Research Paper Management

A Paradigm shift from Semester system to Annual System.

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ABSTRACT

University Grant Commission laid out the action plan in XI plan of 2008 and stressed the need for Academic & Administration Reforms to be addressed by the heads of central state & deemed universities and institutions of higher learning in the country. Accordingly a committee on Academic & Administrative Reforms was formed and on the recommendations of this committee an action plan was developed. Till date educational institutions have been following the format of Academic Session spread over 10-12 months and this format had many plus points and a few drawbacks as well. It has been observed that the Indian system of education, of late, has followed Western European and North American system based on semester system. Initially this semester system was very much appreciated by the higher educational institutes of (HEI's) of India but now after its failure in proper implementation, there have been deterioration in providing the legitimate benefits to all the stakeholders of the semester system. Therefore it has been now felt by the students, the teachers and the members of Managements of HEI's, that annual system of education was much more beneficial and hence there is likelihood of reverting back to annual system of education in the near future. Keeping in viewing this paradigm shift from the semester system of education to our old well established annual system of education, an humble attempt is being made to describe the well deserved benefits of annual system of education over the semester system.

KEYWORDS Annual system, Semester system, Academic & Admin reforms, Stakeholders, HEI's, Paradigm shift.

1. INTRODUCTION

The semester system is an education system whose primary concern in learning instead of teaching. The approach in this system is learner-centered and not of teacher centered. The motto of semester system is to put emphasis on continuous compressive and in depth learning aiming at capacity building of students by developing required Knowledge, Skills & Attitude (KSA). Though there are umpteen numbers of arguments in favour of semester system amongst Educationists over the annual system, yet to materialise the scheme effectively in an environment of poor physical & information sources remains a challenging especially in case of Indian Higher Education System.

Though semester system enlarges curricular space, encourage & supports accelerated learning opportunities for all concerned yet the teachers and students are not fully satisfied with the implementation of semester system because it has not given the required benefits to all stake-holders and hence the validity of semester system has lost it shine these days.

Ali (2001) cited Kotler and Keller, (2006) which stated that for the effectiveness of system, satisfaction is necessary Students' satisfaction is highly imperative because if they are fully satisfied with the facilities provided by the universities their ultimate achievement will automatically be excellent.

Douglass, Douglass and Barry (2006) stated that universities should provide such facilities to their students' that satisfy them completely.

Aslam, H.D., Younis, A., Sheik, A.A. Maher, M., & Abbasi, Z.A. (2012) in their study revealed that semester system is perceived to be most effective way of effective way of effectual learning. They revealed that many factors can efficiently enhance student's satisfaction but teachers' efforts and behaviour are the main factors which are directly related to the students' satisfaction.

Aslam H.D., Younis, A., Sheik, A.A. Maher, M., & Abbasi, Z.A. (2012) cited Demaris & Kritsonis (2008) stated that students who perceive themselves compatible to the environment of the institute acquire more skills and get involved by putting up efforts and participation in class confidently. Many universities in India have embraced the semester system at undergraduate level responding to the UGC's call towards universities taking necessary steps to introduce semester system at undergraduate level vide its Circular No. D.O.No. F.1-2/2008 (XI Plan) dated 31 Jan 2008. Therefore, it becomes important to know how much the system has become effective as envisaged by students and teachers towards various domains of education system especially with reference to semester system.

2. RATIONALE BEHIND SEMESTER SYSTEM

The rationale for adopting the semester system rather than remaining with the annual system stems from the desire shared unequivocally by all stakeholders to impart enhanced value to our students. The reasons for the above rationale are:

(a) Continuous learning & Assessment.
(b) Inter-Displinarity is encouraged.
(c) Global movement of students.
(d) Harmonious and best correlation between Under Graduate & Post Graduate courses.
(e) In conformity with Academic Practice & Procedures.

3. CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESSFUL/ EFFECTIVE SEMESTER

The Effective and successful implementation of semester system depends upon the number of conditions as stated by Jadoon, Jabeen & Zaba (2012). Some of these are listed below:

- ✓ Well designed curriculum.
- ✓ Course Coverage within stipulated time.
- ✓ Regularity of classes.
- ✓ Timely and Constructive feedback of the teachers by students.
- ✓ Accessibility of Teachers to students outside the class.
- ✓ Availability of Information Resources to students.
- ✓ Highest level of Secrecy and Confidentiality in examination.
- ✓ Transparency in Evaluation and Grading System.
- ✓ Timely Declaration of results.

