

A study on the effectiveness of Semester System at Undergraduate Degree level with special reference to the colleges of Sonitpur District under Gauhati University.

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Abstract: Semester system is an arrangement of education, in which each academic year is divided into two parts of about six months for each semester. Literally the term 'Semester' implies six month of period. At present almost all the Universities of India have adopted the semester system as a progressive measure in undergraduate and post-graduate level of education in place of annual system of education. In Assam also the undergraduate colleges have also introduced this semester system of education, which has been welcomed in a positive manner by most of the experts, educationists, academicians, teachers and students. However, many questions may arise regarding the effectiveness of semester system in comparison to annual system of education. It becomes very important to examine whether the semester system at undergraduate degree level is the best alternative of annual system. It is therefore through this paper an attempt has been taken to study the effectiveness of Semester System at Undergraduate Degree level of education. The methodology used in the study was descriptive survey method. Data were collected through a questionnaire and through interview, administered to a sample of 150 undergraduate college students of Sonitpur district. The study reveals that to ensuring the effectiveness of semester system is still a big challenge for the universities.

Key Words: Semester System, Effectiveness, Undergraduate education, Annual system of education.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Introduction of new innovations, practices and concepts in the field of education is always expected for the advancement of education. Semester system has been emerged as a product of recent investigation in the field of education. A semester system is an academic term, in which an academic year is divided into two parts or sessions of six month of duration for each. In other words we can say that a semester is a period of six months, during which teaching work is conducted. In a semester system, the final examination is conducted after six months, at the end of the course. Hence in this system, examinations are held half-yearly, instead of yearly. Now it is clear that the term 'semester' signifies the division of the academic year into two parts called semester, with the designing of the courses separately for each semester. Sometimes, the academic year under semester system may have three or four divisions, i.e., Trimester or Quarter semester.

Like most of the countries of the world, in India also semester system has been introduced in almost all the universities and colleges. The University Grants Commission had

appointed a committee of few experts to give their ideas regarding the semester system. On the basis of the opinions of these experts, UGC published a brochure entitled as 'Principles and Mechanics of the Semester System (1971)' for the sake of guiding the universities which are desirous to adopt the semester system. It was felt by the experts that the introduction of the semester system, if carried out in a coordinated and systematic manner, was likely to initiate a process of modernization and improvement in both teaching and learning process, apart from bringing about the much needed reform and flexibility in course content and techniques of evaluation. At present many of the Indian universities have adopted the semester system as a progressive measure in undergraduate as well as post-graduate classes. Though Assam has responded to this new system of semester quite lately, but at present most of the universities has welcomed and introduced semester system at undergraduate level along with post-graduate level. One of the most prominent universities of North East India, i.e., Gauhati University has introduced the semester system for undergraduate level from the year 2011.

Semester system has been introduced with the expectation of providing the learners with the opportunity of continuous learning, assessment and feedback. It involves students more throughout the year and develop the habit of regular study, sense of punctuality and work ethics. However in a country like India, the introduction of semester system with limited facilities and opportunities is a big challenge yet. So many questions may arise like – Are the students satisfy with the semester system in place of annual system? Does our facilities are sufficient to meet the demand of this system? Can semester system bring all round development of the students? In order to find out the answer of these questions an attempt has been made to study the effectiveness of Semester System at Undergraduate Degree level.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA:

The present study was carried out in Sonitpur district, which is spread over on the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra, the lifeline of Assam. It has the second largest area of districts in Assam. It is the home to several wildlife sanctuaries and national parks. For the present study the three most well-known colleges of Assam, situated in Sonitpur district are selected. These are- Darrang College, Tezpur College and T H B College.

1.3 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY :

In India many of the universities have introduced the semester system of education in place of annual system. Like the other states of India, in Assam also almost all the universities have adopted this new system of education at undergraduate level with the expectation of improving the quality of education. Gauhati University of Assam has also introduced semester system at undergraduate level from the year 2011. But when a new system is introduced, it is very essential to study and examine each and every part of it regarding its effectiveness. This will help to remove the limitations of the system and make it a more effective one. Likewise, it becomes very essential to find out the opinion, benefits, and problems of students from semester system. Because education system is mainly for the students and hence if they are not satisfied with the existing system, the learning will never be effective. Hence there is a greater need of studying the effectiveness of semester system at the undergraduate degree level.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The present study has been entitled as- "A study on the effectiveness of Semester System at Undergraduate Degree level with special reference to the colleges of Sonitpur District under Gauhati University"

1.5 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To study the effectiveness of semester system at undergraduate degree level of colleges of Sonitpur district.
- To find out the opinion of students regarding semester system of education.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY :

The present study is delimited to the following-

- The study is delimited to only Sonitpur District.
- The study is delimited to three undergraduate colleges affiliated to Gauhati University, viz. Darrang College, Tezpur College and T H B College.
- The study is delimited to the students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd semester.

