

## A Study on Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in Higher Education

**Dr. Ravindra Kumar. A. Bhandari**

Assistant professor and  
Head Department of Sociology GFGC  
Farahatabad TQ / District Kalburgi-585308

### Abstract:

*Education in general and higher education in particular play a very vital and critical role in the development and evolution of societies. Universities world wide educate young minds and create responsive and vibrant citizens by creating new innovative ideas. This in turn enables the young youths to participate in the present global job market. India with a huge youth population needs to compete at international level to meet the standards of developed countries with respect to higher education. The Five Plans of India, University Grants Commission (UGC), the National Knowledge Commission report 2008-2009 on higher education and Yashpal Committee Report 2009 had set up a committee to work out an Action Plan to give effect to the academic reforms in the country. Accordingly the University Grants Commission (UGC) along with Association of Indian Universities (AIU) in its 11<sup>th</sup> plan March 2009 stressed on the need for adopting Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in Higher Education. The present article therefore tries to focus on the purpose and implementation of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in Indian Universities and its functioning at various Universities across the Country.*

**Key words:** Higher Education, Choice Based Credit System (CBCS).

### Introduction:

**E**ducation system India is one of the world's largest systems which has been studied and reflected in many academic papers, renowned books and journals. The demographic trend, the GDP annual growth of 8% over the last decade and the demand higher education at present requires an innovative change and transformation in the coming years. Education in general and higher education in particular play a very vital and critical role in the development and evolution of societies. Universities educate young minds and create responsive and vibrant citizens by creating new innovative ideas. This in turn enables the young youths to participate in the present global job market. University Grants Commission (UGC) and the National Knowledge Commission had set up a committee to work out an Action Plan to give effect to the academic reforms in the arena of admission policy, procedure and methods, examination reforms including continuous internal assessment, introduction of credit-based courses, semester system, inter-institutional mobility

of students, credit accumulation and credit transfer. UGC asked the Central and State universities to introduce reforms in their academic and administrative departments. Of various stages of academic reforms Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) is an important effort to meet the challenges of the knowledge based global society.

### Objectives

1. To understand the role of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in higher education system in India.
2. To analyze and evaluate the implementation of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in higher education system in India.

### Rationale of the study

The current higher education curriculum though has been undergoing a tremendous change over a period of time it is observed that it does not impart the necessary skills that would make the students employable adequately. Interdisciplinary approach had very little scope and the students were taught but where not made to learn to think and analyze on their own. Even

the evaluation methods are tradition bound and are based on recalling memory. As a result empowering students to think independently and to get equipped with necessary both hard and soft skills is the need of the hour. Therefore the ultimate goal is to bring reforms in higher education so that students develop thinking as well as analytical ability. This has been the main aim of the institutions concerned with higher education in India which gradually introduced Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) along with Curricula to facilitate student centric learning, Examination and Administrative Reforms.

### Methodology

The present paper is a micro level descriptive study based on secondary data collected from the published and unpublished records, reports and contributions of several institutions, organizations and individuals. Specifically, the secondary sources include UGC reports, National Knowledge Commission reports, Planning Commission reports, Ministry of Human Resource Development reports, journals, books and websites. As these secondary sources have obvious limitations of sampling and dimensional studies, the present study could only be a micro analysis of reforms in higher education system in the country as a whole through the introduction of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS).

### Analyses and discussion

Higher education in India is undergoing considerable change and this transformation is being driven by economic and demographic change. It is predicted that by 2020, India will be the world's third largest economy. Presently over 50% of India's population is under 25 years old. Studies also have revealed that there will be rapid growth in the size of middle classes. The higher education institutions will have to face different challenges with respect to quality of teaching and learning, the supply-demand gap of unequal growth and access to opportunity and lack of research and innovations.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education convened a meeting of all State Education Ministers looking after Higher/Technical Education, on 6th January 2015, to discuss adoption of the Credit Framework for Skills and the Choice Based Credit System in Colleges and State Public Universities.

