



Effectiveness of semester pattern of higher education in India: Comparative study of annual and semester Pattern

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Abstract: In India, a decade before, it was the annual pattern for exams of graduation/post-graduation level. Later semester pattern was offered to post-graduation and some branches of graduation that are application-oriented. In the last decade, we adopted a semester pattern showing its good results for all streams of education. Continuous assessment was also introduced. However, there are few things in India, which assure that the annual pattern is most suitable. This paper reveals this aspect.

Index Terms - Semester system, Annual system, education system .

I. INTRODUCTION

Graduation is a dream for all job seekers. Once a person graduates, he/ she is suitable for a job with a good salary and social respect. In India, people prefer to go for engineering or medical stream after basic education. This leads to a good job or owning a business and a lot of money with social status. The others also prefer to go for arts, commerce, science, law etc. sides of education where there are chances of a job. Very few people go to drama, sports and other streams. Some people prefer to join their family business but it is desirable for them also to have graduation. Hence, graduation is a basic need of India. Before a decade we have started the semester pattern for graduation. It has caused serious effects on our education system. This paper discusses all the advantages and limitations of semester patterns in graduation. It also discusses the effects of semester patterns in other streams. This paper also recommends annual patterns and alternate teaching methods where content knowledge is important instead of marks.

II. Literature Review:

Dr. Itbar Khan et. Al., (2024), tries to implement the semester system in a particular area of the University of Malakand. Through the paper, he completed the survey of requirements to implement the semester system. The findings show that the environment should be made to implement the semester system. The environment in the colleges affiliated with the university is not suitable for the semester system. The environment includes infrastructure, psychology of students and staff, syllabi etc.

Dr. Gunjan et. Al, (2024) finds that the annual system is suitable for students. This is the recommendation by teachers involved in the survey. The majority of teachers prefer the annual system instead semester system to maintain the quality of course contents, student evaluation and performance.

Dr. Rosy Lalrinsangi, Dr. David Rosangliana, (2024) studied the implemented semester system in the perspective of assistant professors and associate professors. There is an observation noting the excess workload in the semester system than the annual system.

Keshav Dhakal, (2022), invented that, the semester system is good however, it increases the workload of teachers. Students are happy with this system. The semester system discourages absenteeism and if implemented properly, is an effective method of teaching. However, where the absenteeism is there, it is less worthy.

Muthukumaran et.al. (2022) noted the negativeness of teachers and students towards the semester system in pharmacy graduates of Himachal Pradesh, India. The research was focused on the perception of examination. Gitali Kalita, (2017) completed the survey-based research project in the area of Jorhat district of Assam, India. The conclusion leads to dissatisfaction of students towards the semester system.

All these research papers have put forward negative feedback on the semester system. The papers are selected from different areas of India and have different cultures.

III. Research Methodology: The methodology adapts a survey of research papers and discussion with a number of people. The major focus of discussion is the effectiveness of the semester system. The advantages and limitations of both systems are discussed to reach the final conclusion.

IV. Results and Discussion:

4.1 Indian Culture and Education: In India, education has a great background. Indian education system starts from 5000 or more years before and we have Vedas and Puranas saying how our inspirations (Lord Ram and Lord Krishna and others) learnt. We have famous stories of Gurus and Shishya saying the greatness of “Guru-Shishya Parampara”. We preferred the “Gurukul” system for complete knowledge of a particular subject where a student lives with his teacher for around 12 years and learns everything that he may need to use the subject in his real life. After education, the student offers some fees known as “Gurudakshina” before going back to his home. Most of the “Gurukul” were operated by well-known “Gurus” and were independent of funds from students.

However, in today’s world, the “Gurukul” system seems difficult to implement. So, we have established our education system. Here, the “needy” and “Expert” are brought together at College/ University (Institute). The expert of a subject is supposed to spend some time in the college for the needy and the needy has to pay fees for learning. The institution works as a bridge between both and also helps them to make teaching-learning easy. For this, facilities like classrooms, libraries, reading rooms, laboratories etc. are provided by the institution. Further, as it is difficult to select proper teachers and students, these institutions have started selection and examination procedures. In this procedure, a certificate is awarded to a student for getting good knowledge or who completes the course. The teacher will have minimum qualifications also to teach the subject. The higher the qualification, more the knowledge and more respect in society.

The learners or students do have some basic knowledge of the relevant subject and some qualifications before entering the course. It is also necessary that the student be interested in learning. The student is supposed to use this knowledge further. The teacher will also be getting remuneration for the efforts of teaching. (Earlier it was honorium, now it is remuneration).

