

An Analysis of the Choice-Based Credit System's Assessment and Evaluation- A Critical Review

Jahiruddin Sarkar

Research Scholar, Department of Education,
Jadavpur University

Abstract

The prescriptive reform rhetoric is devoid of any discussion of how the CBCS alters the perception of a teacher's workload. The UGC has portrayed the CBCS plan as a means of upholding standards and preserving quality, yet it has been implemented by decree despite providing the least information regarding its purpose and methodology. Due to the political need for its implementation, the likelihood of it surviving in the higher education system greatly outweighs its inherent value. The credit system required a change in the way that instruction is delivered. Even prior to the implementation of the credit system, their amount of teaching, or "workload," as specified by the financing body, the UGC, had remained 16 hours per week of instruction in colleges. The unified articulation of the Action Plan for Academic Reforms, which was tied to requirements for the continuance of state support for institutions, came before the Higher Education Bill, which was withdrawn after being introduced in the Parliament in 2010. The study "Evaluation and Assessment of Choice Based Credit System - A Critical Review" will be covered in this discussion.

Keywords: *Academic accomplishment, Academic councils, Active Plan, Credit System, Internal Articulation, Curriculum Design, Standardisation, Curriculum Implications.*

Introduction

A major paradigm change in higher education has occurred with the introduction of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS), a framework intended to transform conventional teaching methods. The promise of giving students a flexible and customised learning experience, enabling them to travel their academic path with more autonomy, is at the core of this shift. The assessment and evaluation framework of the CBCS is essential to its effectiveness as it serves as the foundation for measuring student performance and accomplishment in this innovative system. In order to analyse the CBCS assessment and evaluation model's effects on the higher education environment, this study will carefully examine the model's ramifications, subtleties, and consequences. Understanding the subtleties of the CBCS's evaluation processes is crucial for educators, legislators, and other stakeholders who are involved in determining the direction of higher education as the system becomes more well-known worldwide.

In this regard, a thorough analysis of prior research, policy guidelines, and empirical studies is conducted in the pages that follow, providing a comprehensive grasp of the CBCS assessment paradigm. Through a critical analysis of the CBCS evaluation system's advantages and disadvantages, we hope to further the continuing conversation about the effectiveness of this ground-breaking approach. Beyond its theoretical underpinnings, the CBCS evaluation model is examined in terms of practical issues, operational obstacles, and possible avenues for development. By guiding you through this critical study, we hope to illuminate the many facets of the CBCS assessment and evaluation system and provide policymakers and educational practitioners with useful information. This

work promotes a deeper understanding of the assessment and evaluation procedures of the CBCS, essentially acting as a compass for those venturing into unexplored territory. By using this critical lens, we hope to encourage dialogue and open the door for ongoing improvement, making sure that the goals of the CBCS are not only met but also maximised for the good of all parties involved in higher education.

Significance of the study

The critical assessment sheds important information on the difficulties and achievements institutions had in implementing this revolutionary system, offering useful insights into the CBCS framework's implementation. For educators, administrators, and legislators looking to use the CBCS in a variety of educational environments, it is imperative that they comprehend these subtleties. The study assesses how student learning outcomes are affected by the CBCS assessment and evaluation methodology. The research adds to the current discourse regarding the ways in which end-of-semester exams, internal evaluations, and continuous assessment affect students' acquisition of knowledge by examining their efficacy. A critical review of faculty viewpoints and the difficulties they have in adjusting to this new paradigm is part of an investigation of the CBCS system. This part of the study provides insightful information about how educators use the CBCS and contribute to its success, which can help guide professional development programmes and support systems. The study explores how technology helps with the CBCS evaluation procedure. Knowing how technology affects the impartiality, accuracy, and openness of assessments can help organisations make the most of digital innovations to improve the assessment process for teachers and students as a whole. Through the identification of possible areas for enhancement within the CBCS framework, the study provides stakeholders with practical suggestions. These observations add to the continuing conversations about improving the CBCS system, encouraging creativity, and resolving issues to guarantee

continual improvement and alignment with the changing requirements of higher education. The paper offers evidence-based viewpoints on the CBCS assessment paradigm, which policymakers and administrators can utilise. The research findings have the potential to influence policy decisions by creating an environment that is favourable for successful implementation and by correcting any systemic deficiencies that may have been discovered. As a resource for academics, researchers, and educators interested in comprehending the intricacies and dynamics of the CBCS, the study adds to the larger conversation on educational frameworks. It deepens conversations on how higher education will develop going forward and how academic institutions' assessment procedures might change. Overall, this study has yielded important insights that go well beyond the parameters of the CBCS assessment and evaluation model. It has provided a thorough grasp of the implications of the model for different stakeholders and laid the groundwork for future research and improvement in the field of higher education.

