

OPINION OF UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF GANGADHAR MEHER UNIVERSITY (GMU) SAMBALPUR REGARDING SEMESTER SYSTEM IN RELATION TO GENDER AND STREAM

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ABSTRACT

Semester system is a new innovation in the field of examination reform. At present almost all the Indian colleges and universities have adopted semester system as instructed by University Grant Commission. The present study tries to examine the opinion of both undergraduate and postgraduate students of Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur regarding different aspects of semester system in relation to gender and stream. For this study fifty (50) undergraduate Arts, fifty (50) Science, similarly fifty (50) postgraduate Arts and fifty (50) science students were selected as sample. Data were collected through opinionnaire and further obtained data were analyzed through simple percentage techniques. The present paper aims to analyze the opinion of undergraduate and postgraduate Arts and Science students of Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur regarding various aspects of semester system. The major findings of the study revealed that all the students are satisfy with semester system examination and all agreed that semester system is better than traditional examination system as it improve their study habits and help to secure good grades/marks.

Keywords: Evaluation, Examination system, Examination Reform, Semester system, Undergraduates, Postgraduates,

INTRODUCTION: Education is the strength of a nation. Especially in a democratic country like India, education plays a significant role in our day to day life. Generally education imparted in India in three levels such as primary, secondary and tertiary/higher level. Education at tertiary level is called higher education. Higher education refers to education in post higher secondary level institutions, colleges and universities. India's higher education system is the third largest in the world. India's higher education system has been expanded at a rapid speed quantitatively but the qualitative improvement is very poor which becomes one of the major problems in the field of higher education. The quality of higher education in India is decreasing day by day and the education system is suffering from some serious defects which need rectification as soon as possible. One of such major defect is the faulty evaluation system. Evaluation is an integral part of all education process. It is a comprehensive and continuous process which covers every aspects of an individual's achievement in educative programme. It signifies a wider process of judging students progress in various aspects. According to C.V. **Good**, Evaluation is the process of ascertaining or judging the value or amount of something by use of standard of appraisal, includes judgment in terms of internal evidence and external criteria. For evaluating the learning outcomes of students the most common medium used is examination system. The examination plays a most vital role in our education system. Now the existing examination system held at the end of the session suffers from several criticisms. The main defects of traditional examination system are lack of definite aim, element of chance, lowering of educational standards, lowering of moral standards, ignoring qualities of character, subjectivity etc. in addition to this the present examination system is also not valid, not reliable . It tests only the memory power of the students. They do not foster creative thinking, intelligence and other higher mental processes. It encourages the students to cram certain answers instead of understanding them.

The existing system of examination is criticized by one and all for its serious defects. Examinations are regarded as a horror or an evil by all concerned. They have been recognized as one of the worst features of Indian education. Various committee and commission have thoroughly examined the prevailing system of examination in the country and pointed out its defect. Even in 1902, the university education commission remarked. "The greatest evil from which university education in India suffers is that teaching is subordinated to examination and not examination to teaching". The university education commission of 1949 also studied the problem of examination and evaluation in the university education and state. "If we are to suggest one single reform in university education, then it should be that of the examination."

A pattern of examination that seems to be very attractive for meeting the new demands in education is the semester system. This system comes from the institution of higher education in Western Europe and North

America. According to the shorter oxford English dictionary “semester” means “a period of term of six months, especially in German universities and some united states’ colleges, the college half year.”

