

Implementation of Choice Based Credit System at the Undergraduate Level: A Study in the Colleges of Golaghat District, Assam

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Abstract

The current higher education system in India needs to be redesigned and modified. This can be accomplished by integrating numerous perspectives, striving to build mechanisms that focus on the needs of the student, and establishing internationally accepted evaluation techniques. During the 11th Five-Year Plan, the UGC recommended that all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes implement a Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) following extensive debate among educators and subject-matter experts. This system aims to enhance the flexibility, transparency, and interdisciplinary approach of undergraduate and postgraduate courses. CBCS has been extensively implemented by many universities. In Assam also CBCS has been implemented by many universities for postgraduate as well as undergraduate level education. In this view, this paper aims to study the implementation of CBCS at the undergraduate level. This paper also tries to identify the problems associated with the implementation of the CBCS in Assam, as well as to provide suitable measures for solving the problems. The researcher has used a descriptive survey method to conduct the study. The study is based on data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data are collected with the help of a self-made questionnaire. Secondary data are collected from various research journals, theses, websites, etc. With the optimistic view that this study will help reveal the implementation of CBCS at undergraduate level education.

Keywords: Choice Based Credit System, undergraduate level, colleges

1. Introduction

The development of a country is greatly influenced by its educational system. Among all educational sectors, higher education is regarded as the cornerstone of a nation's success. As India transitions from a traditional teacher-centred system to a student-centred one, higher education is undergoing significant transformation. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has mandated the implementation of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) in all undergraduate and postgraduate courses under the XI Plan of Higher Education, following a prolonged debate among educators and professionals in the relevant sectors. The CBCS is an approach for developing, implementing and evaluating curricula. The primary benefit of implementing CBCS is that it will combine the curricula and evaluation procedures used by all colleges and universities. CBCS represents a paradigm shift in the National Education Policy that aims to close the growing employability gap between undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The suggested curriculum

for this system intends to give students confidence and encourage them as they pursue complete excellence, with the major goal of the plan being to assure high standards and excellence in higher education.

1.01 Significance of the study

CBCS is an efficient approach that equips students with knowledge of diverse courses, allowing them to think critically, explore creatively, and flourish in this liberalised society. It has served as the subject of numerous undergraduate and postgraduate studies. The majority of the available research on CBCS focuses on the perceptions of both teachers and students regarding CBCS concerning students' academic performance. Nevertheless, there aren't many studies on how CBCS works for students. Numerous universities and other independent organisations have adopted CBCS. Dibrugarh University made CBCS mandatory for postgraduate students starting in the academic year 2009-2010. In the academic year 2019-2020, CBCS was introduced at the undergraduate level. Therefore, there is an urgent need to study the implementation of CBCS. To study its effectiveness, to identify the problems associated with its implementation, etc., provides ground for the rationale of the present study. This study is an attempt to analyse the implementation of CBCS for the undergraduate level, the challenges encountered by the stakeholders and on the basis of the insight into the issues, to find out some workable suggestions in this regard.

1.02 Statement of the Problem

Considering the above discussion, the present study is entitled "Implementation of Choice Based Credit System at the Undergraduate Level: A Study in Golaghat District of Assam."

1.03 Operational Definitions of the Important Terms Used in the Study

1.03.01 Choice Based Credit System

Choice Based Credit System is used in this study as it has been envisaged by the UGC and implemented by Dibrugarh University under the guidelines of the Regulations for the Undergraduate Academic Programmes in the Choice Based Credit System, 2018.

1.03.02 Undergraduate Education

In this study, undergraduate education refers to the B.A., B.Sc., and B.Com courses offered through the Choice-Based Credit System in the colleges of Golaghat District, affiliated to Dibrugarh University, Assam.

1.03.03 Colleges

In this study, the term "College" refers to the institutions of Higher Education that are situated in different places in Golaghat District of Assam and affiliated to Dibrugarh University to offer the B.A., B.Sc. and B. Com courses in the Choice Based Credit System.

1.04 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are:

1.04.01

To study the effectiveness of Choice Based Credit System for undergraduate level students.

1.04.02

To study the challenges before the colleges in the implementation of CBCS.

1.04.03

To suggest measures for overcoming the challenges faced in the implementation of Choice Based Credit

System

1.05 Delimitation of the study

Though the scope and purpose of the study are very wide, the researchers have delimited the study in the following aspects:

The study is delimited to B.A., B.Sc. and B.Com programmes offered through the Choice Based Credit System in the colleges of Golaghat District affiliated to Dibrugarh University, Assam

2.00 Review of Related Literature

Howlader and Roy (2021) conducted a study on “Attitude towards Choice Based Credit System of undergraduate students about their Academic Achievements. The findings of the study revealed that regarding the attitude towards CBCS, there exists a significant difference between boys and girls. The study showed no significant relationship between attitude towards CBCS and the academic achievement of boys and girl.

Saha (2021) studied the “Problems and Prospects of Implementing CBCS at UG Level in West Bengal”. The findings of the study showed that there are some students as well as teachers who have no clear idea about Choice Based Credit System. The study also found a lot of problems and obstacles to the implementation of CBCS.

