

# SEMESTERISATION – A FAULTY SYSTEM OR FAULT IN THE MODE OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION

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## ABSTRACT

*Semesterisation was introduced at undergraduate level in affiliated colleges of University of Kashmir in 2015 to replace the annual system of examinations. It was thought that in the annual system of examination students show negligence towards their studies as the examination is conducted only once in a year. It was also believed that examination conducted at the end of the year has limitations in assessing the capacity of students. There was a tendency among the students to skip major portion of the syllabi and concentrate on only certain topics to pass the examination. The examination only at the end of academic session or year, more often than not, insulates students from the quest of knowledge, the excitement of discovery and the joy of learning. Also it was a burden for the students to prepare the entire syllabus for the annual examination. Even it was thought that the attendance of the college going students will get better but there is hue and cry among the college students, parents and academicians against semesterisation as it is thought that by this system precious time (one year) may be lost by the students who are currently enrolled in undergraduate courses in colleges affiliated with University of Kashmir. This paper highlights the reasons for the failure of semesterisation and their possible remedies to make it practical in nature at undergraduate level in Kashmir.*

## INTRODUCTION

As a major reformation in higher education, the 11th five year plan of India as well as the National Knowledge Commission had recommended revamping of higher education through academic and administrative reforms. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has emphasized on such reforms and this was followed by the recommendations made on similar lines by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU). Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) and semesterisation were introduced with the ultimate goal to bring reforms in higher education so that students develop thinking as well as analytical ability. UGC came up with Choice Based Credit System for universities and colleges, in which the students have a choice to choose from the prescribed courses, which consist of core, elective or minor or soft skill courses and students can learn at their own pace. The basic idea is to look into the needs of the students so as to keep up 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. CBCS has the following basic elements: **Semesters, Credit System, Credit Transfer, Comprehensive Continuous Assessment and Grading.**

Semesterisation as such is basically a component of CBCS. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* a semester is 'a period or term of six months'. As per UGC regulation, in a semester there has to be a minimum of 90 teaching days or 15-18 weeks of academic work for learner-teacher engagement.

Introduction of the semester system was advocated by the NPE, 1986 with a view to ensure greater flexibility and functionality among the courses to be offered at the secondary and higher secondary stages. The greatest argument in support of the semester system is the freedom it offers in experimenting with the satisfactory tools and techniques of evaluation in general and the learning outcomes in particular. It supports the universal belief that evaluation should be both comprehensive and continuous and that it should be more formative and corrective in nature than summative and judgemental. The document entitled *Higher Secondary Education and Its Vocationalisation* (NCERT, 1991-92) dealt with the question of semesterisation particularly in the context of vocationalisation of higher secondary education, which also recommended the semester system for facilitating flexibility in learning and evaluation.

Semester based education aims at formulating convenient units of learning and making a quantum jump in educational standards. It can initiate and sustain a process of modernisation and improvement in teaching and learning and provide flexibility in the choice of courses to suit the individual needs and interests. It can also lead to reforms in the technique of evaluation the promotion of interdisciplinary approach and studies and internal evaluation by the teacher teaching the courses. The semester system divided the educational course into small modules or packages. In most of the cases, one year course has been arbitrarily divided into two parts to be covered in the two halves of an academic session.

In semesterisation there is clear cut identification of:

1. Teacher- learner engagement.
2. Duration for conduct of assessment and term end examination.
3. Declaration of grades

Both semester and the Choice Based Credit Systems as a policy reform in education came as a ray of hope to all the seekers and observers of education system and especially as a thread for the well-being of the long run development of the student's academic base and knowledge. The whole framework saw a revision. The syllabus was holistically changed, modified and advanced. Student's participation grew and above all the college attendance and working rose dramatically. This opened doors for co-circulars and other activities like debating clubs, drama clubs, skill development courses etc.

Keeping in view the benefits of semesterisation and CBCS University of Kashmir thereby introduced semester system in 2015 in place of its annual examination system followed by the CBCS in 2016 at the undergraduate level. The decision was taken after 2014 floods. It was thought that in the annual system of examination students

show negligence towards their studies as the examination is conducted only once in a year. It was also believed that examination conducted at the end of the year has limitations in assessing the capacity of students. There was a tendency among the students to skip major portion of the syllabi and concentrate on only certain topics to pass the examination. The examination only at the end of academic session or year, more often than not, insulates students from the quest of knowledge, the excitement of discovery and the joy of learning. Also it was a burden for the students to prepare the entire syllabus for the annual examination. Even it was thought that the attendance of the college going students will get better. Under CBCS, the curriculum was redefined to keep pace with the liberalization and globalization in education and to look into the needs of the students and increase their job opportunities. To improve quality of academics and put emphasis on continuous, comprehensive and in-depth learning, aimed at capacity building of the students, the annual system was replaced by semester system.

