

**CHOICE BASED CREDIT SYSTEM: AN OPINION SURVEY OF TEACHERS OF
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY**

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Abstract:

In India, in the past years many of the higher education institutions, have introduced the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in their UG or/and PG level courses. The CBCS provides a unique feature which is like a 'cafeteria' type approach in which the students can select courses of their choice, learn at their own convenience, they can also take up additional courses and earned more than the required credits, and this system follows an interdisciplinary approach to learning (UGC Guidelines). The Mizoram University has implemented the CBCS system in its PG Programmes from 2012. This paper highlights the opinions of teachers of Mizoram University regarding different issues relating to Choice Based Credit System which have been practiced in Mizoram University for almost 9 years now. The paper deals with the important issues like need for training of teachers and non-teaching staff on CBCS, impact of CBCS on the work load of teachers, problem faced by academic departments.

Keywords: Choice Based Credit System, Mizoram University, Credit system

Introduction:

The report given by National Knowledge Commission 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. The main focus for this reform was to transform the higher education of India at par with the international standard and be equivalent to developed nations. University Grant Commission (11th plan, March 2009) and Association of Indian Universities (AIU) come up with the Choice Based Credit System. This system allows the students to choose from the prescribed courses given by their institution, which are classified as core, elective or minor or soft skill

courses. In CBCS, assessment is done by means of grade and credit system. It is design in such a way that the students can learn at their own speed. The main idea behind this transformation is to serve the needs of the students so as to keep up-to-date with development and innovations happening in higher education due to liberalization and globalization all over the world. CBCS authorize the student's mobility in different educational institutions across the country as well as all over the globe and transferring of credits earned from parental institution to other institution is also available in CBCS. As CBCS has many interesting features, it is the answer to the emerging socio-economic situations, and could effectively respond to the educational needs and occupational aspirations of the upcoming generations. With the help of modern Information and Communication Technology, CBCS has a high probability to be implement effectively and efficiently - bringing students, institutions and higher education to newer heights.

There have been many debates and deliberations regarding the implementation of CBCS all over the country, CBCS is implemented in such haste in many universities, so without clear guidelines or without proper training/orientation it has been implemented. It may be too early to jump into conclusions as it has been practiced only for a few years now. As CBCS is a process of evolution of educational reforms that would reveal the result in successive years and after a few cycles of its implementation.

Mizoram University, in view the aforesaid recommendations, has implemented Choice Based Credit System in its PG Programs from 2012-2013 academic session, and has already produced two batches of students. Mizoram University has drafted two regulations for Post Graduate programmes under CBCS, the first one in 2012 and the second one in the year 2015. There have been various modifications and changes in the second regulation; there has been a change in the course structure, modifications have been made. However, the present study has been confined to the teacher's opinions on the various provisions under CBCS Regulation-2012 of Mizoram University.

The successful implementation of CBCS largely depends on the teachers. For the success of any system in education, the effectiveness of the teacher greatly affects the outcome. CBCS has come up with many new changes that has been lacking in the previous system, so the teachers are left with many challenges. So, in this paper we will be discussing the various problems and difficulties they encountered and steps that has been taken for the successful implementation of CBCS.

1. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the opinions of teachers on need of training of teaching and non-teaching staff on CBCS.
2. To study the opinions of teachers on impact of CBCS on teachers.
3. To study the opinions of teachers on impact of CBCS.
4. Impact of CBCS on the Functioning of Academic Departments.

3. Review of Related Literature

Deuri (2015) in his study, Attitude towards Choice Based Credit System of Post Graduate Level Students in Higher Education: a Study on Gauhati University, has drawn the sample from post graduate (PG) level Arts and Science students of Gauhati University. The sample size is 60 out of which 30 are from Science and 30 from Arts department. For this purposive sampling technique has been adopted. To collect the requisite data related attitude towards CBCS self designed attitude scale was used. The major findings of the study as well as some suggestions are as follow; (1) Science Students are having the highest level attitude towards CBCS in comparison to the Arts Students of Gauhati University. (2) Boys are having the highest level attitude in comparison to the Girls Students of Gauhati University.