Gogoi (2022) in her study on “The Mindset of Teachers Towards Choice Based Credit System as Evaluation System for Undergraduate Students” reported that the attitude of teachers regarding CBCS as an evaluation system for undergraduate students does not differ based on the stream of the course. The study also showed that male teachers have a more positive attitude towards CBCS in comparison to female teachers.

Gupta, S. (2023) made a study on “Choice Based Credit System in India.” The study stated that the Choice-Based Credit System in India has a revolutionary effect, encouraging a skill- and student-centred approach to higher education. The study also revealed that although there have been improvements, the system needs to be continuously assessed and adjusted to handle problems and guarantee that it continues to satisfy the changing demands of the students.

Chauhan & Pathak (2024) made a study titled “Issues, Challenges and Prospects of the Choice Based Credit System”. The study stated that the CBCS is a revolutionary approach to higher education in India that emphasises skill development, flexibility, and interdisciplinary study. Yet, institutions must address critical concerns including employability, resource allocation, and standardisation, for CBCS has become yet reached its full potential. The CBCS has the potential to significantly improve the quality of higher education in India by promoting collaboration between academic institutions, corporate leaders, and policymakers.

Baria Prerna A. (2025) conducted a study on “Perception of Prospective Teachers towards Choice Based Credit System.” The findings of the study indicated that prospective teachers value the freedom and adaptability offered by CBCS, especially when it comes to customising their educational experiences according to their interests and professional aspirations. The study also identified some issues, such as the inability to efficiently manage the workload across a variety of disciplines, uncertainty regarding course selection and the scarcity of assistance in using the system. The study also emphasises how the CBCS helps prospective teachers build their professional identities, as many of them said the system exposes them to multidisciplinary information and instructional strategies

3.00 Methodology

The descriptive research method is applied in the study.

3.01 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises the following:

3.01.01 Population of the Colleges

There are a total of 15 colleges in Golaghat District affiliated to Dibrugarh University offering B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. courses through Choice Based Credit System. The population of colleges in the present study comprises all these colleges.

3.01.02 Population of the Teachers

All the teachers of the colleges of Golaghat District affiliated to Dibrugarh University constitute the population of teachers. There are a total of 402 teachers in the colleges of Golaghat District affiliated to Dibrugarh University.

3.02 Sample of the Study

Sample of the study comprises the following:

3.02.01 Sample of the Colleges

For selecting the sample of the colleges, the researcher has adopted the Simple Random Sampling Technique. Using the lottery method, 5 colleges are selected randomly.

3.02.02 Sample of the Teachers

The researcher has used an incidental sampling technique for selecting the sample of teachers. All the teachers present during the visit to the sampled colleges were included in the sample of teachers. The sample of teachers is shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Sample of Teachers

Sl. No.	Name of the College	No. of Total Teachers	No. of Respondent Teachers
1	Joya Gogoi College	34	28
2	Marangi Mahavidyalaya	22	17
3	Kamargaon College	24	20
4	CNB College	20	16
5	JDSG College	38	29
	Total	138	110

3.03 Tools Used in the Study

The study is based on data collected from both primary and secondary sources. To collect the primary data, the researcher has developed a questionnaire for the principals of the colleges. The questionnaire consists of 8 items. Items are divided into 3 dimensions. These are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Dimensions Included in the Questionnaire for the Principals

Sl. No	Dimension	No. of Items
1	Effectiveness of Choice Based Credit System	6
2	Challenges faced in the implementation of Choice Based Credit System	1

3	Suggestions for the successful implementation of Choice Based Credit System	1
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To prepare the questionnaire, the researcher reviewed various types of questionnaires developed by different researchers for their research work. Then, based on the objectives of the study, the draft of the present questionnaire was developed. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared in English. The first draft of the questionnaire was forwarded to a few experts for ascertaining its content validity. As per the suggestions of the experts, a few questions were modified accordingly. The split-half method was used to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire. It was administered on a sample of 20 teachers of the colleges of Golaghat District affiliated to Dibrugarh University, and the coefficient of correlation of both odd and even item scores of each sampled teacher was found by using Spearman's Rank Difference Method and was found to be 0.93, which denotes a perfect correlation.

4.00 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

In this section, the researcher has attempted to analyse and interpret the data collected from the sampled principals through the questionnaires. Statistical technique percentage (%) was also used. An objective-wise analysis is made under the following sections:

4.01 Effectiveness of Choice Based Credit System for Undergraduate Level Students

Objective 1: To study the effectiveness of Choice Based Credit System for undergraduate-level students. Here, the researcher has tried to reveal the effectiveness of the Choice Based Credit System for undergraduate-level students. To measure the effectiveness, the following questions are asked to the target population, i.e., the teachers and their responses are presented in the table 3:

Table 3: Effectiveness of Choice Based Credit System for Undergraduate Level Students