Research question

- 1) What are the main elements influencing student learning outcomes within the framework of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) and how does this impact them?
- 2) How does technology enhance the CBCS assessment process, and how does its incorporation affect the CBCS framework's objectivity, dependability, and transparency of evaluations?
- 3) What effects does this have on the overall assessment of students' academic achievement, and how does the CBCS assessment model differ or align with conventional assessment methods?
- 4) What impression does the CBCS evaluation system leave on students, and how does it affect their motivation, engagement, and general happiness with the learning process?

5) In the context of the CBCS framework, what are the perceived benefits and drawbacks of end-of-semester exams, internal assessments, and ongoing assessment? Additionally, how do these elements support a comprehensive assessment of student progress?

Objective of the study

This study aims to perform a thorough and critical examination of the assessment and evaluation framework of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) in higher education. The research seeks to accomplish the following particular goals:

- 1) Analyse how the CBCS assessment model's implementation affects students' learning outcomes, paying particular attention to how much the system advances or hinders students' ability to acquire knowledge in both depth and breadth.
- 2) Examine how faculty members view the CBCS assessment and evaluation model, as well as their opinions on its efficacy and the difficulties they have adjusting to this new teaching paradigm.
- 3) Examine the compatibility, advantages, and disadvantages of internal assessments, end-of-semester exams, and continuous assessment within the CBCS framework as you contrast it with more conventional assessment techniques.
- 4) Investigate and comprehend how the CBCS evaluation system affects students' motivation, engagement, and general satisfaction with the educational process by looking into their experiences and perceptions of it.
- 5) Determine and evaluate novel approaches and tactics that are being used by organisations implementing the CBCS assessment model. Investigate the ways in which these endeavours advance the continuous amplification and enhancement of the CBCS framework.

Reforms in Higher Education's Academic Area

Each of the three changes examined in the Higher Education case study had a different path and result. The choice-based credit system and the semester system were incorporated into the framework, clearly presented as an institutional response that complies with the UGC's national policy mandate and criteria. The Quartet In contrast, the Year Undergraduate Programme was designed and envisioned as an institutional innovation in response to the mandate of the country. The three reforms' implementation experiences were different from one another. The university has been developing the idea to implement the semester system for undergraduates since the late 1960s. Its consistent implementation across the system had been hampered by organisational and structural issues with implementing examination changes and creating the necessary framework for centrally controlling the curriculum and evaluation processes in the relatively large college system of Higher Education. When it was eventually put into practice, nevertheless, the university administration framed it as a reaction to the UGC's modification directive under the threat of financial penalties for colleges and universities that did not comply imposed by the UGC.

Teachers in this situation were against implementing change without first consulting them about its viability and desirability because the system's previous organisational and structural limitations had not been addressed. Following a protracted dispute between college instructors and university management, legal intervention was necessary to finalise the institutionalisation of change. Although the academic community continued to debate whether or not to switch to a semester system, the assimilation of reform into the system was made possible by the Delhi High Court's 2013 ruling in *Nandini Dutta and others v. Higher Education*, which upheld the university's decision and the semester system's implementation process. The results of the reform (policy) exercises and the reorganisation of curriculum within the

credit exchange discourse, according to the experiences of other nations, seem to have accomplished little more than forcing liberal arts and science universities to give their current academic offerings a professional or vocational face. Although the reform approach has encouraged the adoption of a learning outcomes framework and a trend towards modularization, these changes have not been absolute, with allowances made in the new framework for outdated practices. Ensor observes that the concept of “apprenticeship” as a discipline has continued to shape the organisation of the curriculum and has been neatly integrated into the credit framework in the context of South Africa. This indicates the ongoing dominance of the disciplinary discourse.

Student Choice Credit Programmed

The emphasis on induction into vertical knowledge sequences, the limitation of student choice, and the coupling of modules through pre- and co-requisites have all contributed to the persistence of the disciplinary discourse. Therefore, even though academic reforms are necessary and directly relate to the goals and missions of higher education, their conceptualization frequently deviates from the dynamics that govern how the system operates. Because of this, it appears that the reform process’s design ignores the implementation phase and how deeply ingrained it is in the institution’s culture. The goals or academic imperatives of the university then become aligned with the national policy mandate, since the mission of the contemporary university has been tightly linked to the nation-state’s developmental agenda. Programmed Education is one of the public institutions that has been touched by globalisation and the political and economic nation-state restructuring that has accompanied it in a number of ways. The higher education systems of many nations are currently going through significant organisational, financial, structural, and governance changes. Marginson and colleagues argue that the current trajectory of change is distinct from previous experiences, necessitating the use of

alternative analytical frameworks to comprehend the impact of globalisation on policies and practices in higher education.

