ISBN: 978-93-84663-35-3

आज़ादी का अमृत महोत्सव

Book of
National Seminar on
"NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY – 2020: AND IT'S IMPLEMENTATION"

10th & 11th, February 2023

Sponsored by

BOD, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune



New National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)



Organized by

Pune District Education Association's

Annasaheb Waghire Arts, Science and Commerce College, Otur

Tal. Junnar, Dist. Pune, Maharashtra – 412409, India

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ISBN: 978-93-84663-35-3

Choice-Based Credit System:An Opportunity-Based Framework

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Abstract: Higher education plays a vital role in the personal development of a human being as well as nation. The latest advancement in the field of education has made everyone alert to acquire knowledge and skills to meet the challenges. UGC has taken commendable steps to make the necessary changes in higher education by recommending new norms for colleges, institutions, and universities. The role of UGC has enabled us to adopt the New Educational Police 2020 and its expected standards. Choice-based credit system also has emerged as a need of the present times. In India, UGC has made the choice-based credit system mandatory for all educational institutions providing higher education. It has its benchmarks to be followed. This system has improved the standards of education by making new avenues available for learners.

Introduction: The system of Higher Education in India is becoming more flexible, challenging, and useful by following global standards to maintain the quality of education. The UGC has recommended CBCS for higher education in India. It is a highly adoptable and learner-centred system. This system has its mechanism. The colleges, institutions, and universities have started implementing this system by changing their syllabus and by adopting the mechanism for the effective implementation of the choice-based credit system. The semester system comes into existence as the result of the choice-based mechanism because it facilitates vertical and horizontal learning mobility.The semester system is the ideal system for the effective implementation of the choice based credit system. Therefore, colleges, institutions and universities are switching from traditional annual system to more advanced and useful semester system to make the teaching and learning process more effective and useful.

Objectives of the choice-based Credit system

This system comes into existence with the objective to provide complete package of education from undergraduate to post graduate levels.It aims to improve the standard of education by providing learning opportunities for the students.It provides flexible approach for the students by allowing them to select the course of their choice and interest. It helps them them to master their particular field at the same time allows them to study and enhance the knowledge of multi disciplines. It enables them to acquire job oriented skills by enhancing their ability through course options available to them. The students get credits for completing and learning new courses provided for them. This system prepares individual to bridge the social and professional divide while maintaining a high standard of education.

CBCS: A System of Systems

The choice-based credit system is itself a system that follows certain systems for better results. It is a choice-based system. The students get the choice to select the area of their interest. Students get access to various courses such as foundation courses, elective courses, discipline-specific courses, and ability enhancement courses. The various course options are made available for the students. Some courses are compulsory whereas some are optional. The choice-based system follows its own evaluation pattern for grading and credit. This system follows the following gradation pattern recommended by UGC:

Letter Grade	Grade Point
O (Outstanding)	10
A+(Excellent)	09
A (Very Good)	08
B+(Good)	07
B (Above Average)	06
C (Average)	05
P (Pass)	04
F (Fail)	0
Ab (Absent)	0

Features of Choice-based System

This system is followed by all the colleges and institutions across the county and follows the uniformity. The same evaluative pattern of 10 grade points is followed everywhere to maintain its uniqueness. This system develops students' performance and knowledge. Moreover, it tries to prepare the students to meet global challenges through its ideal pattern and by providing need-based skills. This system provides opportunities for the learners to excel in different fields of their choice.

The choice-based credit system has made the higher education system more dynamic, effective and globally acceptable as it follows international parameters. It is a completely different system than the conventional system. CBCS evolved as a reaction to emerging new educational challenges .It follows a semester structure and attempts to assess students' performance using internationally recognized standards. It allows students to participate and study in a variety of fields in addition to their major studies. The core subjects help the students to master their specific fields. Simultaneously, the elective option provides more opportunities to develop soft skills.

