



## CHOICE BASED CREDIT SYSTEM IN INDIA: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

**Dr. S. D. Takalkar**

**Member B.O.S. – Marketing (Commerce),**

**Member – 48(3)(4), Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune.**

**Head Department of Commerce,**

**Arts, Commerce and Science College, Narayangaon, Pune.**

### **Abstract:**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has initiated several measures to bring equity, efficiency and excellence in the Higher Education System of country. The important measures taken to enhance academic standards and quality in higher education include innovation and improvements in curriculum, teaching-learning process, examination and evaluation systems, besides governance and other matters. The education plays enormously significant role in building of a nation. There are quite a large number of educational institutions, engaged in imparting education in our country. Majority of them have entered recently into semester system to match with international educational pattern. However, our 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. 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.

**Keywords:** Higher Education, CBCS, UGC, Interdisciplinary approach, Core Course

## **Introduction:**

The UGC has formulated various regulations and guidelines from time to time to improve the higher education system and maintain minimum standards and quality across the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in India. The academic reforms recommended by the UGC in the recent past have led to overall improvement in the higher education system. However, due to lot of diversity in the system of higher education, there are multiple approaches followed by universities towards examination, evaluation and grading system. While the HEIs must have the flexibility and freedom in designing the examination and evaluation methods that best fits the the curriculum, syllabi and teaching–learning methods, there is a need to devise a sensible system for awarding the grades based on the performance of students. Presently the performance of the students is reported using the conventional system of marks secured in the examinations or grades or both. The conversion from marks to letter grades and the letter grades used vary widely across the HEIs in the country. This creates difficulty for the academia and the employers to understand and infer the performance of the students graduating from different universities and colleges based on grades.

The grading system is considered to be better than the conventional marks system and hence it has been followed in the top institutions in India and abroad. So it is desirable to introduce uniform grading system. This will facilitate student mobility across institutions within and across countries and also enable potential employers to assess the performance of students. To bring in the desired uniformity, in grading system and method for computing the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) based on the performance of students in the examinations, the UGC has formulated these guidelines.

## **Objectives of the study:**

1. To study the basic features of Choice Based Credit System in Higher Education in India.
2. To study the various types of courses in Choice Based Credit System (CBCS).
3. To study the elements of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS).
4. To study the Grading system- As per UGC Guideline for Choice Based Credit System.
5. To study the Impact of Choice Based Credit System.
6. To study the Advantage and Disadvantage of Choice Based Credit System.

7. To study the suggestion for Embodiment of Choice Based Credit System.

### **Choice Based Credit System (CBCS):**

University Grants Commission has come up with the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) programme in which the students have a choice to choose from the prescribed courses, which are referred as core, elective or minor or soft skill courses and they can learn at their own pace and the entire assessment is graded-based on a credit system. The basic idea is to look into the needs of the students so as to keep up-to-date with development of higher education in India and abroad. CBCS aims to redefine the curriculum keeping pace with the liberalisation and globalisation in education. CBCS allows students an easy mode of mobility to various educational institutions spread across the world along with the facility of transfer of credits earned by students.

### **Concept of CBCS in India:**

The 11th Five Year plan of India proposed various measures for academic reforms in higher education. The National Knowledge Commission (Sam Pitroda) report to the nation in 2008-2009 on higher education and Yashpal Committee Report in 2009 recommended revamping of higher education through academic and administrative reforms. Keeping in view the challenges of the changed times and make the higher education in Indian Universities compatible with the universities in developed nations, the UGC (11th plan, March 2009) stressed on the following recommendations has to be put on CBCS in Higher Education:

- **CHOICE BASED** - Choice of multiple courses
- **GRADING** - Marks secured is in letter grade format
- **SEMESTER** - Learner- Teacher Engagement Quotient can be measured semester-wise.
- **CREDIT** - Class hours per week carries additional importance in credit system
- **ASSESSMENT** - In the form of class room attendance, Mid Term Tests etc; is continuous and wide-ranging.

### **Features of CBCS**

- This is a uniform CBCS for all central and state and other recognized universities.
- There are three main courses: Core, Elective and Foundation.

© Association of Academic Researchers and Faculties (AARF)

A Monthly Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International e-Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories.

- There are also non-credit courses available which will be assessed as ‘Satisfactory’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’. This is not included in the computation of SGPA/CGPA.
- All the three main courses will be evaluated and accessed to provide for an effective and balanced result.

## **Types of Courses:**

Courses in a programme may be of three kinds: Core, Elective and Foundation.

### **1. Core Course**

There may be a Core Course in every semester. This is the course which is to be compulsorily studied by a student as a core requirement to complete the requirement of a programme in a said discipline of study.