In this way the education system is working and colleges and universities are working as mediators between learners and experts. But, now the trend is changing. Institutions offer various courses, certificates, and degrees. For this, they are appointing different faculty to teach the subject. Students (not pupils) are searching institutes to get good knowledge. Selection and assessment procedures are established to award the certificates. The assessment process is important as it decides the future of the candidate and it also makes the student different from others.

The assessment process is designed on a number of factors and may have a variety of options.

In the whole world, semester examination is preferred. In India, we are also implementing it. Along with it we are implementing CBCS (Choice Based Credit System) also. With the semester system, we are supposed to be part of the international trend of education. However, the education system in India was designed for local

4.2 Annual Pattern: In the early years annual pattern was preferred. It also has some advantages and limitations. The advantages are listed below.

1. The students will have much time to revise the syllabus.
2. Students will have a chance to refer to various subject-related books and can prepare notes by using the library.
3. Students can participate in all the co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
4. Teachers will have a chance to give as much knowledge to the students related to the subject.
5. Teachers can take the students on various field trips and give them much exposure.

It has the following disadvantages also.

1. In the annual system, most of the students show negligence towards studies as the examinations are once in year.
2. Most of the students do not attend college regularly as there is no strict regulation on attendance.

4.3 Semester pattern: In most of the universities either semester or trimester pattern is observed. In India, the semester pattern is observed in engineering and medical streams from graduation. Nowadays it is applied for all streams and at all levels. This pattern has the following advantages.

1. It allows more content to be covered in the course duration.
2. Content can be taught in detail as more lectures and practical sessions are assigned.
3. It allows the student to select courses as per interest.
4. Optional contents are reduced and specializations are increased.
5. Graduates are superior in knowledge.
6. Content is covered in just short duration
7. Attendance increases
8. pre-requisites may be covered in an earlier semester

However, it has the following limitations.

1. It does not allow extra teaching
2. Extra-curricular activities are not possible
3. Work of assessment increases
4. Multiple evaluation causes a lengthy evaluation process
5. No scope for use of library and other resources

4.4 Observations: From the above comparison, it is clearly seen that the semester pattern offers more benefits in terms of advancement of academics but it also offers negligence of students towards resource reading like library and others. But some serious observations in real life are as follows.

1. During the semester pattern, students tend to attend lectures in the view of exams only. Most of the time instead of reference books some short notes published by local publishers or solved question papers are referred to get pass class in subjects which are of no interest. This leads to poor understanding of such a subject.
2. It is also seen that, as the same subject may not be needed in the next semester, the tendency to pass the class is increased. For example, a student who takes admission to a course say B.Sc. In physics, the student only focuses on Physics and for other relevant subjects he/she prefers to pass the class.
3. Even though for teachers, assessment work is increased but work of teaching is reduced. Syllabi are simple as it has to touch more parts of content. Question papers are easy to solve as it is a little difficult to design multiple sets of paper for the same subject twice a year.
4. Students are not interested in learning, so teachers are not teaching. Some of those who teach in class also refer same short books that are referred to by students.
5. As assessment work is increased, exam work starts with the semester and continues in the next semester. Examination, result, and Revaluation is the life of a teacher.
6. The teacher is not free for research work. He /She has no time for other academic activities also. It is also seen that teachers cannot prefer a single casual leave in order to complete the syllabus.
7. It is interesting to see that, a teacher having an interest in teaching and having good knowledge of the subject has no scope to develop his ideas with students. Thus it stops the development of students and even teachers also.
8. It is seen that even though the semester pattern is there for engineering courses, students do not have adequate knowledge. This knowledge is acquired by students when they go for job training or in the job.
9. As most of students are not selected by companies because of poor subject knowledge, they work as literate labourers or remain jobless. Thus, a generation is formed with higher qualifications and no job.
10. The main advantage of the semester pattern is in the favor of universities as universities get exam fees twice in a year. Exam departments of universities are in profit.
11. In lieu of that, universities have given exams in the first year to colleges. This degrades the quality of education.

Conclusion: Even though the semester pattern has many advantages in theory and seems good-looking, in real life these advantages have become limitations. For students, once they get a degree with pass class or even with a higher class, as he/she has no knowledge, no idea about “how to get knowledge” he/she is useless to society. Further, the teacher also has no prosperity as he /she is also doing nothing for personal development.

In summary, the semester pattern is simply a creation of a fair look without knowledge and hence it must not be there in education in India.

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