

# Course Structure of Choice Based Credit System: An Overview

Deepika Rani

Assistant Professor, D.H Lawrence College of Education, for Women, Jhajjar

## ABSTRACT

It is thought in today's world that education is the cornerstone of country formation since the level of education represents a nation's standing. It gives pupils the ability to improve not just professionally, but also personally. There is a lack of a 'Interdisciplinary approach' and a disregard for 'value-based courses' in the Indian education system since India is dealing with two major social malaises that are directly related to 'overpopulation' and 'educational standards.' In the Indian context, the UGC is solely responsible for making progress toward the development of the National Education Policy. The University Grant Commission is in charge of policy implementation and higher education promotion. The UGC recognized the need for academic reform in the higher education sector. Moreover, academic reform must incorporate curriculum creation with a choice-based credit system (CBCS). The CBCS offers a 'cafeteria' style approach in which students can select courses of their choosing, learn at their own speed, take additional courses and acquired more than the required credits, and learn in an interdisciplinary manner. "The CBCS will undoubtedly facilitate us bench mark our courses with best international academic practices" (UGC, 2014). In 2015, the CBCS was implemented in all higher education institutes and universities in India. The purpose of this research is to emphasize the course structure of a choice-based credit system.

*Keywords: higher education, CBCS, course, UGC*

## INTRODUCTION

It is thought in today's world that education is the cornerstone of country formation since the level of education represents a nation's standing. Education is critical for increasing knowledge, developing skills, increasing confidence, and making a positive difference in the lives of children. It gives pupils the ability to improve not just professionally, but also personally. To assure education, higher education institutions must strike a balance between teaching education and boosting skill development by allowing students to explore different subjects. Since its independence 75 years ago, India has achieved enormous strides in many sectors of development. When it comes to the use of computers and communication technology, India is a behemoth today; it ranks fourth after the United States, China, and Germany in the use of supercomputers. Following that, two big social ills staring India in the face are 'overpopulation' and 'educational standard.' There is a lack of a 'Interdisciplinary approach' in education, as well as a disregard for 'value-based courses.' Nonetheless, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), Government of India, has already taken the effort to provide the groundwork for the development of a New Education Policy. The logic behind it is to implement reforms in the Indian education system while also ensuring the quality of Indian higher education and bringing it up to par with the rest of the globe. The University Grants Commission is solely responsible for progressing toward the development of the National Education Policy. The University Grant Commission is in charge of policy implementation and higher education promotion. The University Grants Commission (UGC) acknowledged the need for academic reform in the higher education sector. Academic reform must combine curriculum creation with a choice-based credit system (CBCS). In 2014, the University Grants Commission (UGC) established the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) to bring all higher education institutions in India under a unified umbrella of grading, learning, and standards, and required higher education institutions to use the system beginning in 2015. The choice based credit system not only provide opportunities to learn core subjects but also opportunities discipline unrelated subject and explore additional avenues of learning beyond the core subjects for holistic growth.

The CBCS system follows the semester pattern, with two consecutive semesters (odd and even) forming an academic year; grading and evaluating students' performance in each subject occurs at the end of each semester. CBCS employs a credit-based grading system rather of a percentage-based one. It is a system that aims to promote an individual's holistic development by providing a flexible and multi-disciplinary learning experience.

The CBCS offers a cafeteria-style approach in which students can select courses of their choice, learn at their own speed, take additional courses and earn more than the minimum credits, and take an interdisciplinary approach to learning. The courses will be graded using a grading system that is thought to be superior to the traditional mark system. The grading system will ensure uniformity across all technical institutes in India, as well as aid students who wish to transfer between institutions inside India and beyond countries. Potential employers will be able to analyze candidates' performance using the consistent grading system. The CBCS structure was designed to be pupil-centered rather than system or teacher-centered. CBCS makes an attempt to create a comprehensive syllabus for reaching these goals (2019, Saha). The UGC is always engaged in suggesting and facilitating the implementation of schemes and initiatives that improve not just academic quality but also the academic and research environment in the country.

### **The History/Origin of Choice Based Credit System**

The CBCS is an internationally recognized educational pattern designed to meet the needs of students and enable them to keep up with global changes in higher education. The origins of the CBCSS system can be traced back to the 'cafeteria system' in western countries. Teachers have a significant level of leeway to design their courses under this system, which is in effect in all North American colleges, and students have complete freedom to choose courses for their academic programme. Every major higher education provider in the world uses a credit system.

