

An Attempt to Study on Choice Based Credit System in Advanced Education Programmes at Bharathiar University, Coimbatore

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Abstract

The (CBCS) system is an assessment method used in collegiate Education Programmes such as under graduation and post graduation courses of advanced Education in India. The UGC introduced the CBCS in India in 2015. This system aims to improve the academic learning among students and teachers. Further, it opens the ways and means for students to move across institutions inside India. It is a modern grading system which replaces conventional marks system and approach. The present method of teaching learning process provides better platforms to evaluate courses and choose an option from a list of elective, core and soft skill courses. To be precise, it is a student-centric approach in learning of higher education. The ancient evaluation system of university education in India did not pave the way to offer much scope to the learners, because the learning contents were predefined, redundant and not upgraded as per the modern pedagogical trends. These traditional isolated courses lacked contemporary appropriateness that made a way to introduce the current evaluation method all over India.

Introduction

The Higher Education Commission introduced the present evaluation system across India in 2015. This system was brought into effect to offer learners with more compatibility in advanced education. During 2003-04 the Higher Collegiate Commission initiated the CBCS to ensure flexibility with academic norms in India. Furthermore, in 2013 the same system was implemented for undergraduate courses in Arts, Science and Commerce. And in 2015, this was further expanded to postgraduate courses. The core idea of this execution was to bring compliance to higher education. Hence, a new version of CBCS was also enforced in 2016 in accordance with the UGC guidelines. The former Vice Chancellor, Pro. Janak Pandey a renowned scholar and administrator of Bihar Central University

was known as the founder of modern assessment method and was instrumental in establishing this system.

This system was actively executed by the University Grants Commission to create an opportunity for students to opt courses according to their interests and job requirements. It considered that this system allows students move across institutions anywhere in India. It is also believed that the recruiters and job providers assess the performance of the students. Hence, it paves ways for candidates to pursue courses in their chosen domains based on their professional desire. The key features of CBCS includes choice of courses, credit-based assessment system, grading system, adjustability, transfer of credits, modular approach, continuous assessment and global compatibility.

Objectives

- To explore the current evaluation method with the help of high profile experts of Bharathiar University faculties at Coimbatore.
- To precisely understand the CBCS practices in Bharathiar University.
- To comprehend more about (CBCS) system in detail with intense analysis.
- To study its functions practically, in post graduation programmes.
- To examine the pros and cons of the system by experts' expertise.

Review of Literature

Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) – An analytical study by Santu Biswas (2018) in this study he suggests the innovative and creative methods of imparting quality education to the present generation. He states that there should not be any lack in enhancing interdisciplinary perspectives. He also wishes that there should be no discrepancies when providing multidisciplinary subjects. Besides, there must be a need for value added courses. The remedy for any such problem is rectified by offering an option for the students to learn ample of subjects to focus on various domains. Thus, the Higher Education Commission has paved the ways to add creativity and improvement in the course curriculum.

Methodology

The current study adopts structured Interview Method to examine the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) and its practices in post-graduation programmes. In order to carry out the investigation, the researcher primarily studied and learned about it, through online, e-content and digital sources. The scholar had unstructured and structured interviews with Bharathiar University faculties of various departments. Based on the discussions and interactions held with them, the following are the observations and comments received to enrich, standardize, and formulate the methodology of the study. The investigation was further carried out with the structured questionnaire, distributing it to the experts. The collected data was keenly scrutinized and the views of the resources by Teaching Professionals have been systematically detailed in the study.

Limitations

- The present work comprises of structured interviews.
- The investigation is conducted within the limits of Bharathir University Humanities Departments.
- The experts' views are drawn only from Bharathiar University faculties.
- The investigation is carried out on par with post graduation programmes.
- The data samples taken for the study is four and the questionnaire comprises of 13 descriptive answer type questions.

- The findings are declared based on the data derived from experienced university teaching professionals and the interview conducted.

Research Questions Applied for the Study

1. How far or to what extent CBCS allows students to have choice of courses?
2. Are the actual key features of CBCS in practical process in higher education? If yes/No give details.
3. How does CBCS encourage inter-disciplinary and intra-disciplinary learning of students in post graduation?
4. What are the courses made compulsory under CBCS system?
5. What are the elective courses permitted under CBCS system?
6. What is the difference between conventional evaluation system and choice based credit system?
7. How are the credits assigned to the courses under CBCS?
8. What are the merits of the CBCS system?
9. What are the demerits of the CBCS system?
10. What are the processes/ steps followed in the grading system of CBCS?
11. The focus/ importance of this system relies on what? Core? Elective? Foundational courses? Or skill-based learning? (Detailed explanation required).
12. Does the CBCS system have impact on faculty members? If yes how? If not why?
13. Does this system have impacts in Teaching Methodologies?