Smt Smriti Zubin Irani Union Minister of Human Resource Development chaired the meeting along with Ministers of State Human Resource Development, Shri Upendra Kushwaha and Prof. (Dr.) Ram Shankar Katheri. Meeting was followed by a two day national consultation of Ministers from all the States to endorse the Credit Framework for Skills and the new Choice Based Credit System.

### What is Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)?

**Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)** is a flexible system of learning wherein the quantum of content/syllabus is prescribed for a course in terms of credits which specifies the number of hours of instruction required under each credit. According to the report of action plan, CBCS has several unique features like; Enhanced learning opportunities, ability to match students' scholastic needs and aspirations, inter-institution transferability of students (following the completion of a semester), part-completion of an academic programme in the institution of enrolment and part-completion in a specialised (and recognised) institution, improvement in educational quality and excellence, flexibility for working students to complete the programme over an extended period of time, standardisation and comparability of educational programmes across the country.

**Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)** is also said to be "cafeteria" type of approach in which the students can-1. Take courses of their choice, 2. Learn according to their speed, 3. Undergo additional courses, 4. Acquire more than the required credits, and 5. Adopt an interdisciplinary approach to learning. The basic elements of CBCS is to introduce the following-

**Semester system-** The examination at the end of a year or two years puts a greater demand on memory recall and the examination questions in such an examination would not have a comprehensive coverage of topics studied. Shorter duration terms like 6 months seems to be more suited as they will have relatively less demand for memory recall, questions can cover topics more comprehensively and it is easier to ensure cohesive learning experience and academic momentum for shorter terms.

**Credit system-** Credit defines the quantum of content/syllabus prescribed for the course. It may be a unit prescribed for a course and is determined by the number of hours of instruction required per week.

Thus, in each course credits will be assigned on the basis of the no. of hours required per week for lectures/tutorials/lab work/field work to complete the course in a single semester.

**Credit transfer-** Transfer credit, credit transfer, or advanced standing are the terms used by colleges and universities for the procedure of granting credit to a student for educational experiences or courses undertaken at another institution.

**Comprehensive continuous assessment-** Continuous and Comprehensive assessment is an integral part of CBCS. A continuous assessment system in semester system (also known as internal assessment/comprehensive assessment) is spread through the duration of course and is done by the teacher teaching the course. The assessment is done through various means including: Written tests, MCQ based quizzes, Presentations, Projects Field visits, Seminars, Group discussions/activities etc

**Grading-** Grading constitutes the core of CBCS, as it tries to reduce the subjective element in Assessment/evaluation and there by prevents any disadvantage to the student. Grade is an index of the performance of a student in a particular course. It is the transformation of scaled marks secured by a student in a course. Grade point is the weight age allotted to each grade depending on the range of marks awarded in a course.

**The main objectives of CBCS are:**

- To provide broad based education
- To provide students with greater flexibility in choice of courses
- To provide students multi-disciplinary curriculum
- To enable students to choose courses at basic/advanced level/inter-disciplinary
- To enable students to acquire job oriented skills
- To enable students to progress at their own pace
- To enable highly motivated students gain extra credits and
- To Bridge the gap between professional and social exposure to provide a holistic education.

Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in the Process of Learning is considered important because it is said to enable a learner to pursue any area of knowledge domain depending upon his / her interest. It is also said that it would widen the horizon of learner’s intellectual insight and enable broad-based learner’s profile across areas of knowledge. It is **learning by earning Credits** that allows the transfer of credit for students to move from one branch to another. This system allows interdisciplinary courses, courses across departments and institutions. Some of the terms used in the choice based new system includes the term

**Programme** used for a fixed educational programme instead of “Degree”.

**Course** is a component of programme, i.e. in the new system; papers will be referred to as courses. Each course is identified by a unique course code. Courses in a programme will be of three kinds: Core, Elective and Foundation.