The stakeholders such as the students, the academicians and

the college managements admit that semester system has its own merits but at the same time feel that it could have been designed better to accommodate non-academic activities & hence would have enhanced deeper learning. Though semester system has helped students to prepare better for their exams but in-depth knowledge is missing.

In annual system there is a complete knowledge about the subject. There is no connection between the semesters unlike in an annual system. In the semester system, students tend to read what appears on for the exams. In fact all students are aiming only to pass their examinations and do not go for in depth knowledge due to lack of time in the semester system.

4. DRAWBACKS OF PRESENT SEMESTER SYSTEM

- Enhanced Evaluation load for in which teachers are forcefully spared for evaluation and hence study of students suffers to very large extent.
- Course coverage either not covered or hurriedly covered even sometimes a few chapters are not even taught.
- Practical training especially in Engineering disciplines in case of semester system is not possible due to lack of time.
- Timely result announcement remains a distant dream in semester system.
- Teachers have no time for personal/professional improvement with respect to attending Seminars /Workshops/Faculty development programmes /Research projects. At times faculty do not set time to get proper leave for their personal family works.
- To many Extra – curricular activities and quality is missing and the aim is lost.
- Academic Calendar allots insufficient working days ie. 90 days in each semester (180 days). No justice can be done in 3 months of time as stipulated. UGC also recommends 50-52 hours/ course or semester. Out of 90 day keeping practical days, Mid Semester Exams, preparation holidays and extra-curricular activities leave the teachers with only 13 weeks i.e. 60-65 days which is good enough to do justice with the students.
- Quality family life is missing in case of teachers and in turns it leads to anxiety and frustration among faculty members.
- Lack of recovery due to limited time for the students .Students do not get tine for preparing those subjects in which they clear their supplementary exams. There is no chance of taking up extra coaching classed for the weak students at all.

5. SOME OF THE REASONS FOR PARADIGM SHIFT FROM SEMESTER SYSTEM BACK TO ANNUAL SYSTEM

- In Annual system adequate time is available for teachers to impart in depth knowledge of the subjects to the students.
- Fair & timely evaluation of exams
- Ample time for extra-curricular activities which leads to all round growth. Moreover, the quality of such activities is more important than quantity.
- Sports activities could be well organized in annual system leading to inculcate team spirits among members of their team.
- Availability of satisfied teachers who can take extra initiative to teach student in truthful manner.
- Availability of ample time for Teachers for their personal growth by participating in research project works/ seminar/ presentation and attending faculty development programmes.
- Viability of undertaking live minor projects for the student with respect to domain knowledge.

6. FINE TUNING OF ANNUAL SYSTEM

- Modification of Internal Assessment scheme –There should not be any mid term examinations and it must be replaced by Assignments/ Presentations/ Small scale live projects and Rigorous practical trainings in Engineering subjects.
- Blue print for Implementation: The time lines are required to be changed at the earliest.
- Teacher student ratio – 1:18/or as suggested must be followed.
- Proper Distribution of Administrative load amongst teaching and non–teaching and administrative staff of the college. The improper distribution always creates a rift between teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Salary compensation must be adequate to the working staff keeping in view the increased cost of living. Motivated teaching faculty would like to put in their best to teach students to the best of ability otherwise only lip service would be done.
- More teeth to Monitoring Agencies – All punitive actions to be put into practice for defaulters of higher education system.

7. CONCLUSION:

There have been views of experts who advocate the reversal of paradigm shift from semester system to annual system. The true education can only be achieved in annual system according to PS Manisunadaram, the first vice chancellor of Bhartidasan University. He stated that the concept of semester system has been borrowed from American University and it has been followed in India in the last decade or so. In American system, the system is workable because the evaluation process is entirely an internal affair but when it comes to implementing the same system in affiliating universities, the load on students and teaches becomes enormous. It is much better for the universities to revert to annual system by restructuring the courses and doing justice to the various extra co-curricular activities.

There are no reasons why universities should not get back to the annual system of education since it would expand the duration of teaching hours in learning transactions. It is possible to devote ample time for teaching in depth knowledge of the subjects besides giving ample time to participate in extra co-curricular activates which would fine-time the overall personality development of students. The satisfied teaches would be in right frame of mind to guide & mentor the students in a well organized time frame and have achieve true education indeed!

It is therefore the need of the hour to do introspection of the present system of semester system of education and if possible revert back to the age old well designed of course with some modification to the annual system be articulated for the betterment of all the stakeholders of the education system. This would be a true gift of education to the younger generation of today youth.

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