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the 'National Qualifications Framework' in Australia, the Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits, the Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) in the UK as well as the systems operating in the US, Japan, etc. are examples of these. As per the direction of UGC India too adopted the CBCSS as an instructional package which facilitates revolution in higher education. As the guideline provided by UGC for the 11th Plan to ensure high quality in teaching CBCSS was introduced in the universities of India. Central universities of Pondicherry first implemented this American academic credit system. CBCSS transformed the traditional teacher-oriented education to student-centred education. Students take the responsibility of their own education in CBCSS system. Under Choice-based Credit System (CBCS), students pursue three types of courses - Compulsory Foundation Courses (relating directly to the subject of study), Elective Courses (allowing for interdisciplinary studies) and Core subjects, where it is compulsory to pursue core subjects every semester and choose electives can be chosen which may be from a pool of subjects unrelated to their disciplines. This means a Science student can opt for any subject of Commerce or Arts discipline as an elective. The University Grants Commission(UGC), the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), The Distance Education Council (DEC) as well as National Knowledge Commission (NKC) made several recommendations to improve the effectiveness and quality of higher education. As a result Choice-Based Credit and Semester System was introduced. This choice based credit system in higher education provides flexibility in preparing the curriculum and granting credits based on the course intensity and teaching hours. This helps students to pursue courses of their choice, study at their own pace, learn extra courses, and acquire more than the required credits. CBCS emphasizes group discussions, assignments, class activities, and internal examinations thus creating a beneficial education environment.

### **Recommendation of CBCS Courses in India**

Interdisciplinary approach is essential because the current higher education curriculum in India does not enable students to be employable, (Ravi, 2011). The 11<sup>th</sup> 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 system in Higher Education:

- **Academic Year:** Two consecutive (one odd + one even) semesters constitute one academic year.
- **Choice Based Credit System (CBCS):** The CBCS provides choice for students to select from the prescribed courses (core, elective or minor or soft skill courses).
- **Course:** Usually referred to, as 'papers' is a component of a program. All courses need not carry the same weight. The courses should define learning objectives and learning outcomes. A course may be designed to comprise lectures/ tutorials/laboratory work/ field work/ outreach activities/ project work/ vocational training/viva/ seminars/ term papers/assignments/ presentations/ self-study etc. or a combination of some of these.

- **Credit Based Semester System (CBSS):** Under the CBSS, the requirement for awarding a degree or diploma or certificate is prescribed in terms of number of credits to be completed by the students.
- **Credit Point:** It is the product of grade point and number of credits for a course.
- **Credit:** A unit by which the course work is measured. It determines the number of hours of instructions required per week. One credit is equivalent to one hour of teaching (lecture or tutorial) or two hours of practical work/field work per week.
- **Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA):** It is a measure of overall cumulative performance of a student over all semesters. The CGPA is the ratio of total credit points secured by a student in various courses in all semesters and the sum of the total credits of all courses in all the semesters. It is expressed up to two decimal places.
- **Grade Point:** It is a numerical weight allotted to each letter grade on a 10-point scale.
- **Letter Grade:** It is an index of the performance of students in a said course. Grades are denoted by letters O, A+, A, B+, B, C, P and F.
- **Programme:** An educational programme leading to award of a Degree, diploma or certificate.
- **Semester Grade Point Average (SGPA):** It is a measure of performance of work done in a semester. It is ratio of total credit points secured by a student in various courses registered in a semester and the total course credits taken during that semester. It shall be expressed up to two decimal places.
- **Semester:** Each semester will consist of 15-18 weeks of academic work equivalent to 90 actual teaching days. The odd semester may be scheduled from July to December and even semester from January to June.
- **Transcript or Grade Card or Certificate:** Based on the grades earned, a grade certificate shall be issued to all the registered students after every semester. The grade certificate will display the course details (code, title, number of credits grade secured) along with SGPA of that semester and CGPA earned till that semester.

