

A Study of the Semester System at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University

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I. INTRODUCTION

The 'semester-based' education system helps to implement continuous and comprehensive evaluation which can offer proper justice to the large student community in our country. On January 31, 2008, the University Grants Commission announced that the Indian Universities had to take necessary action in order to introduce semester system at the Undergraduate Level by 2012. In the present study the researcher studied the semester system at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University for which Descriptive Survey Method was used. A total of 1082 students and 336 teachers were selected using incidental sampling technique for the study. The study included 26 number of Principals and 3 administrative officers of Dibrugarh University. The researcher used following tools and techniques -a) content analysis b) questionnaire for teachers c) questionnaire for students d) interview schedule for Principals e) interview schedule for administrative officers e) attitude scale for students f) attitude scale for teachers and g) academic achievement scores. In spite of different challenges, the semester system has positive impact on the teaching- learning process, the study concluded.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the semester system at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University in relation to :
 - (a) Course structure; b) Curriculum transaction;
 - c) Evaluation procedure
- To study the role of semester monitoring system at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University.
- To study the problems faced by the students, teachers and Principals in the implementation of

semester system at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University.

- To study the academic achievement of the Undergraduate students belonging to different streams in semester system of Dibrugarh University.
- To study the attitude of experienced and inexperienced teachers of different streams teaching at Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.
- To study the attitude of Undergraduate students of different streams of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.
- To compare the attitudes of experienced and inexperienced teachers of different streams teaching at Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.
- To compare the attitudes of Undergraduate students of different streams of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.
- To study the relationship between attitude towards semester system and academic achievement of the Undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University.
- To study the views of the administrative officers of Dibrugarh University on semester system at the Undergraduate Level.

III. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H 1: *There is no significant difference between the attitudes of experienced and inexperienced teachers teaching at Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.*

H 2: *There is no significant difference of attitudes among the Undergraduate students of Arts, Science and Commerce streams of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.*

H 3: *There is no significant relationship between attitude towards semester system and academic achievement of the Undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University.*

IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

3.1 Findings on Semester System at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University in Relation to-

A. Course Structure

B. Curriculum Transaction and

C. Evaluation Procedure

A.Course Structure in Semester System at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University:

The B.A., B.Sc. and B. Com. Programmes of Dibrugarh University are divided into

six semesters. There are 20% marks for Internal Assessment and 80% marks for End-semester examination in each course during every semester. The allocation of marks for the practical components in all subjects may not be exactly 40% of the total marks of the course. The components of the B.A., B.Sc. and B.Com. Programmes are Compulsory Courses, Major Courses, Non-Major Courses and mandatory Skill-based Courses for Non-Major (General) B.A. and B.Sc. Programmes. Some new courses are introduced in semester system such as Computer Skills in lieu of Communicative Skills, Environmental Studies, Multidisciplinary Course and Skill-based Courses in B.A. Programme.

- Maximum students (79.30%) and teachers (80.96%) responded that the course structure in semester system made provision for the improvement in marks. Similarly, most of the students (88.54%) and teachers (95.24%) responded that the teachers were able to complete the courses within the time limit for each Academic Session. Similarly, 79% of students and 63% of teachers felt the necessity of improvement in the existing semester course structure. The students (56.84%) and teachers (55.95%) stated that the separation of courses in semester system created obstacles to understand the subjects as a whole.
- More than one fourth (25.60%) of teachers responded that there were sufficient courses to impart knowledge in semester system.

- Most of the teachers (59.52%) responded that semester courses like Multidisciplinary Course, Environmental Studies, Computer Skill, Communicative Skill, Skill-Based Courses created heavy workload. Only a few (22.62%) teachers responded that the students get opportunities to choose their courses according to their own choice. Of course, more than 67% of teachers were satisfied with the existing course structure in semester system. These suggestions are offered by the teachers- new content should be included in the course structure. The courses should be more practical. Job oriented courses should be included in the course structure. The teachers responded that revision of courses was needed. The units of the courses should be short.

B. Curriculum Transaction in Semester System at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University:

- A high percentage (80.90%) of students revealed that the semester system was suitable system for proper curriculum transaction. Similarly, 73% of students and more than 84% of teachers responded that it provided learning experiences in a systematic way. Maximum students (85.12%) and teachers (86.90%) responded that the semester system increased the responsibility of teachers and Principals. However, a high percentage of students (68.30%) and teachers (66.67%) responded that the semester system discouraged the students to participate in co-curricular activities. Sufficient number of teaching days were allotted on the Academic Session (92.26%). Similarly, the teachers responded that proper periods were allotted for Major courses (66.67%) in semester system. The Principals assigned their work load in the colleges (86.61%) and the teachers encouraged the students to participate in co-curricular activities (75.59%).
- Maximum teachers used audio-visual aids (Blackboard: 71.43%, Blackboard and Computers: 11.90 %, Projector and Digital classroom: 11.90%, Blackboard and Projector: 4.77%) and different teaching methods (Lecture, Home Assignment, and Seminar: 61.0%, Lecture, Laboratory Practical, Project: 13.80%, Lecture, Laboratory Practical, Field Study: 13.0%,

Lecture, Seminar, Group Discussion: 6.55%,
Lecture, Home Assignment: 5.65%).