Semester system has been an innovation in examination reform. It is widely used as well as well tried innovation across the country. Examination is the key soul of every educational effort. It aims at selecting students for award of degrees/diplomas/certificates and for promotions of next higher classes, selecting candidates for awarding scholarship, providing feedback to improve their learning, selecting candidate for admission into various courses, selecting candidate for employment. So it should be continuous and periodic. In the traditional system, examinations towards the end of academic session through written test at the end of the year fulfill certain aims of our education but not all. So in order to fulfill all these aim of education and make examination continuous and periodic a new pattern of examination system introduces which is known as “semester system” which is conducting in every autonomous colleges and now all most every government, aided and non aided colleges have also introduced semester system which appears very attractive and appealing to our education and educationists. Now UGC has instructed/directed all the central, states and deemed universities in the country to adopt semester system and choice based credit system (CBCS). This system will facilitate inter institution transferability of students. Now most of the universities have adopted this system. It had noted that the UGC has asked 400 universities across India to adopt semester system from the academic session 2016-17. The decision was taken at a meeting held between the minister of HRD (Smt. S. Irani) and state education ministers’. It is time that semester system is made mandatory for all the institutions of higher education in India and all universities are asked to switch over to the semester system. The Odisha government, by following the recent mandate of UGC, has implemented semester and choice based credit system (CBCS) in all universities and degree colleges of state from 2015-16 academic session. So here the investigator felt necessary to study the opinion of Undergraduate and Postgraduate students regarding the semester system. The area of study for the present investigation was the autonomous colleges/universities of Sambalpur district. The Gangadhar Meher University of Sambalpur, Odisha which is the only autonomous higher educational institution of the district is the most reputed educational institution of western Odisha established in 1944 as Sambalpur College. The name of the institution has changed to Gangadhar Meher College in 1949 after the name of the illustrious Odia poet Gangadgar Meher. The college has been functioning as an autonomous college since 1991 and managed and controlled by statutory and non statutory bodies as prescribed by UGC. The autonomy of this institution has been extended up to 2013-14. The college has been identified as “college with potential for excellence” by UGC. Now the college has provided the status of a university since 2013-14 academic sessions.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY: Research in the field of semester system has gained impetuous in the last few decades and is yet to attain its maturity. A recent trend that has emerged in research in examination system and in reform in examination system, though still in embryonic stage is to study the opinion about semester system. Semester system is not only an examination system rather than an education system whose primary concern is learning instead of teaching and whose approach is learner centered rather than teacher centered. The main motto of semester system is to put emphasis on continuous, comprehensive and in-depth learning aiming at capacity building of the students by developing required knowledge, skills and attitude to become an efficient and effective citizen in diversified semester system is very essential at present society. It provides opportunity to students for continuous learning and assessment and paced understanding of the subjects as well as improve study habits of the students. Semester system also enables a more in depth study and understanding of their concern subjects. The effective and successful implementation of semester system depends upon a number of conditions such as well as designed curriculum, course coverage with in stipulated time, regularity of classes, timely and constructive feedback to students by the lecturer; accessibility of teachers to students outside the classes, availability of information, resource to students such as library and computer facilities, highest level of secrecy and confidentiality in examination, transparency in evaluation and grade, timely declaration of semester result etc. if these conditions will fulfilled in a proper way than semester system will proved as a most significant system of examination and will achieve more success in the field of education. Realizing the importance of semester system, many efforts have been made by researchers to explain and understand about the detailed working of semester system. Work reported in this field appears to be mostly an existing examination system, reforms in examination system etc. In sphere of semester system work has been done by Pallai and Mohan (1986), but they mostly emphasized on the working of semester system. To aware about semester system, how people think about this system and what are their opinion towards semester system is quite

essential. Hence the present study will make sincere effort to study about the opinion of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards semester system in relation to gender and stream.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: The following are the main objectives of the present study.

- To study the opinion of undergraduate students towards semester system examination in relation to gender.
- To study the opinion of undergraduate students towards semester system examination in relation to stream.
- To study the opinion of postgraduate students towards the semester system examination in relation to gender.
- To study the opinion of postgraduate students towards the semester system examination in relation to stream.

METHODS AND MATERIALS: The study is based on descriptive method. In the present study, primary data have collected from 200 students of Gangadhar Meher University (GMU). Out of which one hundred (100) students were undergraduate and rest hundred (100) were postgraduate students. Again out of 100 undergraduate students, fifty (50) were from science (25 boys and 25 girls) stream and rest fifty were from Arts (25 boys and 25 girls). Similarly another 100 were postgraduate students, among them 50 were from science stream which was further classified into two sections such as 25 boys and 25 girls where as another 50 were arts students who were also divided as 25 boys and 25 girls.

As the study was descriptive in nature the data collected through using two sets of self developed questionnaires as tool to study the opinion of Undergraduate and Postgraduate students regarding semester system and the obtained data were analyzed by using simple percentage technique . the data were presented in tabular form.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT: After detail analysis and interpretation of collected data the researcher found that there is a significant correlation between the opinion of both science and Arts (male and female) Undergraduate students and correlation between science and Arts Post Graduate male and female students. Again in maximum cases the opinion of both UG and PG correlated but in few cases UG and PG, science and Arts differ in their opinion. Both UG and PG, science and Arts, male and female students have positive opinion regarding semester system but in few points they have negative opinion as well.

Anyway, overall it could be said that all the under graduate(male and female) and Post graduate(male and female) students are satisfy with semester system examination and all agreed that semester system is better than traditional examination system as it improve their study habits and help to secure good grades/marks.

CONCLUSION: Most of the educational phenomena have both positive and negative sides or we can say merits and demerits points. Similarly all the above discussion about the study of the opinion of Undergraduate and Postgraduate students of G.M. University regarding semester system in relation to gender and stream revealed that the students neither have completely positive opinion nor completely negative one, regarding the semester system but it can be said that they have a moderate opinion. However the negative sides or demerits can be rectify by adopting some modification in this system.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH: Investigators are suggested to undertake an extensive and intensive studies keeping in view of the following suggestions.

- 1- The present study has been conducted on Science and Arts students. Similar types of study can be conducted with commerce student.
- 2- Present study has been conducted on the opinion of students, similar study can be conducted regarding the opinion of teachers and parents.
- 3- Only questionnaire has used as tools for data collection. Another tools like interview schedule to make the results more generalizable.
- 4- Apart from simple percentage technique advanced statistical techniques can also be used to make the results more generalizable.

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