

Need and utility of Choice-based Credit System in higher education in India

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Dear Editor:

The quality of higher education determines the progress of the nation in each and every sector and thus should be given due consideration for periodic improvement. In the Indian set-up, the traditional curriculum which has been offered in the higher education set-up tends to lack standardization across different institutions and in different parts of the nation. At the same time, it is predominantly teacher-centered, with all the offered courses compulsory (no option of elective courses), and the students have to appear within the defined timeframe regardless of their preparation level to move to the next stage [1-2].

As most of the higher education institutions use marks or percentage-based assessment, there is a variation towards examination, assessment and the grading mechanism. This significantly minimizes the chances of the students to study their choice of subjects or even mobility to different institutions [1-2]. Acknowledging the existing challenges in the higher education and with an intention to coordinate and sustain the standards of education across the nation, the University Grants Commission has advocated for the implementation of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) compulsorily in the domains of arts, science and engineering [2]. As the name suggests, it gives an option for student to choose from a wide range of courses, with assessment being graded based on a credit system.

The CBCS approach is unique in the sense that it allows the students to learn at their individual pace, gives them an opportunity to enroll in additional courses and earn more credits, and practice an interdisciplinary learning approach [3]. This also advocates for a uniform grading across all the universities, which in turn makes it

flexible for the students to opt for interdisciplinary or skill-based courses and to even go for change in their universities, if required. CBCS adopts a student-centered approach, is internationally recognized and aids in not only learning the core subjects, but will also give adequate exposure to the preferred additional courses and this will account for a comprehensive development of the student [2-3].

Further, it will bring uniformity in the educational system across the nation and will be beneficial for both slow & advanced learners to plan their learning [1]. As the students can opt for other skill-based courses unrelated to the core courses, it does meet both curricular and extra-curricular desires of the students and in the real sense gives autonomy to the students. Such a provision significantly reduces the stress and anxiety related to the course, while in the long run gives more vocational opportunities to the students [1-2].

However, the transition to CBCS will definitely have some challenges, like issues pertaining to the increase workload among students which might compromise the other responsibilities of a teacher, infrastructure constraints, standardization of credits across universities, and calculation of exact marks [2-4].

Nevertheless, guidelines from the governing body and proper planning at the institution level can significantly improve the outcomes of higher education. At Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth, Puducherry, Deemed-to-be-University, CBCS

pattern has been adopted for all the allied health science courses [4]. It is a welcome sign and is definitely an opportunity for other health science university to adopt the system within their institutions.

In conclusion, the adoption of a choice-based credit system will raise the standards of higher

education in India as our students will be trained via globally acclaimed practices. The need of the hour is to uniformly implement across all the higher education courses and even explore the opportunities to implement the same in the field of medical education.

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