It is a difficult and critical responsibility for Indian universities and colleges to implement CBCS in their local areas by making particular changes to their syllabus and curriculum. This credit system based on choice has many advantages and few disadvantages. It is difficult to evaluate students using a grading system. This semester method is used to regularly evaluate students. It enables students to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses. Because of its flexibility, as new courses and skill-based learning take place in colleges that employ a choice-based credit system, this system becomes more engaging and effective for students to face future challenges. Students can choose from a variety of optional options that will assist them to learn a specific domain.

Colleges and institutions evaluate students' performance. The UGC standards are observed. Internal marks or grades are assigned to students for assignments, project reports, orals, study tours, surveys, industrial visits, and other activities such as research, NSS, NCC, and other college or university activities. The university also conducts examinations semester-wise. This system keeps students engaged throughout the year. Furthermore, credit is given to new educational platforms so that students can learn how to use them. As a result, students who take online courses have the opportunity to earn grades. Students gain knowledge and insight by participating in NPTEL courses, which have been given special credit. The choice-based credit system appears to be ideal, but it has some limitations too.

The key issue of this system is the regular attendance of the students. The attendance of students is a serious concern in the majority of senior colleges. The irregular students fail to participate and complete the activities or tasks allocated to them. It creates problems for them to pass or achieve certain grades in the examinations. The workload of teachers is also a technical problem. Those who are overburdened are unwilling to carry out expected activities for the students The teachers who work on CHB didn't get extra remuneration for conducting short-term courses or activities which are expected to be undertaken. Therefore, most of the colleges do not include extra credit courses in their time-table. This system keeps the teachers busy in recording the documents such as examination forms, attendance, questionnaire, paper setting record, assessment record, uploading the marks etc. The merits and limitations of the choice-based credit system are given below.

Merits of Choice-based credit system

Every system has its merits and limitations. Despite of little limitation, choice- based credit system has its merits which are as follows:

- It provides opportunities for the learner to opt various courses of their choice and interest.
- It is a flexible system.
- It is a learner-centred system.
- Students learn with interest due to available options.
- The courses provide grades to the students.
- This system records the grades and progress of the students.
- It can enhance the dynamism of higher education.
- It respects learners autonomy and facilitates mobility.
- Students get experience of field work and learn to undertake and plan projects.
- Study tours, industrial visits and projects provide practical knowledge.
- It provides various opportunities for the student to develop their skills.
- Internal evaluation and marks make the students attend the classes regularly.

- It promotes active participation.
- The students develop their communication skills as they face oral examinations in certain subjects.
- Report writing, project work and assignments improve the writing skills of the students.
- It provides space for self learning.
- It promotes interdisciplinary approach of learning.
- Students score passing grades easily.
- It avails job opportunities to the students.
- It follows uniformity and tries to achieve global standards.
- Students learning enhances as they learn various courses to earn credits.
- It promotes the students to acquire skills.
- This system gives flexibility to colleges and institutions to start their own short term and certificate courses with prior permission of their university to provide grades to the students .
- Colleges can run need based courses to meet their needs.

Limitations of choice based credit system

- Irregular students fail in the examination.
- Lack of depth learning.
- CGPA/SGPA result has certain limitations.
- Students are over-burdened due to extra courses and activities which they need to complete in limited time frame.
- Extra workload of the teachers affects their regular teaching.
- Recording the evaluative documents semester wise becomes problematic and time consuming.
- It creates problems for the students to gain mastery in a particular subject because of their involvement in various courses.
- Expected infrastructural facilities are not available in all colleges and institutions.
- Need of provision to provide financial support to CHB teachers who teach courses but didn't get extra remuneration.
- Grades doesn't indicate exact marks.

Conclusion

The limitations of a credit system based on choice can be solved. Sincere efforts of teachers, as well as the financial assistance provided by management and institutions, can help to make this system more dynamic and effective. This system will be strengthened through methodical planning and successful implementation.It is the need of the present times to accept the challenges and step ahead for the improvement in the present educational system.The new avenues are available for everyone who are a part of higher education.We need to change our mindset and struggle hard for the bright future of the coming generations by accepting, adopting and implementing the recent challenging educational mechanisms to meet the global standards.

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