



## Choice Based Credit System: A Radical Change in Indian Education System

### KEYWORDS

Choice based credit system, higher education, autonomous etc..

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### ABSTRACT

*India inherited a system of higher education which was not only small but was also characterized by the prevalence of large intra/interregional imbalances. Determined efforts were made to build a network of universities, and their affiliated colleges which provided incredible outreach to country of vast diversities. Today, the era is of radical changes in education and academic field. The times are changing rapidly than even before. The upcoming generation is in the state of dilemma. One needs to find a system that matches students' scholastic needs as well as their personal aspirations. India needs multi-dimensional and broad-based quality education to maintain its leadership in the 21st century. Therefore, India should show the concern over the quality in education as the education in India is not competitive in terms of the quality and quantity. A system with the perfect blend of quality enhancement to stand in competitive market and flexibility to meet the students' requirement is the need of the hour. Choice based credit System(CBCS) can be a panacea in this case, if implemented systematically.*

### Introduction:

Higher education in India has undergone quite a lot of transformation over the years. After the Kothari Commission report in 1966, discussions on college autonomy started and a few colleges became autonomous since 1978 and a few of them have completed 25 years of such a freedom. Academic freedom, under autonomy, helped many colleges to innovate new curricula, design relevant courses, frame new syllabi and introduce new evaluation methods. But the required flexibility for the students to have a greater choice of courses appropriate to their interests, needs and long-term goals is not available even in autonomous colleges; rather a rigid and compartmentalized system is perpetuated.

Choice based credit system (CBCS), or a cafeteria like system is the solution for this type of transformation from the traditional teacher oriented education to a student-centered education. Taking responsibility for their own education in this way, students can benefit the most from all the available resources. Academic commissions and committees such as UGC, TANSCH and NAAC recommend CBCS for higher education. Though a few institutions claim to have introduced this system, in reality not much of freedom is given to the students. Everyone agrees that intellectual depth and breadth characterize higher education. But, in allowing the students to choose their favorite courses, certain questions arise. The rules regarding the number of students in each class and the number of hours per week for the students or for the teachers have not changed from the old affiliated system.

There is a strong resistance to change from every quarter of the academic world. Students are compelled to take two years of language course of their mother tongue. They are not encouraged to take courses according to their abilities and pace and there is no freedom for the first year student to take an advanced course or a third year student to take an introductory course. Students are compelled to be inside the classroom for the entire five hours a day schedule leaving no scope for independent study.

Why not a student earns a few credits from one college and transfer the credits to some other college? Why not

a student who is working on a part-time basis earns a few credits and stretches his studies to four or five years according to his convenience? Why is there a kind of compulsion to complete a degree programme in three years? Why is there no provision to change the college after earning a few credits? CBCS has the facility to transfer the credits from one institution to another provided there are provisions in the rules of the autonomous colleges and the universities to accept transfer of credits.

The academicians often talk about university and the industry collaborations. Why not a few credits earned in a related industry is considered within the curriculum? As creative and performing arts are becoming popular in campuses, credits can be thought of for such activities too. Though the students will choose courses of inter-disciplinary nature, the required courses for majoring in a subject will ensure depth. Professionalism and quality consciousness are the basis for every change. With faculty advising, CBCS can offer a very flexible and open system for a quality up gradation of higher education (G. STANLEY JEYASINGH, 2005).

### Conceptual Framework of CBCS: how will it work?

Higher Education has undergone quite a lot of transformation over the years. After the Kothari commission report in 1966, discussion on college autonomy started and few colleges become autonomous since 1978 and a few of them have completed 25 years of such a freedom. Academic freedom, under autonomy, helped many colleges to innovate new curricula, design relevant courses, frame new syllabi and introduce new evaluation methods. But the required flexibility for the students to have greater choices of courses appropriate to their interest, needs and long term goals is not available even in autonomous colleges; rather a rigid and compartmentalized system is perpetuated. The present system is characterized by too much rigidity and a few choices for students. Universities that are smaller, or run semester-based systems, are obviously more flexible. Even in large universities, however, it is necessary to introduce greater diversity and more flexibility in course structures. This would be the beginning of a transition to a course credit system, where degrees are granted on the basis of completing a requisite number of credits from dif-

ferent courses. Every student should be required to earn a minimum numbers of credit in his/her chosen discipline but should have the freedom to earn the rest from courses in other discipline but should have to freedom to earn the rest from courses in other discipline. It is essential to provide students with choice instead of keeping them captive. Though a few institutions claim to have introduced this system, in reality not much of freedom is given to students. Everyone agrees that intellectual depth and breadth characterized higher education. But, in allowing the student to choose their favorite courses, certain question arises. The rules regarding the number of students in each class and the number of hours per week for the students or for the teachers have not changed from the old affiliated system. There is a strong resistance to change from every quarter of the academic world. Students are not encouraged a take courses according to their abilities and pace and there is no freedom for the first year student to take an introductory course. Students are compelled to be inside the classroom for the entire five hours a day schedule leaving no scope for independent study.