Semester system did not work well in Kashmir. It was implemented with the belief to improve the quality of higher education in our colleges but it is proving to be counterproductive as the first batch of semester system which was enrolled in year 2015 are still in fifth(5<sup>th</sup>) semester. This is a cause of concern for students, parents and academicians and fingers are being pointed towards the system of semesterisation. Students are demanding for the scrapping of semesterisation and reimplementing of annual examination system.

## II.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the flaws of semesterisation at undergraduate level in Kashmir.
2. To suggest remedies for successful implementation of semesterisation and CBCS at undergraduate level.

## III.OBSERVATIONS

Let us have a look on the admissions and examinations of undergraduate courses since 2015

s.no	Batch	Semester	Admission	Examination
1	2015	First	June-July 2015	08 to 28 Dec. 2015
		Second	Continued	08-12-2016 to 03-01-2017
		Third	13-25 Jan. 2017	06-31 May 2017
		Forth	Continued	11-10-2017 to 23-11-2017
		Fifth and Sixth	22-12-2017 to 15-01-2018	
2	2016	First	05-22 March 2016	31-01-2017 to 28-02-2017
		Second	Continued	10- 07-2017 to 16-08-2017
		Third	27-09-2017 to 18-10-2017	
3	2017	First	17-29 March 2017	28-10-2017 to 30-11-2017
		Second	Continued	

#### IV. DISCUSSION BASED ON ABOVE TABLE

##### Batch 2017

1. First semester, batch 2017 got admission in the month of March 2017. The said semester stretched for eight months up to ending November 2017. If the affiliating University worked with the same pace, their second semester will end by the month of July 2018. This means one year (two semesters) will be completed in sixteen (16) months.

##### Batch 2016

2. Batch 2016 got admission in March 2016, till date have completed only two semesters. They completed two semesters in seventeen (17) months, which was supposed to be completed in twelve (12) months.
3. Admission notification for third semester, batch 2016 was notified 42 days after the completion of second semester examination.
4. Batch 2016 took one and a half year (18 months) to complete one year (two semesters), which was supposed to be completed in one academic year.

##### Batch 2015

5. Batch 2015 got admission in June- July 2015. Their first semester examination was conducted in the month of December 2015.
6. Their second semester examination was completed in the month of January 2017. That is one semester ran for more than one year.
7. The third and fourth semesters of batch 2015 were completed only in ten months.
8. Admission notification for fifth semester batch 2015 was notified after one month of completion of second semester exams.
9. In the month of January 2018 University of Kashmir came up with the decision of holding joint examination for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semesters for batch 2015 in the month of June 2018, which means they have to qualify two semesters in a meagre time of less than five (5) months.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE OBSERVATIONS

1. Too much of time is taken to notify admission process in colleges. After the conduction of examination of second and forth semesters more than a months' time is wasted. For admission in first semester this year, notification came in the month of March while as the J&K BOSE declared 12th class result in second week of January 2018.
2. Examinations are not conducted on right time. At certain times examination is conducted after a gap of one year.
3. Time taken to conduct examination for one semester is usually more than one month. A large gap is placed for preparation between the examinations of two papers.
4. Time take to declare results by the University is humongous in nature because first semester batch 2016 completed their examinations of the said semester in the last week of February 2017 and their results were declared in the month of January 2018, which is almost one year duration.

## VI.SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

So far as my research is concerned I came up with the conclusion that semester system in itself is not a faulty system. It proved to be a failure because of its faulty implementation. The non-serious attitude of University of Kashmir is the greatest hurdle in the successful implementation of semesterisation in Kashmir. *Scrapping off this system and returning back to the annual system will be like compromising with the quality of education.* Our college students also feel that semesterisation could improve the quality of education but they cannot afford that quality which will waste one year of their precious academic year. The affiliating University could take following steps for success of semesterisation:

1. Admission notification for subsequent semesters should be issued by the concerned University at least 15 days before the completion of previous semester examinations so that students' time is not wasted because of delayed admission process. After the completion of their examinations they sit idle almost for two months before the commencement of teaching learning process for next semester.
2. Examination calendar should be strictly adhered to so that a semester, which is of six months duration does not get extended to eight or ten months as is currently the practice in vogue.
3. Preparation gap between papers of different combinations offered should be reduced so that examination process does not linger for months.
4. Evaluation and subsequent declaration of results for each semester should be expedited so that *semester results do not become annual results.*

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