Aithal & Kumar (2016) conducted a study on Analysis of Choice Based Credit System in Higher Education and pointed out the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of CBCS, they also touch upon the ABCD analysis of CBCS, the advantages, benefits, constraints and disadvantages of CBCS. The basic motive of CBCS is to expand academic quality in all aspects, right from the curriculum to the learning-teaching process to examination and evaluation systems. However, multiple methods are followed by different universities across the country in examination, evaluation and grading system. Considering this diversity, the implementation of the choice based credit system seems to be qualitatively superior although it is not to be considered s ultimate. The comparative analysis using SWOC and ABCD has put ABCD analysis on greater footing.

4. Population and Sample

All the teachers from all academic departments of Mizoram University constituted the population of this study. The sample consisted of 78 teachers' (59 male and 19 female) drawn from 25 academic departments constituted the sample of the study.

5. Tools Used for Data Collection

An opinionnaire consisting of 21 statements on different issues relating to CBCS was developed by the investigators.

6. Findings and Discussions

Findings and discussions of the study have been presented under the following sections:

1. Opinions of teachers on need of training of teaching and non-teaching staff on CBCS.
2. Opinions of teachers on impact of CBCS on teachers.
3. Impact of CBCS on the Functioning of Academic Departments.

Dimension -1

Need of Training of Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff on CBCS

One of the very important criterions for successful implementation of any new idea or change is the training/orientation of the personnel involved in the implementation of the process. Since CBCS has to be implemented by the teachers' and educational administrators, its success largely depends on how much training has been imparted. So, there are many issues that have to be thoroughly studied and discussed, the need for orientation or training on CBCS is very much required for the teachers', This particular section has been executed to examine issues related to training of teachers', office workers, examination branch, heads of departments and Deans, regarding CBCS. Here are the opinions of the teachers' regarding these issues.

1) Training of New Heads and Deans Regarding CBCS: In view of the rotation policy adopted by the university there is a change in headship and deanship in certain departments and schools in every semester. In view of such changes there is a need to conduct orientation/training programmes for new heads and deans for the effective implantation of CBCS. When teachers' were asked their opinion on this question, 82 percent of them agreed

that the new heads and deans should undergo such training, whereas 9 percent of the teachers' disagreed with it and the remaining 9 percent of them were undecided.

2) ***Frequent Training of Teachers' Regarding CBCS:*** Regarding training of teachers' on CBCS, majority of the teachers' 73 agree that there should be frequent training of teachers' regarding CBCS, 12 percent did not have an opinion on this, whereas 15 percent disagree with this statement.

3) ***Frequent Training of Office Staff of Examination Branch Regarding CBCS:*** Item 3 highlights that 60 percent of the teachers' agree that there should be frequent training of office staff of examination branch regarding CBCS, it is surprising to find that 27 percent of the teachers' have no opinion on this, whereas 13 percent did not feel the need for training of office staff of examination branch regarding CBCS.

4) ***Workshop Should Be Organized for Teachers' By Inviting and Involving Resource Persons With Appropriate Expertise:*** Responding to the statement special workshop should be organized for teachers' to understand the details about grading, semester, credit system, credit transfer etc. by inviting and involving resource persons with appropriate expertise, 9 percent of the teachers' disagree with it, 1 percent did not have opinion about it, whereas large majority 90 percent of the teachers' agree to it.

5) ***Training to New Heads and Deans on CBCS:*** Regarding providing mechanisms for training to new Heads and Deans on CBCS, 7 percent of the teachers' disagree, Whereas 4 percent of the teachers' were undecided about this statement, on the other hand majority of the teachers' 90 percent agree that the new Heads and Deans should be provided training on CBCS.

6) ***Provisions for Training for the Officers and Staff of Examination Branch:*** Responding to the statement there should be provisions to provide training on CBCS to the officers and staff of examination branch, 3 percent of the teacher did not agree to this, again 3 percent of the teachers' are undecided, where on the other hand 94 percent of the teachers' agree to this statement that training should be provided for office staff and examination branch.

7) ***Need to Conduct a Centralized Orientation Programme:*** All academic departments, every year, conduct orientation on CBCS, wherein issues relating to CBCS are discussed. Many of these departments either do not have very complete understanding of the various provisions under CBCS or do not give that much focus or the desired attention to it while explaining. Thus, the researcher felt the need of conducting a centralized training on CBCS

for students' by inviting the University CBCS committee. This centralized team should be over and above the orientation training organized by the department. Item 7, vide table-1, shows that 83 percent of teachers agreed that there is a need to conduct a Centralized Orientation Programme on CBCS for students' every year soon after admission, on the other hand 10 percent of the teachers did not have any opinion on this and only 7 percent of the teachers' disagreed with this statement.

