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A discussion on the problems of implementing CBCS at UG level in Nagaland

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Abstract

Within the backdrop of the CBCS being implemented in Nagaland, this paper seeks to explore some of the challenges that Nagaland faces. This paper is built on the premise that the system of education in Nagaland is predominantly traditional which brings forth many loopholes in implementing progressive approaches.

Keywords: Choice-based credit system (CBCS), UG level, traditional, problems

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in the development of a country, necessitating timely efforts to enhance its quality. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in India has introduced various educational policies to improve the education system. However, several challenges persist in the higher education sector, including students' lack of knowledge, confidence, values, and skills. These issues stem from the disconnect between education, employment, and skill development within the traditional education system. Considering Nagaland's education system, which has been predominantly traditional, the implementation of the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) at the undergraduate level has presented numerous challenges in the higher education sector. The shift from a teacher-centric approach to a student-centric approach, as emphasized by CBCS, has been a significant obstacle to the smooth functioning of the education system in Nagaland.

Furthermore, the freedom given to students to choose subjects of their interest for their degree poses additional challenges for many colleges in Nagaland. Other difficulties faced by colleges include human resource development, inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, procurement of books and study materials, and adaptation to the new system. While the CBCS program is innovative and holds the potential to bring about significant changes in the education system, its implementation in Nagaland only began in 2022, which has further impacted the state's education system compared to more advanced states. Additionally, both students and teachers in Nagaland are currently grappling with a lack of understanding of the CBCS program, posing a major threat to the quality of education in the higher education sector. This paper aims to explore the challenges posed by CBCS in Nagaland, shedding light on the issues faced by colleges and proposing possible solutions.

CBCS

Due to the inherent drawbacks of the traditional teacher-centric approach, which primarily emphasizes rote memorization and limits students' cognitive engagement, the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) offers a distinct alternative. CBCS adopts an interdisciplinary approach that promotes the integration of concepts, theories, techniques, and perspectives from multiple disciplines; this approach aims to foster a comprehensive understanding and enhance problem-solving abilities among students (Kelkar, 2014). In line with the recommendations of the 11th five-year plan and the National Knowledge Commission, India has embraced the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) to enhance the quality of higher education (UGC: 2008).

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Prior to the implementation of CBCS, the higher education curriculum in India faced limitations in equipping students with the necessary employable skills. It lacked an interdisciplinary approach and offered limited opportunities for value-based courses (Wanchoo, 2015) [8]. CBCS aims to address these issues by introducing a multi-disciplinary approach to undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum. It provides students with diverse opportunities for mobility, enabling them to transfer credits earned from one institution to another (Hanchinalkar, 2008).

Under CBCS, students have the freedom to choose courses from a wide range of options, and their performance is evaluated using unconventional grading systems. This approach encourages students to learn at their own pace, take additional courses, and earn more than the required credits. It also facilitates student mobility within the country and internationally, establishing uniformity and parity across institutions.

Problems of CBCS in Nagaland

A significant portion of students lack awareness and understanding regarding the essence of CBCS. They struggle to comprehend the fundamental nature of CBCS and have limited knowledge about the UGC guidelines pertaining to CBCS. Colleges in Nagaland encounter a range of problems when it comes to implementing the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). These problems can be categorized into infrastructure, student factors, teacher factors, and procurement of books and study materials. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensure a successful integration of CBCS and enhance the overall quality of higher education in Nagaland.

Infrastructure stands out as a significant concern in the effective implementation of CBCS. Many colleges in Nagaland lack the necessary infrastructural facilities to meet the requirements of the CBCS program. Inadequate infrastructure inhibits the provision of a conducive learning environment, including well-equipped classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and other essential resources. Without sufficient infrastructure, colleges may struggle to provide the necessary resources and practical experiences that align with the objectives of CBCS.

The adoption of CBCS by higher educational agencies like the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) aims to align Indian higher education with global trends such as liberalization and globalization. The implementation of proper grading systems enables the measurement of learners' performance (UGC, NAAC).

In summary, the introduction of CBCS in India is a response to the need for quality improvement in higher education. It addresses the shortcomings of the previous system by promoting an interdisciplinary approach, providing mobility opportunities, and incorporating effective grading systems to measure student performance.

