

Attitude of Undergraduate Teachers & Students towards Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) - A Study on Basanti Devi College, Kolkata

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Abstract

Education plays a very important role in the process of nation building. Among all the sectors of education, higher education is considered as the backbone of the nation. In India, Higher education is imparted largely through Universities and Colleges. The University Grants Commission (UGC), the premier policy-framing, decision-making and funding agency for Universities and Institutions of higher learning in India has initiated several measures to bring equity, efficiency and excellence in the Higher Education System of the country. In 2015 University Grants Commission (UGC) implemented the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). University of Calcutta, Kolkata has adopted Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in all its undergraduate & postgraduate courses since 2018. Basanti Devi College, Kolkata (NAAC Re-accredited) is affiliated to University of Calcutta & it has 17 Undergraduate & 2 Postgraduate Courses under CBCS. In this study the researcher tried to find out the attitude of Undergraduate teachers & students towards CBCS. Sample size comprises of 200 (50 undergraduate teachers & 150 students of Semester-2). Ten (10) Open Questionnaires has been used. Respondent answer the questions on their own words. Mixed reaction received from both teachers & students towards CBCS and all of them are of the opinion that since all the Undergraduate & Postgraduate courses (under CBCS) of University of Calcutta are in its infancy stage it will take time to run the system smoothly and reach the desired outcomes.

Key Words: CBCS, Attitude, U.G.C, Basanti Devi College, University of Calcutta.

Introduction

Education plays a very important role in the process of nation building. Among all the sectors of education, higher education is considered as the backbone of the nation. In India, Higher Education is imparted largely through Universities and Colleges. The University Grants Commission (UGC), the premier policy-framing, decision-making and funding agency for Universities and Institutions of higher learning in India has initiated several measures to bring equity, efficiency and excellence in the Higher Education System of the country. UGC observed in 2014 that in spite of large number of public as well private funded educational institutions engaged in imparting education in our country, the present education system produces young minds lacking knowledge, confidence, values and skills. It could be because of complete lack of relationship between education, employment and skill development in conventional education system (UGC, 2009). The present alarming situation necessitates transformation and/or redesigning of education system, not only by introducing innovations but developing "learner-centric approach in the entire education delivery mechanism and globally followed evaluation system as well (UGC, 2014). In 2015 University Grants Commission (UGC) implemented the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in Higher Education. National Knowledge Commission (NKC) & The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) also recommended Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in Indian Higher Education just to bring Higher Education at par with Global Trends like Liberalization and Globalization and adopted proper grading system for measuring performance of the learner.

The Choice Based Credit System means there are options available to students (Undergraduate, Post graduate degrees, Diploma and Certificate courses) to select from the prescribed courses like core, elective, soft skill or minor courses (Basu, 2010). As per UGC the students under this approach can take courses of their choice, learn at their own pace, can take additional courses and acquire more than the required credit. This system will facilitate student mobility across educational institutions within the nation and outside.

Basanti Devi College (NAAC Re-accredited) is the first Government sponsored women college in Kolkata founded by the Govt. of West Bengal in the year 1959 and it is affiliated to University of Calcutta. It has 17 Undergraduate & 2 Postgraduate Courses under CBCS. University of Calcutta, Kolkata has adopted Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in all undergraduate & postgraduate courses since 2018. The University of Calcutta has secured the 5th position among the Universities in India according to the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2019, MHRD, Government of India.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were outlined in this study:

1. To study the attitude of Undergraduate teachers towards Choice Based Credit System.
2. To study the attitude of B.A/B.Sc. students towards Choice Based Credit System

Delimitation of the Study:

The study was delimited to undergraduate teachers & students of only one Semester of Kolkata based college under University of Calcutta

Review of Related Literature

Alka S. Kelkar and Lakshmy Ravishankar (2014) analysed teacher's opinions, problems faced and recommended suggestions for better implementation of the CBCS. In response to the problems faced by teachers in the implementation of the credit system, the following points were evaluated:- class size, teaching hours, maintenance of records, time spent on evaluation, work load, stress levels and preparation time. Study revealed that students felt that the increased class size was a major hurdle in the successful implementation of the credit system. They concluded that teachers being an integral part of the system and valuable stakeholders, it is essential to understand their perspective and opinion about the CBCS.

Roy, Khanam & Trribeni (2013) found in their study that science background students and boys are having higher level of positive attitude towards CBCS in comparison to Arts and Girls students.