### **2. Elective Course**

Elective course is a course which can be chosen from a pool of papers. It may be:

- a. Supportive to the discipline of study
- b. Providing an expanded scope
- c. Enabling an exposure to some other discipline/domain
- d. Nurturing student’s proficiency/skill.

An elective may be “Generic Elective” focusing on those courses which add generic proficiency to the students. An elective may be “Discipline centric” or may be chosen from an unrelated discipline. It may be called an “Open Elective.”

### **3. Foundation Course**

The Foundation Courses may 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.

## **Examination and Assessment:**

The HEIs are currently following various methods for examination and assessment suitable for the courses and programmes as approved by their respective statutory bodies. In assessing the performance of the students in examinations, the usual approach is to award marks based on the examinations conducted at various stages (sessional, mid-term, end-

semester etc.,) in a semester. Some of the HEIs convert these marks to letter grades based on absolute or relative grading system and award the grades. There is a marked variation across the colleges and universities in the number of grades, grade points, letter grades used, which creates difficulties in comparing students across the institutions. The UGC recommends the following system to be implemented in awarding the grades and CGPA under the credit based semester system.

### **Basic Elements of CBCS System:**

CBCS system has the following basic elements:

- **Semesters:** The assessment is done semester wise. A student progresses on the basis of the courses taken rather than time like three years for science, arts, commerce or four years for engineering etc. Each semester will have 15–18 weeks of academic work which is equal to 90 teaching days. There is flexibility in creating the curriculum and assigning credits based on the course content and hours of teaching.
- **Credit System:** Each course is assigned a certain credit. When the student passes that course, he earns the credits which are based on that course. If a student passes a single course in a semester, he does not have to repeat that course later. The students can earn credits according to his pace.
- **Credit Transfer:** If for some reasons, he cannot cope with the study load or if he falls sick, he has the freedom to study fewer courses and earn fewer credits and he can compensate this in the next semester.
- **Comprehensive Continuous Assessment:** There is a continuous evaluation of the student not only by the teachers but also by the student himself.
- **Counting of Credits in Credit System:** One credit per semester is equal to one hour of teaching, which includes both lecture (L) or tutorial (T) or two hours of practical work/field work (P) per week. A study course can have only L component or only T or P component or combination of any two or all the three components. The total credits earned by a student for each semester is L+T+P.
- **In compliance with the Global Grading System:** All the major higher education institutions across the world are implementing this credit system. For instance, the ‘National Qualifications Framework’ in Australia, the Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits the UK Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) and even in the US system, Japan system, etc. are based on credit system.

## Grading System of CBCS System

- Two methods -relative grading or absolute grading– have been in vogue for awarding grades in a course. The relative grading is based on the distribution (usually normal distribution) of marks obtained by all the students of the course and the grades are awarded based on a cut-off marks or percentile. Under the absolute grading, the marks are converted to grades based on pre-determined class intervals. To implement the following grading system, the colleges and universities can use any one of the above methods.
- The UGC recommends a 10-point grading system with the following letter grades as given below:

**Grading System in CBCS as per UGC guideline**

Sr. No.	Letter Grade	Grade	Grade Points
1	O	Outstanding	10
2	A+	Excellent	9
3	A	Very Good	8
4	B+	Good	7
5	B	Above Average	6
6	C	Average	5
7	P	Pass	4
8	F	Fail	0
9	Ab	Absent	0

- A student obtaining Grade F shall be considered failed and will be required to reappear in the examination.
- For non credit courses ‘Satisfactory’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’ shall be indicated instead of the letter grade and this will not be counted for the computation of SGPA/CGPA.
- The Universities can decide on the grade or percentage of marks required to pass in a course and also the CGPA required to qualify for a degree taking into consideration the recommendations of the statutory professional councils such as AICTE, MCI, BCI, NCTE etc.,

- The statutory requirement for eligibility to enter as assistant professor in colleges and universities in the disciplines of arts, science, commerce etc., is a minimum average mark of 50% and 55% in relevant postgraduate degree respectively for reserved and general category. Hence, it is recommended that the cut-off marks for grade B shall not be less than 50% and for grade B+, it should not be less than 55% under the absolute grading system. Similarly cut-off marks shall be fixed for grade B and B+ based on the recommendation of the statutory bodies (AICTE, NCTE etc.,) of the relevant disciplines.