Table-1
Opinion of Teachers' on Training on CBCS

Item No.	Statement	Response	N	%
1.	There should be frequent training of new Heads and Deans regarding CBCS.	Disagree	7	9%
		Undecided	7	9%
		Agree	64	82%
2.	There should be frequent training of teachers' regarding CBCS.	Disagree	15	15%
		Undecided	9	12%
		Agree	57	73%
3.	Do you feel that there should be frequent training of office staff of examination branch regarding CBCS?	Disagree	10	13%
		Undecided	21	27%
		Agree	47	60%
4.	There should be a special workshop with an expert resource person for teachers to understand better about grading, semester, credit system, credit transfer etc.?	Disagree	7	9%
		Undecided	1	1%
		Agree	70	90%
5.	There should be a mechanism to provide training to New Heads and Deans on CBCS.	Disagree	5	6%
		Undecided	3	4%
		Agree	70	90%
6.	There should be provisions to provide training on CBCS to the officers and staff of examination branch	Disagree	2	3%
		Undecided	2	3%
		Agree	74	94%
7.	There is a need to conduct a Centralized Orientation Programme on CBCS for students' every year soon after admission	Disagree	5	7%
		Undecided	8	10%
		Agree	65	83%

Dimension -2

Impact of CBCS on Teachers'

The UGC has admitted in its guidelines that one of the negative aspects of CBCS is fluctuations in the teachers' workload. With the introduction of CBCS, the workload for the teachers' increased to a very great extent; it increases their administrative, teaching, testing and evaluative workload, they have to finish their syllabus on time, but due to many evaluative exercises like C1, C2, seminars, assignments etc., it is difficult to focus only on the teaching part, one of the important features of CBCS is open elective, which increases the workload for the teachers' as well as the office workers, as the department has to send all the attendance and marks for open electives to their parental department, they have to tabulate and calculate all the marks of C1, C2 and C3. The data vide table-2 here shows the opinion of teachers' regarding the different impacts of CBCS on them.

1) ***Increase in Teaching Work Load:*** With the introduction of CBCS, the workload for the teachers' increases to a very great extent; it increases their administrative, teaching, testing and evaluative workload. A quick glance from the table-2 here shows that 87 percent of the teachers' respond that CBCS has increased the teaching workload of the teachers' while 13 percent of the teachers did not agree with this statement. Of those who agreed with this statement, 65 percent said it increased their teaching workload to a great extent, whereas the remaining 35 percent reported that it added to their work load to some extent.

2) ***Increase in Administrative Work Load:*** While responding to the statement whether CBCS has increased the administrative workload for the teachers', majority of the teachers' i.e., 78 percent teachers opined that CBCS has increased their administrative workload; on the other hand 22 percent did not agree with this statement. Of those who agreed with this statement, 36 percent said it increased their administrative workload to a great extent, whereas the remaining 64 percent reported that it added to their work load to some extent.

3) ***Increase in Testing and Evaluation Work Load:*** A large number of teachers' 88 percent agree to this statement with the introduction of CBCS, there is a sudden increase in testing and evaluation, when further asked to what extent 52 percent agreed to it to a very great extent, 48 percent to some extent, while on the other hand only 12 percent did not agree to this statement.

4) *Due to open electives teachers' are not able to pay attention to their main courses:*

The data vide Item No. 4 indicates that 82 percent of the teachers' did not agree that with the introduction of Open Electives under CBCS teachers' are not able to pay due attention to their main courses in their respective departments, majority of the teachers', 4 percent were undecided about it, whereas 14 percent agree to this statement.

5) *Inadequate number of teachers':* The problem which some of the teachers' used to point out is that due to limited number of teachers' CBCS cannot be implemented in its full form. When teachers' were asked to express their opinion on this issue, vide Item 5 in table-2, almost half of the teachers' (53 percent) reported that their departments did not have any problem regarding the number of teachers' for the implementation of CBCS, 32 percent reported about the inadequacy of number of teachers', and 15 percent were undecided about it.