- A high percentage of teachers (83.18%) used innovative practices other than Lecture method (Seminar: 47.45%, Home Assignment: 35.55%, Group Discussion, Project, Field Study: 17%).

C. *Evaluation Procedure in Semester System at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University:*

- Maximum respondents (90.57% of students and 95.20 % of teachers) responded that Internal Assessment procedure motivated the students for self-study. A small section (22.09%) of students and about 60% of teachers responded that the teachers provided individual attention through In-semester evaluation. Similarly, more than 79% of students and more than 87% of teachers responded that Internal Assessment procedure kept the students busy in their study. Again, more than 64% of students and approximately 39% of teachers responded that the teachers gave internal marks on personal interest.
- Most of the students (87.80%) responded that evaluation procedure brought academic improvement in the colleges.

3.2 Findings on Role of Semester Monitoring System at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University:

- The three-tier Semester Monitoring Committee(s) monitor all the works performed by the colleges regarding college academic calendars, class routine, course plan by the teachers, delivery mechanism, curriculum transaction, conduct of internal assessment, admission of the students within the scheduled period. The Committee(s) over all monitor the various activities mentioned in the academic calendar.
- Maximum teachers (98.21%) and all the Principals responded that Internal Semester Monitoring Committee was the main agency of semester monitoring system in the colleges. Similarly, a high percentage of teachers (98.81%) and Principals (96.15%) responded that Internal Semester Monitoring Committee helped to implement the Academic Calendar of the colleges. Again, more than 98% of teachers and all the Principals responded that Internal Semester Monitoring Committee monitored the academic environment of the colleges.

- Maximum teachers (93.75%) supported Internal Semester Monitoring Committee in the colleges. On the other hand, minimum percentage (6.25%) of respondents did not support Internal Semester Monitoring Committee in the colleges. The Principals were not satisfied with the three-tier Semester Monitoring Committee System (88.46%).

- All the Principals supported Internal Semester Monitoring Committee in the colleges (100%). Most of the Principal (92.31%) stated that due to advisory system, ISMC helped the students to improve their academic life.
- The Principals visited classroom regularly and interacted with the students on different issues of semester system (100%). Principals used Student Feedback Report for counselling of the teachers (92.31%). Most of the Principals (98.51%) responded that there was detail Internal Assessment system available in their college. Similarly, most of the Principals (76.92%) responded that they organized staff meeting to discuss about the different issues on monitoring of semester system. Maximum Principals (84.62%) responded that they monitored the relevant activities prescribed by Dibrugarh University through different Cells (Group of teachers) and organized the Internal Semester Monitoring Committee meeting on different issues like college class routine, conducting Internal Assessment, various activities mentioned in the Academic Calendar.

3.3 Findings on Problems Faced by the Students, Teachers and Principals in the Implementation of Semester System at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University:

A. Problems Faced by the Students:

- Maximum students (68.39 %) felt uneasy to cope with the semester system. Due to the large student population, teachers could not give individual attention in students (74.21%). Classes were hampered by holidays, strike and cancelation of class (91.13%). More than 83% of students responded that they did not get available standard textbook in regional (Assamese) language. Same number of students responded that they could not get opportunities to discuss the learning material with the teachers. The actual time for classroom

teaching was very short (63.23%). More than 81% of students revealed that the admission procedure in semester system made the system costly, frequent evaluation in semester system created obstacle (15.58%) and fixed attendance rate could not orient the students to attend in the class regularly (2.74 %).

B. Problems Faced by the Teachers:

- Maximum (73.51%) teachers responded that large student population created difficulties and classes were hampered by holidays, strike, and cancelation of class (90.77%) and it could not develop creative talent of the students (71.43%).
- All the teachers faced problems in classroom teaching, among them more than 86% of teachers responded that the actual time for classroom teaching was very short. Again, the teachers faced problems for the regulations of semester system. The teachers responded that semester system could not develop writing skill of the students (66%). Similarly, it increased memory learning (6.67%) and it also increased dropout rate among the students (26.66%).

C. Problems Faced by the Principals:

- The Principals responded that students' poor economic condition effected on the implementation of semester system (92.31%). Maximum Principals (73.08%) responded that no provision of re-evaluation of the answer-scripts in semester system created problems for the students. Nearly, 85% of Principals responded that shortage of teachers was acute problem in the implementation of semester system. The workload was too heavy due to the implementation of semester system in the colleges (92.31). Similarly, limited time in semester system hampered to work smoothly (76.92%) and the students were not interested for attending (75% and above) in the class (88.46%) .

The Principals provided some suggestions regarding the implementation of semester system from the Principals. These suggestions are- the semester monitoring system should be modified. The teacher and student ratio should be maintained in the colleges. The actual teaching days should be increased. The attractive and practical courses should be included to motivate the student in semester system.