2. METHODOLOGY:

For the present study the Descriptive Survey Method was applied according to the need and nature of the study. This method aims at describing a population, situation or phenomenon accurately and systematically.

In the present study, the investigator attempted to study the effectiveness of semester system on the basis of the opinion of the students regarding semester system.

2.1. POPULATION OF THE STUDY:

A population in research refers to the aggregate or the entire group of people, objects or events, from which a statistical sample is drawn. Thus population in research means a complete set of elements (persons or objects) that possess some common characteristic.

In the present study all the undergraduate degree students of Darrang College, Tezpur College and T H B College constitute the population of the study.

2.2 SAMPLE OF THE STUDY:

A sample in refers to a small and representative portion of the population, which is selected by using various sampling methods. In research study sampling is very essential as collecting data and information from each and every unit of the population is almost impossible and difficult.

For the present study a total number of 150 undergraduate degree students were selected as sample, where 50 students are from Darrang College, 50 students are from Tezpur college and rest of the 50 students are from T H B college. For selecting the sample for the study simple random sampling technique has been applied.

Sl No.	Name of the college	Number of Students
1	Darrang College	50
2	Tezpur college	50
3	T H B College	50

2.3 TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION:

- **Questionnaire:** A questionnaire is one the most significant tools, used for data collection. It is a device which consists of a number of questions related to some issues or problems under study. It may be of two types- closed ended and open ended.

For the present study, a self-structured questionnaire, consisted of 10 close ended (yes/no) questions was applied by the investigator for the collection of data. The questionnaire consists of questions related to different aspects of semester system.

- **Interview:** In the present study along with the questionnaire, the investigator has also taken the help of interview in order to explore some more open ended opinion related

to the questions asked to the students in the questionnaire on the effectiveness of semester system.

2.4. STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE USE:

For the analysis of collected data the investigator has used simple percentage and graphical representation in the study.

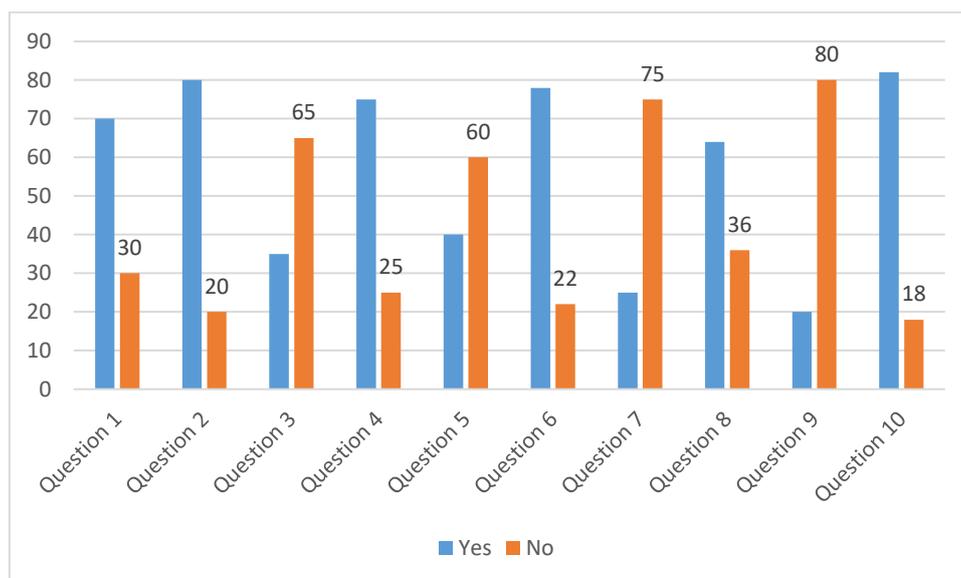
3. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

Analysis and interpretation of data is the most important stage of a research study, without which the collected will not get a proper meaning. Data analysis is a statistical or logical technique to describe and illustrate, condense and recap and evaluate data.

Table No 1: Showing the analysis of opinions of students regarding semester system

Sl No.	Questions	Total No. of Responses	Response opinion	Percentage of responses
1	Are you facing more work load?	150	Yes	70%
			No	30%
2	Does you become more examination oriented?	150	Yes	80%
			No	20%
3	Is there enough time for participating in co-curricular activities in semester system?	150	Yes	35%
			No	65%
4	Is your regular study habit developing?	150	Yes	75%
			No	25%
5	Do you able to study the content thoroughly?	150	Yes	40%
			No	60%
6	Is there more scope for securing more marks in semester system?	150	Yes	78%
			No	22%
7	Does the syllabus complete in proper time?	150	Yes	25%
			No	75%
8	Do you feel any biasness regarding the internal assessment in semester?	150	Yes	64%
			No	36%
9	Are you able to understand the evaluation system in CGPA?	150	Yes	20%
			No	80%
10	Do you maintain regularity of attendance in your class?	150	Yes	82%
			No	18%