6) *Too Much of Internal Evaluation leaves less Time for Teachers' to Teach:* While responding to the statement too much of internal evaluation leaves less time for teachers to teach, 55 percent of the teachers did not agree to this statement, 43 percent agree to it and the remaining 2 percent are undecided about it.

7) *Teachers' Involvement in Testing and Evaluation Leaves Less Time for Supervising M. Phil. And Ph.D. Scholars:* There is quite a diversion of opinions as seen from Item No. 7, here 53 percent of the teachers' agree to the statement, too much involvement of teachers' in testing and evaluation under CBCS does not leave much time for teachers' for supervision M. Phil. and Ph.D. scholars, while 14 percent were undecided about it, on the other hand 33 percent disagree to it.

8) *Teachers' Involvement in Testing and Evaluation Leaves less Time for their Personal Research:* As Item 8 shows that 70 percent agree to the statement, too much involvement of teachers' in testing and evaluation under CBCS does not leave much time for teachers' for their personal research, while 3 percent were undecided about it, while 27 percent disagree to this statement.

Table-2
Impact of CBCS on Teachers'

Item No.	Statement	Response	N	%
1.	Increased the teaching work load of teachers'	Yes	68	87%
		No	10	13%
		If yes, To what extent	44	65%
		(a) Large extent		
		(b) Some extent	24	35%
2.	Increased the administrative work load of teachers'	Yes	61	78%
		No	17	22%
		If yes, to what extent	22	36%
		(a) Large extent		
		(b) Some extent	39	64%
3.	CBCS increased the testing and evaluation workload of teachers'	Yes	69	88%
		No	9	12%
		If yes, to what extent	36	52%
		(a) Large extent		
		(b) Some extent	33	48%
4.	With the introduction of Open Electives under CBCS, teachers are not able to pay due attention to their main courses in their respective departments.	Disagree	64	82%
		Undecided	3	4%
		Agree	11	14%
5.	Inadequate number of teachers' in my department is not able to do justice with open electives.	Disagree	42	53%
		Undecided	11	15%
		Agree	25	32%
6.	Do you think that too much of internal evaluation exercises in CBCS do not leave much time for teachers to teach?	Disagree	43	55%
		Undecided	2	2%
		Agree	33	43%
7.	Too much involvement of teachers' in testing and evaluation under CBCS does not leave much time for teachers for supervision M. Phil. and Ph.D. scholars.	Disagree	26	33%
		Undecided	11	14%
		Agree	41	53%
8.	Too much involvement of teachers' in testing and evaluation under CBCS does not leave much time for teachers for their personal research.	Disagree	22	27%
		Undecided	2	3%
		Agree	54	70%

Dimension-3

Impact of CBCS on the Functioning of Academic Departments

There is a general perception in the university that with the introduction of CBCS the workload of academic departments has increased to a great extent, as it demands too much involvement of the department in testing and evaluation, compiling of results and other clerical work. Thus, the researcher, in order to validate this perception, seek teachers' opinions on various issues relating to certain paradigm shifts in the functioning of departments and work load of teachers. Analyses of data relating to the opinions of teachers on the impact of CBCS on the working of the department have been discussed as under:

1) ***With the Introduction of CBCS, the Workload of the Examination Department Relating PG Examination has been Transferred to Academic Departments:*** One of the core features of CBCS is Internal/Formative Assessment on regular intervals. The CBCS Regulation, 2012 of Mizoram University requires the academic departments to conduct 3 tests each under C-1 and C-2 within one semester. Besides, setting of question papers and evaluation of answer scripts have to done internally by teachers for their respective courses. All these provisions under CBCS seem to have certain impact on the functioning of departments and work load of teaching and non-teaching staff. There is a generalized feeling among the university fraternity that with the introduction of CBCS the work load of examination branch has been shifted to the academic departments. When teachers were asked to express their opinion on this issue it is interesting to report that huge majority 93 percent of the teachers' agreed with this statement, whereas only 6 percent of the teachers' disagreed with this statement, and 1 percent of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

2) ***There is Too Much of Internal Evaluation Exercises in My Department Under CBCS:*** In response to the statement there is too much of internal evaluation exercises in departments under CBCS, majority of the teachers' 72 percent agreed with this statement, 8

percent of them were undecided about this one, on the other hand 20 percent disagreed that there is too much of internal evaluation under CBCS.