Choice based credit system increase the work load of teaching faculty significantly. Wider the choice more are the demands on the education systems. Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) or a cafeteria like system is the solution for this type of transformation from the traditional teacher oriented education to a student –centered education. Taking responsibility for their own education in this way, students can benefit the most from all the available resources. Academics commissions and committees such as UGC, AND NAAC recommend CBCS, for higher education. For implementing the CBCS institutions of higher education need to review the following steps:

- Review of curricular contents (study paper, term papers, 'assignment', workshop-assignment, experiment, etc.) of certificate, diploma, undergraduate, postgraduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. Programmes.
- For the sake of clarity of faculty, students and examiners, all the curricular contents are specified, sub –divided into units and, if need be, into sub-units, which are subsequently assigned numerical values and termed 'credit'.
- Faculty of the concerned 'department' deliberates and decides on (a) core –credits, and (b) elective or optional credits for different levels of academics programmes.
- Departmental faculty evaluates and decides on the relative weight age of the core and elective credits.
- Decision on the "total" credits to be earned (or completed) by students undergoing certificate, diploma, undergraduate, postgraduate, M.Phil or PhD programmes.
- Generally, core credits would be unique to the programme, the earning core –credits would be essential for the completion of the programs and eventual certification.
- On the other hand, elective –credits are likely to overlap with other programmes or disciplines of study, (for example, languages, statics, computer application etc.)
- Students enrolled for a particular programme or course would be free to opt and earn elective-credits prescribed under the programme, or under other programmes within the department, faculty, and university or even outside recognized university/ institution of higher education.

CBCS will be operated on modular pattern based on module /units called "credits" wherein 'credit' defines the

quantum of contents/syllabus prescribed for a course/paper and determines the minimum number of teaching –learning hours required. The university adopting choice based credit system (CBCS) in all the programmes of the study permits student to:

- Learner learns at his own pace.
- Chose subjects from a wide range of elective courses offered by the institutions.
- Undergo additional/values added courses and acquire more than the required number of credits, depending upon the learner's aptitude.
- Adopt an interdisciplinary approach in learning.
- Inter college/university transfer of credits.
- Complete a part of programme in the parent institute and get enrolled in another institution for specialized courses.
- Enhance skill /employability by taking up project work, entrepreneurship and vocational training.
- Make best use of the expertise of faculty across the institution besides the particular department faculty.
- Acquire knowledge, skill and attitude of learning outcomes through participatory teaching and learning and continues evaluation process.
- A student enjoys an extra ordinary benefit that his/her evaluation would be in terms of grades, computed through a more scientific and a logical process of normalization which imbibes the advantages of relative weighting of the performance against evaluating in an absolute way.
- The great advantage is that the learning process is made continues and the evolution process is not only made continues but also made learner-centric
- And is designed to recognize the capability and talent of student.
- CBCS is a process of evolution of educational reforms that would yield the result in subsequent years and after a few cycles of its implementation.

In this system, three types of courses like hard-core, soft core and elective courses are included. Hard core papers are compulsory and fundamental in requirement for a subject of study. These papers cannot be substituted by any other papers. Soft –core papers are slightly advanced papers. Every department of the university will furnish a detailed list of need –based soft core papers and student can chose one/two or many of them depending upon the courses structure. The soft core paper provides enough scope for advanced learning in subject with in outside the department. Elective papers are the concept papers are offered by each department. These papers are general in nature and students have the freedom to choose any of them.

The CBSC imminently fits in to the emerging socio-economic milieu, and could effectively respond to the educational and occupational aspirations of the upcoming generation. In view of this, institution of higher education in India would be well to invest thought and resources into introducing CBCS. Aided by modern communication and information technology, CBCS has a high probability to be operationalized efficiently and effectively –elevating students, institutions and higher system in the country to newer heights, if implemented systematically.

#### **What higher educational Institutes need to do?**

- Review curricular contents (Study papers, term papers, assignments, workshop-assignments, and experiments) of certificate, diploma, undergraduate, post graduate,

M.Phil and PhD programmes of not only of their universities but other universities too.

- Faculty of the concerned department should deliberate and decide the F-Foundation courses: development of communication skills, Development of English language , ICT based training , personality Development ; C-Core courses; Compulsory courses and discipline wise; HC- hard courses: Basic discipline specialized course and project work; SC-soft courses: pool of allied courses (mostly intra –disciplinary); Elective course- pool of courses either inter-disciplinary or trans- disciplinary subjects and credits for different levels of academic programmes.
- For the sake of clarity of faculty , students and examiners , all the curricular contents should be specified ,and subdivided into units and subunits , which are subsequently assigned numerical values and termed 'credits'.
- Departmental faculty should evaluate and decide on the relative weightage of credits to each of the courses.
- Decision on the 'total' credits to be earned by students undergoing certificate, diploma, undergraduate, post graduate, M.Phil or PhD Programmes.

#### Challenges:

Some of the major challenges in implementing CBCS are as follows

- Uniformity in the curriculum across the Higher Education Institutions but without losing the autonomy of higher educational Institutions.
- Uniformity in academic calendar of the universities.
- Systemic reforms in examination system in terms of pattern, mode, duration, conduct.
- Trained Human resources.
- Attitudinal changes among the faculties.
- High amount of funding from Govt. Of India.
- Difficult in working out the modalities of implementing CBCS as many of the universities by other state run universities are facing human resource crunch.

#### Conclusion:

While the CBC system has been operative in several countries since quite some time now, in India very few universities have introduced this system so far. Presently, most of the universities and colleges in India are practicing the annual and semester systems of examination. The UGC has asked the varsities to introduce the choice-Based credit system(CBCS) which will facilitate inter- institution transfer of students after completion of a semester .The CBCS will facilitate part completion of an academic programme in

the institution of enrolment and part –completion in a specialized institution. But to implement the CBCS, institution of higher education need to review curricular contents, terms paper and assignments of various programmes. It is possible only when we have innumerable approaches to learning resources, such as e-contents through open source, learning modules, sharing of credits intra- faculty, and inter-faculties, intra –university and inter-university. Induction of choice based credit system is challenging, but highly desirable.

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