#### **Structure of Courses Offered by CBCS System**

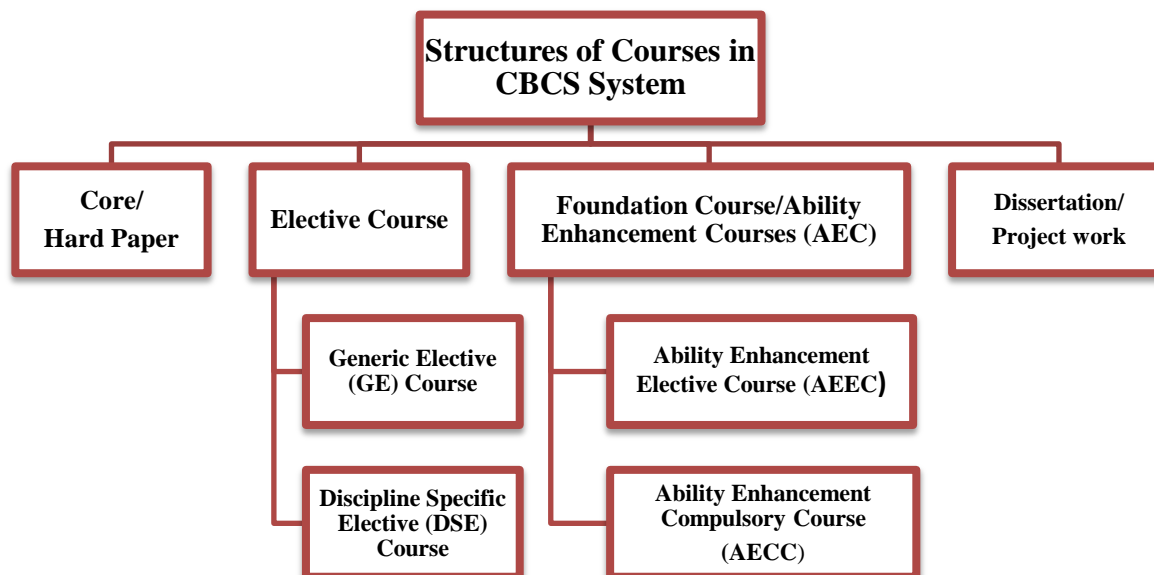
NAAC has made a series of efforts to compile a document on the best practices on curricular aspects initiated by some accredited universities with higher grade capitalizing on the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) i.e, the cafeteria approach in their course offerings. Each semester has a typical structure of courses of study with well-defined name for each course/paper, instruction hours per week translated into credits, marks for comprehensive continuous assessment and semester-end examination as percentage of total marks/grades. Different courses of study are identified under the CBCS (Varghese and Ponmudiraj, 2008). CBCS system offers four types of structure courses choices to the Students- Core, Elective, Foundation and Project work.

**Core Papers:** The Core Papers are to be offered in every semester and compulsorily studied by a student as a core requirement to complete the requirement of a programme in a said discipline of study.

**Elective Papers:** The Elective may be “Generic Elective” focusing on those courses which add generic proficiency to the students. They may be “Discipline centric” or may be “Open Elective” chosen from an unrelated discipline. Elective course may be chosen from a pool of papers that may be:

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

**Foundation Course:** also referred to as Ability Enhancement Courses (AEC). The Foundation Courses maybe 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.



**Project Work:** Project work/Dissertation work is a special course involving application of knowledge in solving/analyzing/exploring a real life situation/difficult problem. The minor project work may consist of 6-8 credits and 10-12 credits may be assigned to major project work/dissertation.

### Strategy of CBCSS

1. To introduce Semester system
2. To develop a structured programme for CBCS that would:
  - Enable students to have a flexible learning within a structured model
  - Enable students to have wider choices outside their discipline of their study
  - Enable students to have an exposure to real life experience by participation in internships as well as vocational training
  - Enable students to have facility of Credit transfer across the country
3. To design the curriculum with sufficient/appropriate/adequate provision for Value oriented courses, Interdisciplinary courses and Vocational courses. Each course shall have a clearly defined course objective and course outcome.
4. Teacher training and capacity building
5. Revamping of learning processes by changing in teaching pedagogy by Use of ICT, Sandhan, ALM, computer laboratories to be set up across the state as learning,
6. Concept of Teacher fellow (TF) and Course Assistant (CA)
7. Content preparation as per the curriculum means both textual content as well as E content.
8. Question Banks are prepared
9. Facilities for On Demand on Line Examination (ODOLE)