Sl.	Question	Yes	No
1	Do you think that the courses available in CBCS at the Undergraduate Level under Dibrugarh University are comparable to those of other top universities across the country?	89%	11%
2	Have you noticed the enthusiasm among the students to exercise their options in selecting courses/studies, cutting across the conventional stream?	81%	19%
3	Do you believe that CBCS, with its multidisciplinary approach, facilitates students in integrating the concepts across different disciplines?	83%	17%
4	Do you agree that CBCS assists students in diversely obtaining learning experiences?	92%	8%
5	Do you think that the courses in CBCS cover adequate content to transmit knowledge?	78%	22%
6	Do you think the elective courses in CBCS have enhanced the students' employability?	74%	26%

By analysing the data, it is observed that most of the respondents (89%) provided positive responses that the courses available in CBCS at the Undergraduate Level under Dibrugarh University are comparable to those of other top universities across the country. Again, it is revealed that 81% of the total respondents have noticed the enthusiasm among the students to exercise their options in selecting courses/studies, cutting across the conventional stream. From the data, it is also seen that 83% of the total participants agreed that CBCS, with its multidisciplinary approach, facilitates students in integrating the concepts across different disciplines. Most of the respondents (92%) said that CBCS assists students in diversely obtaining learning experiences. It is also seen that 78% of total participants agreed that the courses in CBCS cover adequate content to transmit knowledge. From the responses of the participants, it is revealed that 74% of the respondents provided their opinion that CBCS have enhanced the students' employability.

4.02 Challenges before the colleges in the implementation of CBCS

Objective 2: To study the challenges before colleges in the implementation of CBCS.

From the analysis of the responses received from the sampled teachers, the following challenges were found regarding the implementation of Choice Based Credit System:

- Limitations in terms of courses, especially vocational and skill-based courses, would hinder in successful implementation of CBCS.
- Lack of adequate infrastructure and technological intervention also creates problems.
- Another problem is the lack of skilled professionals to teach various skill-based courses.
- Students in the CBCS might be confused due to the variety of subject choices available to them.
- Transferring or moving students from one institution to another would be problematic.
- It would be difficult to simultaneously offer multiple courses of different natures.
- Insufficient text and reference books available in the college library also create problems.

4.03 Suggestions for Effective Implementation of Choice Based Credit System

Objective 3: To suggest measures for overcoming the challenges faced in the implementation of Choice Based Credit System.

From the analysis of the responses from the sampled teachers, the following suggestions are found for the effective implementation of Choice Based Credit System:

- Skilled faculty for skill-based courses should be appointed.
- Proper and adequate planning of the curriculum should be made.
- Workshop and discussion on different aspects of CBCS should be organised.
- All colleges should be made multi-streamed.
- More vocational subjects should be introduced.
- Sufficient digital classroom should be provided.
- More options should be provided to the students for choosing elective courses.
- Adequate infrastructure is necessary.
- The government should provide sufficient financial assistance.

5.00 Major Findings of the Study

The following major findings have been drawn based on the analysis and interpretation of data:

- Most of the teachers (89%) responded that the courses available in the CBCS at the Undergraduate

Level under Dibrugarh University are comparable to those of other top universities across the country.

- 81% of the total respondents noticed the enthusiasm among the students to exercise their options in selecting courses/studies, cutting across the conventional stream.
- 83% of total teachers said that CBCS, with its multidisciplinary approach, facilitates students in integrating the concepts across different disciplines.
- Most of the teachers (92%) viewed that CBCS assists students in diversely obtaining learning experiences.
- 78% of total teachers responded that the courses in CBCS cover adequate content to transmit knowledge.
- The elective courses in CBCS have enhanced the students' employability as viewed by 74% of respondent teachers.
- Most of the sampled teachers have faced various problems in the implementation of CBCS in their colleges such as limitation in terms of vocational and skill-based courses, lack of adequate infrastructure, lack of skilled professionals to teach various skill-based courses, insufficient text and reference books, challenges in moving or transferring from one institution to another, difficulty in selection of elective papers, problems in managing the time etc.
- Most of the respondents provided various suggestions for solving the problems faced in the based Credit System, such as appointment of skilled faculty for skill-based courses, adequate infrastructure, proper and adequate planning on curriculum, organisation of workshops and discussions on different aspects of CBCS, introduction of more vocational subjects, provision of sufficient financial assistance etc.

6.00 Conclusion

The Indian higher education system is expected to undergo reform. The goal behind implementing the CBCS is to provide students more freedom to choose from a wider range of interdisciplinary courses and to bring academic programmes at par with those of prestigious Indian institutions, as well as top international universities. Under the 11th Plan of Higher Education, the UGC has mandated the implementation of the Choice Based Credit System in all undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The Choice Based Credit System is a progressive step in Assam's higher education landscape, aimed at aligning with national and global educational standards. While it presents certain implementation challenges, its potential to empower students and improve the quality of education makes it significant. The views and suggestions revealed from the study will be beneficial in removing the problems faced in the implementation of CBCS as well as in making it more effective. The findings of the study should be interpreted keeping in mind the delimitations as stated. The success of a new system mostly depends upon the availabilities of facilities it demands for effective implementations. The success of CBCS rests upon the multiplicity of disciplines and related infrastructure required in the colleges, in absence of which it may not come out with desired outcomes.

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