

Choice-Based Credit System in Indian Higher Education: A Curriculum Approach



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Abstract

The study has discussed on Indian higher education nascent reforms in the context of Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS). The authors have discussed here on various aspects of Choice-Based Credit System in terms of various course pattern, grading structure, flexibility in learning, credit transfer, etc. Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) gives more freedom to learners and moves towards teacher-centric teaching to learner-centric education. CBCS has Core, Elective and foundation courses in its structure.

Keywords: CBCS, Higher Education, Curriculum, Credit, Core Course, Elective Course, Foundation Course.

Introduction

In the paradigm of teaching, learning and research, curriculum plays a vital role. The education system is guided through curricula which not only strengthen the education system but also empower the learners. Indian higher education is one of the oldest and largest systems in the globe. Since its inception, the universities are growing very fast and cross five hundred in numbers. Universities are classified on the basis of the divergent feels the too broad division on the basis. Indian universities are traditional, where science, social science subjects and technological disciplines are implemented, though Indian student is doing well in their respective field in India and abroad. In teaching & research Indian administration university authorities MHRD & other agencies have struggled hard to enhance the qualitative aspects of teaching and learning. "The present alarming situation necessitates transformation and/or redesigning of system, not only by introducing innovations but developing learner centric approach" (Panda, 2017, p. 30). That should be implemented uniformly for the entire nation and the same time the learners or the students should have interest in the learning process. The academic is competitive, now it sustaining the higher values to train the students at the grass root level or at the post-secondary level has become a concern. One of the problems the reason found that more numbers of subject coverage are needed and the learners should be allowed to have the course of their choice to smaller or greater extent. So that they can build their knowledge base during his study and this helps to find them a suitable job.

By looking at this issue the experts and the academic guru's focus on the curricular aspects through his empowering the learner in choosing of their choice are possible. Due to these reasons, the choice-based credit system (CBCS) was implemented by UGC in higher education. In this research paper, the author wishes to present a generalized version of CBCS in India in terms of curriculum, the concept, history & growth and the issues related to implementation.

Objective of the Study

Every study conducted with having an aim, it's a usual feature. This study was aimed to know about the recent higher education reforms in terms of CBCS and its implementation issues. This study was conducted to know about the Choice-Based Credit System features and structure to help the information seekers. The authors were aimed to gives an overview of recent curriculum reforms in the Indian higher education system.

Indian Education System

In today scenario, every country wants to grow up forward rapidly with the help of skilled and good quality of manpower. Education plays an important role to prepare skillful manpower. Therefore every country has

done amendment in their education system to keep the curriculum in pace in the changing environment. In the past years, many reforms have been made by our government in Indian higher education system with the help of various curriculum development committees but older curriculum of Indian higher education system is not able to prepare employable and skilled students adequately. Due to our poor curriculum design and evaluation methods at the international level standards, our job seekers students do not fulfill today's job market needs in the terms of quality and skills as compared to developed nation's job seekers students. So Indian higher education system lately passes away big reforms in the context of higher education in recent passing years, UGC issued a circular for all universities regarding the implementation of CBCS pattern. In our opinion, there should be some more practical aspects in our curriculum so that students can learn and able to understand practically how to work and how to operate in their working field and this is possible through newly adopted CBCS system. "The current condition of Indian teacher education system calls the necessary reformation and transformation of introducing and devising innovations, and also by developing learner center approach as well as globally claimed evaluation system (Nehru, 2016, p.27)."

According to world point of view Higher education system of India stands on third place after China and USA. "Five Year plan of India proposed various measures for academic reforms in higher education. The National Knowledge Commission in its report to the nation in 2008-2009 on higher education and Yashpal Committee Report in 2009 recommended overhauling of higher education through academic and administrative reforms. The purpose of such reform was to establish the higher education of India on international level equivalent to developed nations. University Grant Commission (11th plan, March 2009) and Association of Indian Universities (AIU) stressed on the Choice Based Credit System (Mishra, 2017, p. 4871)." Committees and Commission make different policies and did various reforms in our education system and help to build more advanced curriculum.

Implementation

Some institution have already implemented CBCS program while UGC make it compulsory for all universities in 2015-2016. "The University Grants Commission (UGC) has made it compulsory to implement choice-based credit system (CBCS) in all undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) courses under the XI Plan¹. While 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 (Kelkar & Ravishankar, 2014, p.1229)." In other hand during implementation of CBCS pattern mostly universities are facing faculty related issue some universities have limited faculty that's why they are not capable to implement the CBCS pattern in all departments of university. "The lack of an interdisciplinary approach is

one reason why we are losing many of our brightest students to universities abroad. This year, the Institute for International Education estimates that India is the No 2 country of origin for foreign students in the US, with over 1.2 lakh students studying there, contributing an estimated \$3.3 billion" (Naidu, & Sreedevi, 2016, p.77). "According to a report published in IANS [10] around 35 percent posts are vacant in the central universities, 25 percent in the IIMs, 33.33 percent in the National Institute of Technology (NITs) and 35.1 percent in other central education institutions coming up under the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry" (Gupta & Gupta, 2012, p.19). "CBCS imminently fits into the emerging socio-economic environment, and could effectively respond to the educational and occupational aspirations of the upcoming generations" (RUSA, 2013, p.119). Some universities/institutes have already divided there UG & PG syllabus into parts in the form of units or subunits that will be help to switching traditional system to newly emerged CBCS system. In a generalized way sequence of CBCS system looks like Paper-Unit-Sub Units-Credits.