Das Amutha Joseph (2012) makes an attempt to identify the unique features of choice-based credit system and the effect of helping students to decide on the choice of subjects which they want to learn. She ascertained that higher Education 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 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. She concludes that, a credit system can function only when we start to see our students as mature individuals, capable of making their own decisions.

Research Methodology:-**1. Sample of the Study**

The present study was conducted on a sample of 50 Undergraduate teachers & 150 students of B.A/B.Sc. Semester-2(Academic Session 2018-2019) of Basanti Devi College, Kolkata.

2. Tool Used for the Study

Open Questionnaire was used as the tool for the study. A Pilot survey was undertaken to ensure that the questionnaires were as meaningful to the average respondent as they were to the researcher & to decide which questions were relevant for the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was distributed to users (10 teachers & 20 students) for the pilot study & it helped the researcher to modify the questionnaires on the basis of the suggestions provided by the users.

3. Data Collection

In this study Survey method has been applied for data collection. Ten (10) Open Questionnaires has been used. Respondent answer the questions on their own words. The data was collected from 50 undergraduate teachers & 150 students of B.A/B.Sc. Semester-2(2018-2019) of Basanti Devi College, Kolkata at the beginning of the B.A/B.Sc. 2nd Semester i.e. January, 2019 . The questions were prepared on the basis of the objectives of the study.

4. Findings of the Study

The findings emerging from the present study are:-

Opinion of Fifty (50) Undergraduate Teachers

- CBCS offers freedom to students to choose subjects according to their own learning needs, interests and aptitudes.
- Most of the Language teachers are not happy with the system as in depth teaching which is needed for Honours Students cannot be provided through this system.
- 22% teachers are of the view that syllabus for each semester is huge & the time is too short to complete the syllabus.
- It puts emphasis on seminar presentation, assignment, discussion, project etc. based teaching.
- It stressed on exercising maximum use of ICT in class room teaching-learning process.
- 75%of the teachers felt that the credit system does not help students retain what they have studied in the previous semester.
- There is a scope for continuous evaluation of the student.
- Habits of work commitment of learners strengthened.

- Work load of teachers increased a lot.
- Regular Classroom teaching has been affected.
- No clear instruction given by the University regarding attendance of students who will produce medical Certificate.
- 59% teachers are of the opinion that in CBCS knowledge, skill and attitude towards learning outcomes acquired through participatory teaching and learning and continuous evaluation Process.

Opinion of One Fifty (150) B.A. /B.Sc. Sem-2 Students

- There is a scope for Credit transfer: If for some reasons, student cannot cope with the study load or if she/he falls sick, she/he has the freedom to study fewer courses and earn fewer credits and she/he can compensate this in the next semester.
- It is student centric and recognises the importance of individual learning.
- It is scoring.
- The students in the CBCS might get confused with too many choices of subjects available for them. In-depth study is not possible in this system.
- CBCS offers freedom to choose subjects according to their own learning needs & interest.
- CBCS allows a student to earn his/her own credits at his own pace.
- No clear instruction given by the University regarding attendance of students who will produce medical Certificate.
- 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 hour per day schedule leaving no scope for independent study.

Suggestions

- Every aspect of CBCS should be explained clearly to the student & Orientation Programme must be organised by the institutions of higher learning for the fresher's.
- Orientation & Workshop should be organised for teachers to understand the details about grading, semester, credit system, credit transfer etc. by inviting & involving resource persons with appropriate expertise.
- In CBCS, as the time is very short for each semester, syllabus should be prepared accordingly.
- Provision for ICT in each department should be provided.
- Extra time should be given for discussion among teachers and students.
- CBCS should be based on present and future needs of the students.
- To make it more effective, guidance and counselling services should be arranged for the teachers and students while choosing soft core papers.
- University should conduct annual survey regarding CBCS in order to get feedback from all stake holders.

Conclusion

The UGC has always initiated measures to bring efficiency and excellence in the Higher Education System of India. The basic motive is to expand academic quality in all aspects, right from the curriculum to the teaching –learning process and evaluation systems.

Choice Based Credit System is essential for Higher Education. This system increases the sincerity among the teacher as well as the students. CBCS have been efficient in eliminating rote learning and memorizing, introducing critical thinking and analysis which lead to creativity and innovation in education system. It can be said that success never comes overnight it needs constant efforts, determination, inspiration and consistency. Since all the Undergraduate & Postgraduate courses under CBCS of University of Calcutta are in its infancy stage it will take time to run the system smoothly and to get the desired outcomes.

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