3.4. Findings on Academic Achievement of the Undergraduate Students Belonging to Different Streams (Arts, Science and Commerce) in Semester System of Dibrugarh University:

- It was found that the highest number of students (55.27% in B.A.), (91.82% in B.Sc.), (55.63% in B.Com) obtained First Class in the 6th semester (final) examination, 2016-2017 conducted by Dibrugarh University.

3.5. Attitude Level of the Experienced and Inexperienced Teachers of Different Streams (Arts, Science and Commerce) Teaching at Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University towards Semester System:

The findings of the present study revealed that the attitude level of the experienced teachers of Arts, Science and Commerce stream teaching at Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University towards semester system was favourable.

- The findings of the present study indicated that the attitude level of the inexperienced teachers of Arts, Science and Commerce stream teaching at Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University towards semester system was favourable.

3.6. Attitude Level of the Undergraduate Students of Different Streams (Arts, Science and Commerce) of Dibrugarh University towards Semester System:

- The findings of the present study revealed that the attitude level of the Undergraduate students of Arts, Science and Commerce stream of Dibrugarh University towards semester system was favourable. (mean and standard deviation of attitude scores were 135.22 and 12.82 in Arts stream, 135.70 and 14.03m in Science stream, 130.11 and 12.25 in Commerce stream respectively).

3.7. Comparison of Attitudes of the Experienced and Inexperienced Teachers of Different Streams (Arts, Science and Commerce) Teaching at Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University towards Semester System:

- The findings of the present study revealed that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the experienced and inexperienced teachers of Arts stream teaching at Undergraduate

Level of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.

- The findings of the present study revealed that there was no significant difference between the attitudes of the experienced and inexperienced teachers of Science stream teaching at Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.
- The findings of the present study revealed that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the experienced and inexperienced teachers of Commerce stream teaching at Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.

3.8. Comparison of Attitudes of the Undergraduate Students of Different Streams (Arts, Science and Commerce) of Dibrugarh University towards Semester System:

- The study revealed that there was a significant difference among the Undergraduate students of Arts, Science and Commerce streams of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.
- The study revealed that there was no significant difference between the attitudes of the Undergraduate students of Arts and Science streams of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.
- The study revealed that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the Undergraduate students of Science and Commerce streams of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.
- The study revealed that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the Undergraduate students of Commerce and Arts streams of Dibrugarh University towards semester system.

3.9. Correlation between Attitude towards Semester System and Academic Achievement of the Undergraduate Students of Dibrugarh University:

- There was a significant positive relationship between attitude towards semester system and academic achievement of the Undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University.

3.10. Views of the Administrative Officers of Dibrugarh University on Semester System at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University:

- The respondents gave positive reaction that the semester system developed academic environment in the colleges. The respondents suggested for the use of e-learning system to make learner centric classroom and to develop strong motivation for the students.
- The respondents hoped that the well planned semester system provided the learning experiences in a systematic way and oriented the student in a skilful manner.
- Continuous and comprehensive evaluation in semester system provided the scope to develop communication skill and improved the level of confidence among the students.
- Dibrugarh University developed monitoring mechanism, organized workshop and discussions among the stakeholders for the implementation of semester system and the outcome was positive.

V. POLICY PRESCRIPTION

From the present study, following educational Policy prescription may be inferred:

- a. For the improvement of course structure in semester system new content should be included in it along with practical and job oriented courses. Revision of courses should be done for the systematic organization of courses in semester system.
- b. Dissatisfaction of students on the evaluation procedure in semester system might be a barrier in students' learning progress. Therefore, internal marks should be given on the basis of proper Internal Assessment without any bias or discrimination.
- c. For the proper implementation of semester system, Dibrugarh University introduced Three-tire Semester Monitoring Committee System. But, most of the Principals (88%) were not satisfied with it. Modification of semester monitoring system is also necessary step to solve the different academic problems in the colleges.
- d. To overcome the problems faced by the students, teachers and Principals, Orientation Programme should be organized which may be helpful to cope with the semester system in spite of limited

teaching days, inadequate teacher-student ratio and poor economic condition of the students.

- e. The present study established that the students of Science stream had more favourable attitude towards semester system than the students of Arts and Commerce streams. Thus, while making attempt to develop attitude towards semester system, this issue should be taken into account.
- f. Lastly, the present study revealed that the attitude towards semester system had a positive and significant relationship with the academic achievement of the Undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University. Thus, there is a need to give primary importance on the attitude of students towards semester system. Developing the proper attitude of students towards semester system would further contribute significantly towards the increasing academic achievement of students.
- g. Though, the semester system was implemented for the first time at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University, it is observed that there were positive reactions to semester system from the administrative officers of Dibrugarh University. Such result indicates a good sign to achieve the goal of implementing semester system at the Undergraduate Level of Dibrugarh University. Some steps are necessary in the part of the Government to delink the Higher Secondary section from the General Degree colleges for the successful implementation of semester system.