, under the faculty of science, arts and commerce. The value of one credit is equal to 30-40 learning hours. The ratio between Internal and External assessment is 40:60. Minimum duration of a UG programme is 3 years. Credits allotted to Undergraduate Programme and Postgraduate Programme is 120 credits and 96 credits respectively. Learners have to obtain more than 40% marks in Internal Assessment and External Examination respectively to pass in all courses. A 7 point grading scale is considered for the assessment of students' performance. Grade Card is also given to the students by the institution.
- **University of Delhi:** Delhi University is one of the leading Universities in India. It adopted the regulations of UGC about the implementation of Choice Based Credit System from the academic year of 2015-2016 for the Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The University has allotted the credits of courses in different programmes following the guidelines given by the UGC. It already have started semester and grading system in the year of 2010. The assessment and examination system is divided into two parts-internal and external. The aggregate passing mark is 40%. A 7 point relative grading scale is used for the assessment of students.
- **Pondicherry University:** Pondicherry University has adopted this approach around 2011, and revised it in 2016-2017. It made effective the CBCS in PG programme and UG programme. An academic semester consists of 16 weeks with one teaching period of 60 minutes duration. The evaluation process is based on Internal and External assessment in the ratio of 40:60. A relative as well as absolute grading with 10 point grading scale is used to assess the performance of students. The minimum mark to pass in each course is 50.
- **Ravenshaw University:** Ravenshaw University has implemented the Choice Based Credit System effective from the academic session of 2016-2017 in undergraduate programme. 144 credits are allotted to the programme for 28 study courses in each discipline. The evaluation system is internal and external based in the ratio of 20:80. 20% marks for the internal assessment is done by the mid-term and 80% marks is for end term examination. The semesterised credit system has implemented for all the B.A, B.SC and B.COM undergraduate programme.
- **Gujarat University:** Gujarat University has given its ordinances and regulations under the Choice Based Credit System for the UG (B.COM) programme from the academic year of 2011-2012. The programme is for 3 years which is divided into six semesters. The total programme is consists of 150 credits equally divided into 25 credits per semester. The number of working hours allotted per week is 30 and it will be spread over 6 days/week. The number of week is 15 in a semester. The evaluation system will be consists of internal and external examination, in a ratio of 30:70. The passing marks in internal and external examination are 36% respectively. An absolute grading with 10 point grading scale is used for the assessment of students' performance.
- **Himachal Pradesh University:** Himachal Pradesh University (for the undergraduate programme) has implemented the Choice Based Credit System in its draft regulation in 2013. Six semesters in 3 years with 15 weeks per semester is considered as the academic week. One academic week is consists with 6 working days per week. For an undergraduate degree a student has to cumulate at least 120 credits (maximum 135 credits). The Continuous Comprehensive Assessment and End-Semester Assessment consists 50-50 weightage respectively. A 10 point Absolute grading scale is used for the assessment of the performance of students. Relative grading is done in all cases where the number of students in the HPU and its affiliated colleges is more than 50.
- **University of Kashmir:** Kashmir University has given the notification for the implementation of Choice Based Credit System in 2016. The duration of each undergraduate programme shall exist over six semesters. Each semester to be of at least 16 weeks with 22 credits in a semester and 132 credits in three years for a General course and a total of 148 credits for an Honours course. 40%marks (grade 'P') is necessary for passing the examination. A 10 point grading scale is allowed for the assessment and grade card is provided to the students after the completion of one semester.

### **CONCLUSION**

The idea of implementation of the CBCS is allow greater flexibility for the students to opt various interdisciplinary courses and to bring

academic programmes at par with the standards of international universities and premier Indian institutions. Though it is not so successful in many universities, while many top institutions in India IITs, ICT etc. follow the credit system, The most valid reason for successful implementation of CBCS is that every teacher handling the course as assigned several teaching assistants who help in conducting tutorials and in evaluation. The classes are spited into smaller groups of 25-30 students and once a week, tutorials sessions are conducted with the help of teaching assistants. CBCS is a new stride by UGC in the higher education in India. This paves way for reformatory changes in the Education system of India. Students autonomy, self learning, all round development of students are the major features of CBCS. Extra burden on the institution, different nature and standards of the institutions etc., would pose problem in maintaining it. Therefore, it would be advisable to have open discussion, seminars, and workshops on better and successful implementation of CBCS. It may bring a constructive change in the Indian Higher Education System.

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