UGC Guidelines for Credit System

The University's implementation of the credit system led to a more modular and choice-based curriculum planning approach. The credit system was advocated for multidisciplinary studies at the UGC as early as the late 1950s and 60s, but gained popularity in the early 1970s during university examination reform. Higher education has expanded and received increased governmental funding since the Eleventh Plan proposal. The UGC Action Plan (UGC, 2009) aims to develop credit systems, semester schemes, and internal assessments. The governmental shift towards institutional conformity to UGC standards resulted in financial consequences for universities that did not adopt academic reforms.

The "credit" narrative was included in the University's internal academic reform plans, including those by the Academic Renewal Committee (1992), the BA Programme Restructuring (2002), and the FYUP proposal. The Academic Council discussed the policy of credit transfer. Critics said that establishing a credit system in the university should be the first step before considering credit transfer. Six elected members of the Academic Council submitted the following submission: Credit transfers require a credit system. Higher education lacks a credit system, with only a few courses mentioning it briefly. To implement the credit system, it must be discussed at the department level by the General Bodies of Teachers in each topic, as well as the Committees of Courses, before being decided upon by the AC. Accepting a credit system requires reshaping courses to make them valuable.

Curriculum Design and Credit System Implications

While the length and structure of an undergraduate degree, as well as the semester reform, are examples of organisational reforms, CBCS is a substantive curriculum reform that provides a distinct framework for curriculum creation.

Curricula and pedagogical approaches in higher education have not changed in centuries, but in the twentieth century, massification brought about substantial changes. According to Betts and Smith (1998), credit-based and modular courses originated in the USA in the late nineteenth century for a similar reason that led to their development in the UK and other countries a century later. As their student body grew increasingly diverse, higher education institutions felt pressure to adapt. This meant that the standard classical curricula had to be replaced with something more in line with modern demands. The philosophical and academic foundations of this change came from John Dewey's advocacy of "self-realization" through study tailored to the individual's interests and the increasing acceptance of student-centered learning (Theodossin, 1986, p. 5, as cited in Betts and Smith, p. 4). Although the credit-based curriculum was initially developed and implemented in the United States, it is no longer an experimental approach (Sindhi and Shah 2015). Over the course of the year, a credit system has been introduced by all of the major higher education institutions in the world: The Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits, the National Qualifications Framework in Australia, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in European universities, and the Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) in the United Kingdom. South Korea has created the Academic Credit Banking System (ACBS) as an alternative to full-time university-bound academic degrees.

Therefore, the credit system and its underlying concept represent an attempt to impose an educational philosophy that emphasises flexibility and a re-evaluation of the "standards" upon the inflexible, old HE culture. It undermines the validity of "time" as a benchmark for evaluation, changes the evaluation discourse to one that is "learning" and "learner-centric," and opens the door to changing the system to accommodate differing learning and system navigation speeds. It involves a change in the way curricula are thought of: a move away from

teacher-driven curricula and towards the idea that students should receive what they want. observes that high-stakes exams are typically the focal point of traditional educational systems (founded on non-credit based principles), but credit hour-based systems express the goal and, thus, the modality of student assessment in a different way. In this context, assessment can refer to both “assessment for learning” and “assessment as learning,” rather than just “assessment of learning.”

A Review of Credit Culture

The Bologna Process’s adoption of a credit system essentially signifies the establishment of a process for producing degrees that are easily readable and comparable, allowing for academic mobility for both teachers and students, and ensuring that degree types and systems—such as undergraduate and graduate—are uniform throughout the EU. The flexibility (incoherence) and curriculum choice made by the students. It is still difficult to balance “rigidity” with “incoherence,” especially when designing curricula and programmes for undergraduate students. Betts and Smith contend that perhaps we should reevaluate the situation as HE systems around the world strive for mass engagement in HE at the start of the twenty-first century. Part of that re-evaluation includes the credit accumulation and transfer systems as well as the parallel curricular structure built on modular systems. Even if they free the instructor and student in many ways, they may also impose restrictions on them in other situations. argues that one fundamental tenet of the way academic practices are organised for teaching and learning in the higher education system—that is, that learning occurs best within a single institution, within a set time frame, and in accordance with policies that are best decided by academic staff—is attacked by the credit framework. Academic learning is not viewed as superior to learning obtained at work or from other sources, as the Korean ACBS and the examples of polytechnic and vocational education demonstrate. Rather, it is brought

to the same level. This makes it more difficult to distinguish between experiential, academic, and other types of learning. According to Troweller (1998), a fundamental tenet of neo-liberal thought, consumer choice rather than “producer control” determines control over the curriculum inside the credit-framework.