3) ***Teachers' Remain Too Busy in The Conducting of Evaluation Exercises:*** As we have pointed out under CBCS there is too much evaluation, responding to the statement, 'teachers' in department remain too busy in the conducting of evaluation exercises under CBCS', 21 percent of the teachers' disagreed with this statement; 13 percent of the teachers' were undecided about this, majority of the teachers' 66 percent agreed that the teachers' in their department were too busy with their evaluation exercise.

4) ***Too Much Involvement of Academic Departments in Testing, Evaluation and Compiling of Results has Impacted the Quality of Education:*** With the introduction of CBCS, the evaluation has increased in different spheres, therefore, too much involvement of academic departments in testing, evaluation and compiling of results, there is a fear that the quality of teaching might have been compromised. Here, 69 percent of the teachers' agreed with this statement, 10 percent are undecided about it; on the other hand 21 percent of them disagreed with this statement.

5) ***Supporting Staff is Not Adequately Trained in CBCS:*** In response to Item 5 Vide Table-3, 'supporting staff in my department is not adequately trained in CBCS,' 15 percent of the teachers' opined that the supporting staff in their department are adequately trained on CBCS and 8 percent of the teachers' were undecided about the adequacy of their training, whereas, majority of the teachers' 77 percent expressed their agreement with this statement.

6) ***Without I.T Support, Maintenance and Retrieval of Office Records Relating to CBCS is Not Possible:*** As CBCS required a lot of clerical works, without I.T support, maintenance and retrieval of office records relating to CBCS is not possible. Here, 19 percent of the teachers' disagree with this statement, whereas, 9 percent of the teachers' have no opinion on this, on the other hand, majority of the teachers' 72 percent agreed that without I.T support successful implementation of CBCS is not possible.

Table-3
Opinion of Teachers' with Regard the Impact of CBCS on the Functioning of the Academic Departments

Item No.	Statement	Response	N	%
1.	With the introduction of CBCS, the workload of the examination department relating PG examination has been transferred to academic departments.	Disagree	5	6%
		Undecided	1	1%
		Agree	72	93%
2.	There is too much of internal evaluation exercises in my department under CBCS.	Disagree	16	20%
		Undecided	6	8%
		Agree	56	72%
3.	Teachers' in my Department remain too busy in the conducting of evaluation exercises under CBCS.	Disagree	17	21%
		Undecided	10	13%
		Agree	51	66%
4.	Too much involvement of academic departments in testing, evaluation and compiling of results, the quality of teaching has been compromised.	Disagree	17	21%
		Undecided	8	10%
		Agree	53	69%
5.	Supporting staff in my department is not adequately trained in CBCS.	Disagree	12	15%
		Undecided	6	8%
		Agree	60	77%
6.	Without I.T support, maintenance and retrieval of office records relating to CBCS is not possible.	Disagree	15	19%
		Undecided	7	9%
		Agree	56	72%

7. Conclusion: From the responses of teachers' on various issues, covered under the three dimensions, it can be concluded that the implementation of CBCS in Mizoram University was done in haste without adequate and proper training or orientation of its academic administrators like deans and heads, teaching, non-teaching staff and even students'; as the UGC has made it mandatory for implementing CBCS in all the Universities. These confusions could have been avoided if the university had given itself little more time to have open debate on core issues relating to CBCS like the nature of courses on Open Electives, total credits for professional and non-professional post graduate programmes, transfer of credits, earning of additional credits etc. orientation of academic advisers in discharging their role in assisting students' in selection of their open electives and soft courses. With the introduction of CBCS, the evaluation has increased in different spheres, therefore, too much involvement of academic departments in testing, evaluation and compiling of results, there is a fear that the quality of teaching might have been compromised.

The University Grants Commission have come up with many new policies and changes in higher education which aims to bring efficiency and excellence in the higher education system in India, right from the curriculum to the teaching-learning process, to examination and evaluation systems. Looking at the objectives of Choice Based Credit System, it can also be regarded as the right step for quality education. However, looking at the present scenario of Mizoram University, it is still in the process of adjusting and experimenting with CBCS. Thus, it may be too early to make final judgment whether CBCS is the right step to address the quality issues in higher education.

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