Student factors present another challenge. Students in Nagaland face difficulties adjusting to the new CBCS system, which entails a sudden shift from a teacher-centric approach to a student-centric approach. Many students lack a clear understanding of the concept of CBCS and may struggle to adapt to the new learning framework. To support students in this transition, it is crucial to provide them with proper orientation and support mechanisms that facilitate their understanding and engagement with CBCS.

Teacher factors pose significant challenges as well. The shortage of teachers in specific departments directly affects the smooth functioning of CBCS. Insufficient faculty availability can hinder effective instruction and mentorship in line with the student-centric approach emphasized by CBCS. Additionally, the credit allocation of six for each class can lead to inefficient management of class time by teachers, impacting the teaching and learning process. The increased workload resulting from assessment-related tasks, such as class tests, assignments, and scrutiny of paper presentations further strains teachers' capacity. Addressing the shortage of qualified teachers, providing necessary training and support, and exploring effective time management strategies are crucial to alleviate this problem. Procurement of books and study materials is another significant hurdle for colleges in Nagaland. The CBCS syllabus often differs significantly from the previous course structure, making it challenging to find suitable resources. Many of the required books and study materials may not be readily available in local stores or markets in Nagaland. Moreover, the availability of online study materials for teachers and students might be limited, particularly for specific topics. Collaborating with publishers, both local and national, and exploring the development of online repositories can help ensure the timely availability of relevant textbooks and study materials.

Discussion

While the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) offers numerous benefits compared to traditional education methods, it can be argued that its introduction in Nagaland, particularly in Under Graduate Level in Nagaland, seems premature. From the outset, the system revealed several drawbacks rather than advantages. These include the absence of a trial version, inadequate infrastructure preparedness, limited awareness among faculty and students, and inconsistencies between the prescribed guidelines and current practices. The implementation of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) in Nagaland has brought about various challenges for colleges and universities in the state. To address the challenges, collaborative efforts are required from various stakeholders. The state Higher Education Department and Nagaland University should provide support and guidance to colleges in Nagaland. Infrastructure development initiatives must be undertaken to provide colleges with the necessary facilities for implementing CBCS effectively. Teacher recruitment and training programs should be prioritized to address the shortage of qualified faculty. Colleges should establish partnerships with publishers and explore digital platforms to ensure the availability of appropriate textbooks and study materials. During the admission process, it is essential for prospective students to receive comprehensive information regarding the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). This information should cover all relevant aspects of CBCS, providing detailed insights into its structure and implementation within the educational context. By ensuring the availability of such detailed information, colleges can facilitate transparency and enable prospective students to make well-informed decisions about their educational journey.

Furthermore, awareness and orientation programs should be organized for both students and teachers to familiarize them with the concept and benefits of CBCS. These programs can

help in mitigating the resistance to change and foster a positive attitude towards the new system. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the CBCS implementation can provide valuable insights for identifying and addressing emerging challenges.

In conclusion, the implementation of CBCS in Nagaland has brought several challenges for colleges and universities. Infrastructure limitations, student and teacher factors, and the procurement of books and study materials need to be addressed to ensure the smooth functioning of CBCS and the overall improvement of higher education in the state. Collaborative efforts, involving various stakeholders, are necessary to overcome these challenges and create a conducive environment for effective implementation of CBCS in Nagaland

Conclusion

The implementation of the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in Nagaland's higher education sector has posed several challenges for colleges and universities. These challenges span infrastructure, student factors, teacher factors, and procurement of books and study materials. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for the successful integration of CBCS and the overall improvement of the education system in Nagaland. The fundamental aim of the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) is to enhance academic excellence at both the micro and macro levels, encompassing core curriculum, learning-teaching methodologies, and evaluation systems. However, paradoxically, CBCS appears to restrict the role of education from fostering well-rounded individuals to merely preparing a skilled workforce for the job market. As a result, instead of addressing the underlying issues in the Nagaland higher education system, CBCS has the potential to aggravate the existing problems in higher education in Nagaland. By addressing the above problems, Nagaland can successfully integrate CBCS, enhance the quality of higher education, and prepare students for employability and overall excellence. Overall, overcoming the problems posed by CBCS in Nagaland requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach involving various stakeholders. By addressing infrastructure limitations, supporting students and teachers, and ensuring the availability of suitable study materials, Nagaland can navigate the transition to CBCS and foster a robust and student-centred higher education system.

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