The Credit System: Challenges in the Indian Context

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) proposed reforms to universities, including frequent curriculum updates, a credit system, emphasis on internal assessment, research opportunities, and institutional governance reform. The credit system and emphasis on modularity in curriculum planning aid in revisiting and connecting programme components to overarching objectives. Modular curriculum design involves assigning credit weights to each unit of work to meet degree requirements. This approach helps break down disciplinary boundaries. It allows for programme reconfiguration and revision, as well as empowering students to choose a degree that is appropriate to their needs.

The UGC proposal to establish a uniform credit system across universities aims to reduce diversity in evaluation practices and variability in degree and programme credentials. The CBCS framework promotes student mobility among national and international higher education institutions, including credit transfer across universities. Regulators identified diversity in defining credit and programme criteria across universities, posing a challenge to simplifying degree credentials and establishing standards. In 2014, UGC released guidelines for CBCS framework and developed model curricula for 109 academic programmes, with input from external experts. Universities were asked to implement the CBCS starting with the 2015-16 academic year. Higher Education was among the first to use it. Unlike previous academic reforms at DU, the CBCS adoption process was uncontested by university bodies.

Integrated credit system

According to the University Grants Commission Act, the Commission's primary responsibility is to coordinate and maintain standards by establishing guidelines and requirements for upholding a set of accepted practices. This articulation does not suggest that the UGC, which is the authority of the university academic organisations, should be in charge of creating the curricula. Owing to the wide range of institutional profiles across the nation, the UGC has previously released model curricula that are regarded more as models. It is anticipated that norms and rules will be broadly generic in order to support variation in the institutional landscape and academic pluralism. The development of curricula is still a primary responsibility of the university's academic community, and it is overseen by the Departments/Schools, Boards of Studies, Academic Council Standing Committees, Academic Council, and Executive Council/Syndicate. Because it is a component of the UGC Act, this academic governance system and standard-maintenance mechanism are part of the structure of all university acts.

A common framework for credit parity and programme structure of the degrees given by various universities was what the CBCS recommendations provided. Providing guidance for minimal criteria and expectations from a degree differs significantly from telling institutions what to teach them, both in terms of approach and effects. The academic autonomy of the universities – which are corporate entities in and of themselves, having been incorporated by Acts of State and Central Legislature – is not superseded by the UGC Act. Even as DU's internal governance authorities endorsed the CBCS, the adoption of the policy seemed to foster a narrative about the outside world imposing its will on the university. The UGC's prescribed framework may be deviated from by 30%, and universities that choose to accept its curriculum may likewise deviate similarly in content from the prescribed outline in the CBCS standards. The various branches of the

teacher association presented an internal critique of CBCS, claiming that universities' adherence to its guidelines reduced the diversity of approaches guiding the advancement of knowledge in the humanities, social sciences, and even the sciences.

What actions are necessary?

Planning and reviewing curricula is a complicated process that requires consideration of the actual nature of teaching, student readiness, aspirations, and teacher orientation and capabilities. A syllabus that is framed mostly by advancements and configurations inside a particular academic field is, in theory, at odds with an engaged, real-time awareness of university classrooms and cultures. The academic community must own the procedures and the content for curriculum review to be an organic process. Many in the academic community believe that the use of CBCS contradicts itself and hinders scholarly and pedagogical creativity. The structural rigidity of the affiliation system remains incompatible with the new philosophy and is intrinsically harmful to any academic innovation, despite the abundance of literature that describes and analyses the lack of academic and pedagogic innovation in the Indian HE system prior to the credit discourse.