**Credit** defines the quantum of content/syllabus prescribed for the course.

**Grade** is an index to indicate the performance of a student in a particular course.

**Core Course** should compulsorily be studied by a candidate as a core requirement to complete the requirement of a degree in a said discipline of study. A course may be a soft core if there is a choice or an option for the candidate to choose from a pool of courses from the sister/allied disciplines which supports the main discipline. It may be called “Core Elective” or “Core Allied”.

**Elective course** is a course which can be chosen from a pool of papers. It may be: Supportive to the discipline of study, providing an expended scope, Enabling an exposure to some other discipline/domain and Nurturing candidate’s proficiency/skill. An elective may be “Generic Elective” focusing on those courses which add generic proficiency to the students. An elective be “Discipline centric” elective. It may be called “Subject Elective.” An elective paper may be chosen from an unrelated discipline. It may be called an “Open Elective.”

**The Foundation Courses** will be of two kinds: Compulsory Foundation and Elective foundation. “Compulsory Foundation” courses are the courses

based upon the content that leads to Knowledge enhancement. They are mandatory for all disciplines. "Elective Foundation" courses are value based, and are aimed at man making education.

There are both **advantages as well as disadvantages** in Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). The advantages of CBCS is that it Represents a much-required shift in focus from teacher-centric to learner-centric, it also affords more flexibility to the learners allowing them to choose inter-disciplinary courses, change majors, programmes, Helps to record course work and to document learner workload realistically since all activities are taken into account and respects 'Learner Autonomy' by allowing learners to choose according to their own learning needs, interests and aptitudes. The disadvantage of CBCS is that the huge student strength poses a problem of estimating exact marks. The other limitations are the workload of the teachers fluctuates in very semester. For the successful implementation of this method we need proper and very good infrastructure.

### Conclusion

The UGC has always initiated measures to bring efficiency and excellence in the Higher Education System of India and CBCS is one among them. The Prime Minister, Dr. Man Mohan Singh, clearly spelt out the challenges and directions for our future as a knowledge economy while launching the Knowledge Commission in year 2005. He said "At the bottom of the knowledge pyramid, the challenge is one of improving access to primary education. At the top of the pyramid, there is need to make our institutions of higher education and research world class The time has come for India to embark on a second wave of nation building. Denied this, the youth will become a social and economic liability. The implementation CBCS is already in the run both at UG as well as PG level to bring such changes at higher education level. But there is shortage of infrastructural facilities at one hand and on the other the project-based activities, case studies, practical class, seminars, guest lectures and host of other things is taking tale of both the teachers as well as students. The uneven ratio between the teacher and student is another big hurdle. There is lot of confusion for both student and teachers regarding

interdisciplinary study, choice of credits, what combination works best, provision for student mobility across institutions and universities. It might be too early to predict that the CBCS system may not be successful provided a relevant system for proper assessment of the overall performance of students, teachers as well as the institutions with uniform single grading system needs to be followed through out the country.

### References

1. National Knowledge Commission, Report to the Nation (2006), New Delhi (2007). National Knowledge Commission
2. Agarwal P. (2006). Higher Education in India: The Need for Change, ICRIER Working Paper, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, 180.
3. Joshi K.M. (2010). Indigenous children of India: enrolment, gender parity and drop-out in school education, International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 30, 9/10, 545–558.
4. MHRD, Statistics of Higher and Technical Education: 2009–10 (2011). New Delhi: Bureau of Planning, Monitoring and Statistics,
5. Stella A. (2002). External Quality Assurance in Indian Higher Education: case study of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council. Paris: International Institute for Education Planning, UNESCO.
6. Tilak, J.B.G. (1997). The Dilemma for Reforms in Financing Higher Education, International association of Universities, Elsevier Science Ltd, 10(1).
7. Government of India, University Grants Commission (2012). Higher education in India at a glance.
8. Government of India Planning Commission (2012). Twelfth five year plan (2012-17): social sectors. Volume III