### CONCLUSION

As a result of the above discussion, we came to the conclusion that CBCS is the best system since it is built on a student-friendly, learning-centric, efficient grading system, enabling intra-faculty and inter-university student mobility, and providing students with more chances. It would undoubtedly have a good impact on higher education. However, India is a massive country in terms of its educational system, which includes basic, secondary, and postsecondary (higher) education. First and first, any reform that must be adopted should be thoroughly examined and critically reviewed with stakeholders—in this case, University Teachers and Students. Therefore, it would be preferable for educators and policymakers to hold open debates, seminars, and conferences, as well as go over the fundamental nuances of CBCS and their implications for broader perspectives.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. **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), pp-278- 284.
- [2]. **Aneja, N. (2015).** Choice Based Credit System: A Radical Change in Indian Education System. *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 5(10), pp-604–606.
- [3]. **Baird, L. L. (1972).** Grading System: the relation of changes in average grade awarded. *American Educational Research*, 9(3).
- [4]. **Biswas, S., (2018).** Choices Based Credit System (CBCS)-An analytical study. *IJRAR- International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 5(3), pp-1362x-1368.
- [5]. **Chaubey, A. K. (2015).** Choice Based Credit System (CBCS): A Better Choice in Education System. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 3(6), pp-2–13.
- [6]. **Chaudhary, C. (2012).** Assessment of adoption of Choice Based Credit System by India Universities. *International Journal of Behavioural and Movement Sciences*, pp-45-49.
- [7]. **Choedhary, S.R. (2015).** Choice –Based credits FYUP over again in 3 years’in DU, Times of India:14, January, 2015.
- [8]. **Evertson, C.M., Emmer, C.T., Sanford, J.P., & Clements, B.S. (1983).** Improving classroom management: An experiment in elementary classrooms. *The Elementary School Journal*, 84(2), pp-173-188.
- [9]. **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*.
- [10]. **Hasan, M., & Parvez, M. (2015).** Choice Based Credit system In India: Pros and Cons. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(25), pp-30–33.
- [11]. **Joseph, A., (2012).** Choice Based Credit System: The need of the hour. *University News*, 51(08), pp-15.
- [12]. **Kaur, A., & Sharma, M. (2016).** Academic Curriculum Reform of Indian Higher Education: Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). *International Journal of Advanced Research in Education & Technology*, 3(1), 78–80.
- [13]. **Kelkar, A. S., & Ravishankar, L. (2014).** Choice Based Credit System: boon or bane? *Current Science*, 107(8), 1229–1230.
- [14]. **Kothari, V. (2012).** University Grants Commission for a flexible learning system in higher education. *The Times of India*.
- [15]. **Kumar, B. D. (2012).** Quality in Higher Education System of India. *University News*, 50(43), pp-12-14.
- [16]. **Mali, R.M. (2015).** Role of ICT for effective implementatation of CBCS in teacher education. *Global Academic Research Journal*, pp-16-20.
- [17]. **Naidu, B. V. R., & Sreedevi, O. V. A. M. (2016).** Choice Based Credit System in India : A Critical Evaluation. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 3(2), 77–84.
- [18]. **Nehru, R. S. S. (2016).** Comparative Choice Based Credit System in India and Vietnam: Best Practices and Limitations of Education & Teacher Education. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 3(2), pp-26–34.
- [19]. **P. Purna Chandra Rao (2009).** Special issue on Evaluation System: Student Evaluation for Quality Education. *University News*, 47(45), pp-92.
- [20]. **Ramesh B Kasetwar (2009).** Special issue on Evaluation System: Evaluation system in India: A Stocktaking of Prevalent practice and Alternative Strategies. *University News*. 47(45), pp-13-14.
- [21]. **Ravi, J.S. (2011).** The Choice Based Credit System (CBCS): A Game Changer IN the Higher Education Landscape. *University News*, 49(35), pp-38-42.
- [22]. **Roy, N.R., Khanam, U.K. & Devi, T. (2013).** Attitude Towards Choice Based Credit System of PG levein Higher Education: A Study on Assam University. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinarity Studies*, pp-1198- 1208.
- [23]. **Saha, T., (2021).** Problems and Prospects of Implementing CBCS at UG Level in West-Bengal. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, 10(1), 871-874.
- [24]. **Saharish (2009).** Special issue on Evaluation System: Implementing UGC-mandated Reforms in Higher Education. *University News*, 47(45), pp- 39-40.
- [25]. **Shivkumar, V. (2012).** Quality in Indian Higher Education: Problems and Possible Solutions. *University News*, 50(43), pp-52-55.
- [26]. **Sindhi, S., & Shah, A. (2015).** India’s Controversial Choice Based Credit System, *Kahmir Times*, Sept 15 2015
- [27]. **Sindhu, S. (2005).** A study on the attitude of high school teachers in Ernakulam districts towards introducing Grading system in the tenth standard. Unpublished M.Ed thesis, Manonmaniam University, Tamil Nadu.
- [28]. **Pitroda, S., (2013-14).** Academic manual, Semester Based, Credit and Grading System St. Xavier’s College, Ranchi. (Speech).

- [29]. **Sumitha, P. V., Krishnamurthy, M. G., & Winfred, B. R. (2016).** An Empirical Study to Measure the Perception of Management Students Towards Choice Based Credit System (CBCS): A Case Study. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*.
- [30]. **UGC (2012).** Report on 12th Five Year Plan on Inclusive and qualitative expansion of higher education, New Delhi.
- [31]. **UGC (2012).** Report on Higher Education in India at a Glance, New Delhi.
- [32]. **Dutta, I. & Dutta, N. (2013).** Choice Based Credit System: An Academic Reform in Higher Education. *UNIVERSITY NEWS*, Vol. 51, No. 08, p. 6-13.
- [33]. **MHRD. (2013).** All India Survey on Higher Education 2011-12 (Provisional). Department of Higher Education Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi.
- [34]. **Kapur, S., (2015).** Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) and Higher Education in India Paper. *Jamia Journal of Education*, 3(2), pp-1-14.