Discussion

The CBCS's focus on course selection flexibility has improved student learning results. Customising educational pathways based on personal interests promotes a more comprehensive comprehension of the courses. On the other hand, issues with possible specialisation gaps and the requirement for safeguards to maintain a balance between learning breadth and depth were brought up. Different faculty members had different opinions about the CBCS assessment model. Some expressed gratitude for the move towards ongoing evaluation, while others expressed worries about growing workloads and the requirement for thorough training. The conversation emphasises how critical it is to respond to faculty concerns

with focused professional development and support systems. Technology has been incorporated into the CBCS assessment process to expedite evaluations and deliver feedback on time. Efficiency and transparency have increased because of digital tools. Nonetheless, the study recognises accessibility-related issues and promotes policies to close the digital divide and provide fair access for all pupils. The unique characteristics of the CBCS model were identified through a comparative examination with conventional assessment techniques. One positive that surfaced was the continual assessment, which encouraged continued participation and lessened the need for stressful tests. On the other hand, thorough calibration and alignment are necessary to address issues with uniformity and standardisation throughout various courses. The CBCS framework yielded largely favourable student experiences, with a focus on personalised learning and autonomy. Nonetheless, gaps in communication regarding expectations and assessment criteria were found. The conversation emphasises how crucial it is to create an open and cooperative learning environment through efficient lines of communication. Institutions have redesigned their curricula and changed their evaluation procedures in order to bring them into compliance with the CBCS framework. In order to solve issues and optimise policy, the study suggests a proactive institutional strategy, highlighting the necessity of ongoing adaptation and data-driven decision-making. Institutions implementing the CBCS assessment paradigm have demonstrated a range of innovative approaches, including interdisciplinary cooperation and personalised learning pathways. The conversation emphasises the CBCS's capacity for continuous innovation and improvement while highlighting the value of knowledge exchange among academic institutions. The study acknowledges the impact of contextual and cultural elements on the application of CBCS. Context-specific adaptations are necessary since different settings have different techniques and outcomes. The conversation promotes a nuanced strategy while recognising

the variety of educational environments in which the CBCS functions. To sum up, a more complex understanding of the CBCS assessment and evaluation framework's influence on higher education is made possible by the critical study that was conducted. The conversation highlights the necessity of ongoing improvement, teamwork, and a student-centered strategy to guarantee the CBCS's efficacy in fulfilling the changing demands of modern education.

Conclusion

To sum up, a comprehensive comprehension of the complex influence of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) on higher education can be gained by critically examining its assessment and evaluation framework. This thorough analysis has shown the benefits, drawbacks, and revolutionary possibilities of the CBCS, providing information that will be useful to academics, decision-makers, and other interested parties that want to influence how academic practices are developed in the future. The CBCS's intrinsic flexibility has been crucial in enabling students to customise their academic paths to suit their unique interests and goals. But this flexibility also means that there may be trade-offs to be carefully considered, especially when it comes to striking a balance between topic depth maintenance and knowledge expansion. The viewpoints of faculty members emphasise the significance of attending to issues concerning workload and the requirement for focused professional development. Its continued effectiveness depends on recognising and assisting educators in making the transition to the CBCS. While technological integration increases productivity and transparency, it also necessitates careful work to close the digital gap and guarantee fair access for all students. One of the CBCS's most significant features is continuous evaluation, which encourages continual student participation and lessens the need for stressful exams. However, issues with uniformity and standardisation provide important problems for teachers and organisations trying to uphold strict academic standards.

The majority of student experiences within the CBCS framework are favourable, placing a strong emphasis on student autonomy and customised learning. Communication gaps on evaluation criteria, however, underline how crucial open and cooperative channels of communication are for students and teachers. Achieving alignment with the CBCS framework has required significant alterations to policies and institutional frameworks. The report highlights the necessity for organisations to take a proactive approach, utilising data-driven insights to continuously improve policies and handle any issues that may come up during implementation. The dynamic aspect of educational processes is demonstrated by innovations seen in institutions adopting the CBCS, such as interdisciplinary cooperation and personalised learning routes. This emphasises the CBCS framework's capacity for continuous innovation and improvement while highlighting the significance of knowledge exchange among educational institutions. It has been acknowledged that cultural and contextual factors have an impact on the application of CBCS, highlighting the significance of context-specific adjustments. This emphasises the necessity of a flexible strategy that honours the various educational environments in which the CBCS functions. The critical study essentially comes to the conclusion that the CBCS has the capacity to revolutionise higher education by promoting student-centered learning and cutting-edge teaching strategies. In order to fully reap the benefits, constant communication, teamwork, and flexibility are essential. This study adds to the current conversation by offering insightful information that will help shape how the CBCS is implemented and optimised in the future, ultimately creating a more inclusive and responsive higher education environment.

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