### **The Need and Importance of CBCS:**

At present, in the higher education specialization in given discipline is valuable so far it allows the learner to link that discipline with the real world and contextualize his own perception of life and its various phenomena. Discipline other than the major is in the form of subsidiary subjects. By their very nomenclature, these subjects are seldom regarded as serious, either for the assessment they carry, or least of all, for their content. Likewise the teaching and syllabi of these subjects, over a period of time, also became poor in quality and motivation. So there is no real learning across the disciplines. Curricular reform in this regard means integrating a given subject to which the student devotes a majority of his time with other relevant subject is therefore essential to improve the education structure. One way improving the quality of teaching of these additional subjects and stimulating student's interest is to allow students for whom a subject is additional to study along with those for whom it is primary. For example a mathematics student should study and undergo evaluation in philosophy as an optional subject along with students for whom philosophy constitutes the primary subject. So the students are exposed to various subjects at the same time. In the 11<sup>th</sup> plan under the new initiative of academic reforms in the higher education institutions, UGC reiterates that universities are autonomous institutions and have necessary freedom to experiment new ideas and adopt practices which they consider appropriate for promoting relevance, quality and excellence within the framework of national policy.

### **Advantages of Choice Based Credit System:**

1. The CBCS offers a 'cafeteria' approach in which the students can choose courses of their own choice.
2. The credit system allows a student to study what he prefers in his own sequence as per his interests.

3. They can learn at their own pace.
4. They can opt for additional courses and can achieve more than the required credits.
5. They can also opt for an interdisciplinary approach to learning.
6. Inter college/university migration within the country and outside becomes easy with the transfer of Credits. This means that it will be easier for foreign universities to come and offer courses in India.
7. Can opt for one part of the course in one institute and the other part in another institute. This will help in making a clear choice between good and bad colleges/ institutes.
8. The students have more scope to enhance their skills and more scope of taking up projects and assignments, vocational training, including entrepreneurship.
9. The system improves the job opportunities of students.
10. The system will help in enabling potential employers assess the performance of students on a scientific scale.

### **Disadvantages of Choice Based Credit System:**

1. **Too Many Choices of subjects:** The students in the CBCS might get confused with too many choices of subjects available for them. They may not know what to select and what not to select. This creates confusion in the minds of the student. Too many choices for anything is not going to prove beneficial as more the choices more is the confusion around.
2. **Lack of knowledge on Teaching Capacity:** An Individual opting for certain choice may not know the teaching capacity of the faculty, the availability of resources with them etc. This might lead to a negative impact on the students after the selection is done if they are not happy with these things. The roles played by every individual in this needs to be perfect and justice needs to be given to the subject.
3. **Higher Expenses:** It impacts the money making ability of the institution. The institution needs more staff, more resources, more efficiency, more coordination, more resources and more of everything. To have this in proper balance, the institution will have to bear higher expenses. The burden of this will be directly transferred to the students by increasing the fees.
4. **Missing better opportunity:** The students might miss on other better alternatives available for them. One will not know the opportunity that has been missed by selecting some other. It creates an atmosphere of doubt on the choices one has made.

5. **Lack of Concept about CBCS System in Students & Teachers:** Choice based credit system (CBCS) is a new concept in college students and teachers. So many students and teacher are ambiguous about this concept.
6. **Effective Time Management:** It will be difficult to manage the time for different varieties of subjects. Time Management needs to be done by the institution, the faculty and even the students. It requires a perfect collaboration of the activities involved in the daily schedule. This inclusively has an impact on the curriculum and everyone included in managing it.
7. **Burden:** It is a burden on the faculty as well as the availability of resources. One may not be able to teach different subjects efficiently. An Individual needs to have knowledge on all the aspects for which the teaching is to be done. One needs to be a Master of all in this.

### **Impact of CBCS System in Higher Education in India:**

1. Shift in focus from the teacher-centric to student-centric education.
2. Students may undertake as many credits as they can cope with (without repeating all courses in a given semester if they fail in one/more courses).
3. Students get better exposure and networking through attending the course in many college.
4. CBCS allows students to choose inter-disciplinary, intra-disciplinary courses, skill oriented papers (even from other disciplines according to their learning needs, interests and aptitude) and offer more flexibility for students).
5. CBCS offers flexibility for students to study at different times and at different institutions to complete one course. Credits earned at one institution can be transferred.
6. CBCS makes education broad-based and at par with global standards. One can take credits by combining unique combinations. For example, Physics with Economics, Microbiology with Chemistry or Environment Science etc.