Graphical Representation of Table No 1



3.1 Interpretation of Table No. 1:

After analysing the data, it has been found that Semester system has increased the workload of 70% of students and only 30% are feeling free from such workload. 80% of the students are becoming examination oriented and only 20% replied negative to this question. The result shows that for 65% students there is no enough time for participating in co-curricular activities in semester system and for 35% students only there is enough time for participating in co-curricular activities in semester system. Most significantly the regular study habit is increasing in case of 75% students. But only 40% students are able to study the content thoroughly and 60% students are not. Regarding the scope for securing more marks in semester system, 78% students has replied positively and 22% has replied negatively. According to 75% of the students the syllabus in a semester is not completed in proper time. Again 64% students feel biasness regarding the internal assessment in semester. Likewise 80% students are yet not able to understand the CGPA System of evaluation in semester. From the data analysis it is found that 82% students maintain regularity of attendance in their classes.

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

The investigator has collected the required data for the study through descriptive survey method by using questionnaire and interview to get a real picture regarding the effectiveness of semester system. After the systematic analysis and interpretation of data, the investigator has been able to drawn the following findings of the study-

- From the present study it is found that Semester system is increasing the workload for the students as the evaluation process is conducted twice a year. Majority of the students revealed that within the limited period of six months they need to complete a lot of work like- submission of assignment, project etc., which definitely increase their workload and mental pressure.
- It has been found from the study that 80% of the students become examination oriented in a semester system. They are running their study just for appearing in the examination, but not for gaining deeper understanding of the concepts. Because according to them their final examination comes within a very short period of month, where they get less time for proper settlement with the syllabus and as a result they become not able to study the content thoroughly.

- Participating in co-curricular activities is very essential for the all-round development of the student. But in the present study it has been found that 65% of the students do not get enough time for participating in co-curricular activities due to lots of academic works in a semester system.
- One of the positive sides of semester system has also been found in the study, i.e., semester system has developed the regular study habit of majority of the students as they need to sit and pass in the examination within a short period of six month.
- Again another important fact has been found that majority of the students feel that the scope for securing more marks in semester system is very high as evaluation includes internal marks, marks from assignment, projects and so on.
- Very unfortunately in the study it has been found that 64% of the students feel biasness regarding the internal assessment in semester. According to them teachers sometimes provide good internal marks to those students which have good attachment to teachers.
- Failure of timely completion of syllabus is an another finding of the study. 75% of the students reported that due to the shortage of time most of the teachers become not able to complete the syllabus at proper time, due to which they need to suffer in the examination.
- It has also been found from the study that 80% students are yet not be able to understand clearly the CGPA system of evaluation in semester system which creates confusion for them.
- Finally one positive impact of semester system has also been found, i.e., 82% students maintain regularity of attendance in their classes. Because in most of the colleges 75% attendance is compulsory for appearing in the examination.

5. SUGGESTIONS:

The comparison of both annual and semester system of education regarding its effectiveness is quite difficult. Both have their pros and cons. Semester system is the demand and need of present time from which we may expect a lot. But this system of education has so many drawbacks yet, which has been well reflected in the present study. However we can make the semester system more effective for the students by overcoming its limitations and for this purpose following suggestions are put forwarded by the investigator-

- Although duration of semester is only six month, but the length of its curriculum is almost similar to the annual system. It increases the workload of students to a great extent. Hence, overcrowded curriculum must be avoided by the universities for semester courses.
- The evaluation system of semester examination should be improved so that it can assess the all-round development of students rather making them examination oriented.
- Engagement in co-curricular activities is very essential for the all-round development of the students and hence curriculum must have the provision of co-curricular activities apart from the academic works.
- Biasness on the part of the teachers regarding internal marks is reported by the students and thus the system of evaluation through internal assessment must need proper monitoring by the authority.
- Most significantly the CGPA system of evaluation should be simplified and made clear to the students so that they can be aware about their performance in examination.

- For the effectiveness of a semester system proper and modern updated teaching learning aids must be made available in the institutions.

6. CONCLUSION:

From the above study we may conclude that although semester system has been implemented in almost all the undergraduate degree colleges of Assam, questions are still arising regarding its effectiveness. As semester system has been introduced as a best alternative of annual system, the administrators, policy makers, educationists, teachers must try to remove all its demerits and all should work in co-operation for its more effectiveness. We can predict that introduction of semester system can definitely change the quality and standard of our education system. It may be the best alternative of annual system of education. For this we need to redesign its syllabus, curriculum, evaluation system and all others aspects in which drawbacks are there.

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