Now the universities administrations have to play an important role for implementing CBCS in a uniform manner and it's a big challenge to prepare new syllabus in a define time. Some steps which is to be needed for implementation of CBCS system as follows:

1. Pre-decision on time distribution is much required and important thing for class room-work, field-work, laboratory-work, workshop practice and/or other type of curriculum related activities. In different subjects Distribution will be vary from one to another.
2. During a semester contact hours for teaching faculty and students will be decided before starting the course work.
3. Institutes needs to check their curriculum content what course they provides like Bachelor, Masters, M.Phil., Ph.D. etc. and check availability of sufficient faculty, labs or other infrastructure.

The Structure of CBCS

Primarily the CBCS system is divided into three tires of the structure where hardcore papers, optional papers, and foundation or soft skill papers to be studied by students. "It is a system of evaluation which offers maximum opportunities and avenues to the learner to learn core subjects with the provision of additional soft courses for the holistic their development (Hasan & Parvez, 2015, p.31)". In the course of papers, students get different credits according to his performance. Here are hardcore papers based on the core content of a subject which gives maximum information about central part of a subject. These papers are compulsory for completing the course of study and to get a degree in their respective discipline. Secondly optional or elective papers are divided in to two parts first one is generic elective and second one is open elective where generic elective papers given by parent department for his students to gain generic skills and open elective papers are given by every department for all other departments of the institution it may be

discipline oriented or unrelated discipline. Foundation or soft skill courses are for enhancing more knowledge among core area of the subject and through the value-based elective foundation course to improve extra skills which helps man-making education. All of these are credit-based courses and there are some non-credit courses which are satisfactory or unsatisfactory. In the final result, Non-credit courses are not included in CGPA/SGPA. On the other hand, some other elements are there which is the semester, credits, grades etc. "The CBCS emphasizes on continues evaluation with 40%weightage given to internal assessment comprise one test for 20 marks, one assignment for 10 marks and 10 marks (5 marks each) for active participation in class and overall conduct of the student in class (Kelkar & Ravishankar, 2014, p. 1229)."

Semester

Today scenario has been changed and now in higher education system our institution follows latest semester system at the place of old annual evaluation pattern and now in HEIs used semester is divided in to two parts in a year where one semester completed in July to December and the even semester or second part of the semester accomplish in January to June. In a semester system, 15-18 weeks time assigned to completing a semester period which is equal to 90 teaching days. Semester system reduces student's workload and helps to learn efficiently and easily into the parts. Moreover, Students have more chances of getting the high score in his examinations in semester system and they can prepare their self easily for the whole subject in less time.

Credits

'Credit' is a unit for measuring the coursework, concluding the number of hours and further instruction which is mandatory per week. One credit is denoting one hour of teaching/tutorial or two hours of practical work/field work per week. For completing a course or degree students has to get the credit through different academic activities like theoretic classes, practical work, performance in assignment or presentations and attendance in the classroom. Credits are transferable if any student wants to complete the course through the different institution in the same time he/she can transfer their credits in that particular institution.

Grading

Now the assessment pattern follows grading system which is set up by UGC and at the end of the year students gets final result with grades. Grading pattern given below:

| Grade Pattern | Stands for What | Grade Points |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| O | Outstanding | 10 |
| A+ | Excellent | 9 |
| A | Very Good | 8 |
| B+ | Good | 7 |
| B | Above average | 6 |
| C | Average | 5 |
| P | Pass | 4 |
| F | Fail | 0 |
| Ab | Absent | 0 |

Growth

In past years Indian Higher Education system has been moving from the ordinary annual system to semester system. Now in these days semester system also modified by UGC and implemented new reforms in the form of choice based credit system for higher education. For maintaining minimum standards and quality in higher education system UGC formulated some rules, regulations continuously and publishing guidelines on curriculum related aspects. So two or three years ago UGC & MHRD introduced curriculum reforms for higher education betterment or prepare skilled youth work force. Lots of the institutions have already introduced the choice based credit system for brining uniformity, quality, efficiency and excellence. Most of the Central and State universities follows CBCS based curriculum during session 2015-2016.

Basically CBCS system focusing on learner centric education in spite of conventional teacher centric teaching and provides a cafeteria approach for students. "Whatever you want to like to select any food item and get instantly, in the same manner the CBCS concept. So according to my opinion in globalization era CBCS is customer (learner) based choice system" (Nehru, 2016, p. 27-28). CBCS gives more flexibility for designing curriculum and assigning credits with effective approach Where students have freedom to choose between the given pools of papers and learns according to their pace and individual interest, it gives more flexibility to students. Mainly there are three types of course of papers core, elective and foundation or soft skill courses. Core papers is the most innermost or closed part of the studied subject which is mandatory for students to be studied, elective papers gives freedom for students to choose from given pool of optional papers which is to be discipline oriented or unrelated discipline, foundation course or soft skill course including some special skill oriented courses like software & hardware, foreign language etc.

Conclusion

In this paper, authors presented the reforms of higher education especially recently aspects of the curriculum in the form of CBCS system which is implemented by UGC on the recommendation of MHRD and Govt. of India. During this study, authors define CBCS as a cafeteria approach where students have the choice to choose between given options, for example in a college canteen the students have choices to eat between various items but in mess food, they don't have an option. Similarly, Students have options to study different types of courses between the given options with his savor. CBCS gives flexibility for the student to earn more credits than the required credit. It provides facility to transfer the credits between the two different institutions. It is more flexible than the previous one higher education system. In this study, authors found CBCS pattern has mainly three types of courses which is avail to be studied, the core courses, elective and foundation course. In this system, students have more choices as compare to the previous design curriculum system.

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