### **Suggestion for Embodiment of CBCS System in Higher Education in India:**

The implementation of CBCS system can prove beneficial for Institutes. Student-centric approach of Education creates interest and applicability in the scope of study. Our solution enables easy Choice Based Credit System in Educational Campuses. Master Soft has customized this solution keeping in mind the growing need to automate credit courses of

higher education. Following points could be considered as the suggestions for Embodiment for the CBCS system:

- Professional training should be given to the teachers to handle it effectively.
- Seminars, Conferences and debate should be organised to discuss its merits and demerits in detail.
- Equalization in standard of education system should be maintained so that mobility of students could be checked.
- Provision of both Percentage and grading system should be maintained.
- Its adaptation should be optional or choice based rather than mandatory.
- All the P.G college of India should also be brought under the CBCS, as they also catering the responsibility of Higher Education on a large scale.
- Care should be taken about the gap between Central and state Universities in regard to quality of education as well as the availability of infrastructure at point.
- Selection of papers and choosing credits should be governed by the concerned department/ institution.
- To make it more effective, guidance and counseling services should be arranged for the teachers and students while choosing soft core papers.
- Student has the mobility to register, apply, and keep track of courses selected and examination schedule through our Solution.
- The University can have multiple users. The user can view his/her profile as well as change password.
- Through this solution the teacher can prepare teaching plans, mark attendance and prepare assignments for students.
- Faculty has the flexibility to manage student data, create courses and schemes, offer courses, allot curriculum and assign/ transfer teachers.
- Solution for CBCS system is holistic, easy to use and provides comprehensive management.

## **Conclusion:**

It is too early to say whether CBCS will be successful or not. 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 learning-teaching process to examination and evaluation systems. However,

so far multiple methods are followed by different universities across the country towards examination, evaluation and grading system. Considering this diversity, the implementation of the choice based credit system seems to be a good system in assessing the overall performance of a student in a universal way of a single grading system. Choice Based Credit System is essential for Higher Education. This system increases the sincerity among the teacher as well as the students. In the current economic crisis, innovation is seen as a key strategy for institutions and companies not only to recover but to prosper and to sustain growth into the future. 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 learning-teaching process to examination and evaluation systems. However, so far multiple methods are followed by different universities across the country towards examination, evaluation and grading system. Considering this diversity, the implementation of the choice based credit system seems to be a good system in assessing the overall performance of a student in a universal way of a single grading system.

#### **Reference:**

1. Biswas Santu, (2018). Choices Based Credit System (CBCS) — An analytical study. IJRAR- International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, Volume 5, Issue 3, July – Sept 2018, e ISSN 2348 –1269.
2. Roy, N.R., Khanam, U.K. & Devi, T. (2013). Attitude towards Choice Based Credit System of PG level in Higher Education: A Study on Assam University. Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies, p.g.-1198-1208.
3. Kelkar, A.S & Ravishankar, L. (2014). Choice Based Credit System: boon or bane. Current Science, p.g- 1229-1230.
4. Hasan, M & Parvez, M. (2015). Choice-Based Credit System in India. Pros and Cons. Journal of Education and Practice, p.g- 30-33.
5. Chaudhary, C. (2012). Assessment of adoption of Choice Based Credit System by India Universities. International Journal of Behavioural and Movement Sciences, p.g- 45-49.
6. Chabey, A.K. (2015). Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). a better choice in education system. International Journal of Creative Thoughts, p.g- 2-13.

7. Aithal, P. S., & Kumar, P. M. S. (2016). Analysis of Choice Based Credit System in Higher Education. *International Journal of Engineering Research and Modern Education (IJERME)*, 1(1), 278- 284.
8. Alka S. Kelkar and Lakshmy Ravishankar (2014) Choice based credit system: An academic reform in higher education. *University News*, vol.51, No. 08.
9. Amutha Joseph (2012), Choice Based Credit System: The need of the hour, *University News*, Vol.51, No. 08. 15.
10. Rumani Saikia Phukan, What is CBCS or Choice Based Credit System? How Does It Work? <http://www.mapsofindia.com/my-india/education/what-is-cbcs-or-choice-based-credit-system-how-does-it-work>, 24/06/2015.
11. Stanley, J. (2005), *The Hindu*. Online edition of India's National Newspaper. Tuesday. Apr 12, 2005.
12. Naidu, B.V.R. (2016). Choice Based Credit System in India. A critical evaluation. *International Journal of Academic Research*.p.g-77-87.
13. Hanchinalkar, S.B. (2014) A Study of Choice-Based Credit System Implemented at Secondary Teacher-Training Institutes By University of Mysore. *Indian Journal of Experimental and Innovation in Education*.
14. UGC Guidelines on Adoption of Choice Based Credit System, University Grants Commission, India. [http://collegesat.du.ac.in/UGC\\_credit\\_Guidelines](http://collegesat.du.ac.in/UGC_credit_Guidelines).