Experts' Views on the Choice Based Credit System based on the Data Collected:

- Dr. P. Nagaraj , Professor and Head, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu.
- Dr. M. Ashitha Varghese, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu.
- Dr. Parthasarathy, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Technology, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu.
- Dr. T. Enokjoel, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Technology, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu.

The views of the experts are as follows:

The experts say that though CBCS allows students to have choice of courses, the actual extent of its execution varies from institutions. The learners have limited choices in selecting the core, as it is mandatorily prescribed in the syllabus. They have a good array of electives and other skill-based enhancement courses. And it is said that only around 20% of the core subjects or courses allowed as choice-based within the discipline. Further, they register that only less than 10% of subjects are really full-choice-based at multi-disciplinary level. Of course, CBCS is in practice in higher education, but it is subjected to proper execution.

There is considerable flexibility in choosing the supportive or extra departmental courses. And the elective subjects are allowed at the average of 20% within the same domain. It indeed encourages adaptability to pursue their interests in diverse disciplines in both at inter and intra levels that enables learners to study the subjects in a more systematic way.

Core-subjects like theory and practical are compulsory under present Choice Based Credit System. Moreover, Elective subjects are also made mandatory at certain level and the University Grants Commission (UGC) insists the incorporation of Communication Studies, Gender Studies, Environmental Studies, and Human Rights as compulsory topics.

Health Humanities, E-learning, Linguistics, Cognitive Studies, Diasporic Studies are generally the electives offered as disciplinary electives for Language and Literature students. And according to the curriculum designed by the departments are permitted for choosing the electives.

The modern evaluation method primarily follows a structure of continuous assessments throughout the semester. This includes, Seminars, Assignments, Presentations and other Learner-Centered Activities and this awards grades. In addition, the CBCS uses both Internal and External Assessment for learners' assessment. On the contrary, the Conventional Evaluation System was functioning solely based on Final exams. The Traditional Evaluation used to award marks.

Credits are assigned through Continuous Internal Assessment and End Semester Assessment (ESA). Continuous Internal Assessment is done by course teacher, while End Semester Assessment is done by an expert chosen by the university. Credit or Grade is assigned by accumulating both. The credits are distributed for the combination of Core, Electives, and Skill Enhancement papers. Typically 4 credits are allocated for the core paper, 3 credits for the Electives and 2 credits for other skill set and additional self study papers respectively.

As far as the merits of the system are taken into consideration, it primarily provides integrated, customized learning opportunities. It can be undoubtedly stated as student-centric as students being one of the significant stakeholders of education. Therefore, students can choose 10% credits by their own at intra or multi-disciplinary level and 20% at inter-disciplinary level. The teacher will design the curriculum.

Similarly, the drawback of CBCS system is an overflow of choices can sometimes lead to cluttered learning and dilution. The higher education learners significantly need deeper engagement with subject matter. It can also pave way for numerous difficulties in the implementation of courses without time table confrontation. A directionless student finds this as a confusing system and recognition of the credits awarded by another institution is very subjective.

In the grading system each course is designed with number of credits attributed through letter grades like (A+, A, B, C) further, corresponding to grades. The total credits considering the pass or fail is typically above 6. Continuous Internal Assessment (CIA) is applied during the course of the study. The end semester assessment is utilized at the end of the course of study, this process is very vital in grading.

The focus of Choice Based Credit System mainly relies on choices of learners. Core courses though are diminished boundaries and demarcations, the interchange of knowledge is crucial for the learners' success and sustainability. Hence, the kind of 'Interdisciplinary' the system brings out in the learning is to be appreciated. The importance of this system purely relies on the core subjects, as more than 60% of the subjects are mandatory.

The system does have severe influence on faculty development. The faculty members have to catch up with the pace of learners and courses and they have to be lifelong learners. The old lesson plans and teaching aids would no longer serve the purpose. It also gives definite compulsion on teachers to prepare for the range of courses. On the whole, the system encourages Continuous Internal Assessment (CIA) and it allows designing curriculum.

When Teaching Methods are concerned, the present system comprises of Continuous Internal Assessment (CIA) that helps carry out Assignments, Seminars and Collaborative methods effectively. So, the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) indeed, promotes a real paradigm shift from the traditional lectured methods to student integrated learning methods with the diverse range of courses; diverse teaching methods would also have to be tapped into the teaching and learning.

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