

Attitude of Government Aizawl West College Students towards Semester System at College Level

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Abstract

Educational system all over the world has never been consistent over the year. Through advancement and exposure to new concepts, educationists investigate possibilities to teach texts in various feasible manners. A semester system is an academic term. It is division of an academic year, the time during which a college holds classes. The purpose of this study is to find out the attitude of the college students of a particular college in Mizoram on semester system and to examine whether they have a positive or negative attitude towards semester system.

Keywords : *Semester, Teacher-centred, Attitude*

Introduction

The semester system is an education system whose primary concern is learning instead of teaching. The approach in this system is learner-centered and not of teacher centered. The motto of semester system is to put emphasis on continuous compressive and in depth learning aiming at capacity building of students by developing required Knowledge, Skills & Attitude (KSA). Though there are umpteen numbers of arguments in favour of semester system amongst Educationists over the annual system, yet to materialise the scheme effectively in an environment of poor physical & information sources remains a challenge especially in case of Indian Higher Education System. Semester systems enlarge curricular space, encourage and support accelerated learning opportunities for all concerned.

The word 'semester' originated from a Latin word 'Cursusmesestris' meaning 'course of six months- Se means six and Mensis – month. So, it literally means Half a Year or one of the two divisions (of 15 to 18 weeks each) of an academic year. However, a semester does not

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merely mean dividing an academic year into two half yearly sessions. It is an innovative approach to teaching-learning process, an educational culture, a student-friendly system, which requires a new mind set on the part of the learners as well as facilitators of learning.

In India, the University Grant Commission (UGC) under the new initiative for academic reforms under XI Plan announced that the universities must take necessary action in order to introduce the semester system at the under graduate level by 2012. Accordingly, Mizoram University, in its 14th Academic Council meeting held on 26th June, 2009 constituted a committee to go through the UGC's Action Plan and its implementation at the UG level.

Regulations on semester system at the under graduate level in colleges of Mizoram University

Some of the important regulations made by the Mizoram University on semester system at three year degree course are as follows:

1. The under graduate courses consist of three academic years with two semesters in each year. Each year is divided into two semesters. The first academic year comprise of the first and second semesters; the second academic year-third and fourth semesters and the third academic year- fifth and sixth semesters.
2. Each semester have 400 marks and the total marks for the course is 2400.
3. Three class test in each semester out of which one maybe seminar/ assignment to be conducted each in theory and practical separately for continuous assessment. The average of the best two will be considered as the mark obtained in the continuous assessment in that paper out of 20 marks. The rest 5 marks maybe allocated to the attendance and classroom performance of each student.
4. Duration of each theory class shall be 1 hour whereas for practical it shall be 2 hours.
5. The syllabus of each paper is divided into 5 units. A total contact hour for each course paper is 50 hours.
6. The working days recommended for each semester shall not be less than 90 days excluding holidays, sports, examinations, semester break and vacation.
7. Student is not allowed to appear in any course more than three times and student shall not be allowed to appear in any course beyond ten semesters of his/her first admission.
8. Student shall be permitted to proceed from the first semester upto final semester irrespective of his/her failure in any of the semester examination subject to the condition that the students shall appear for all arrear paper of each course along with the concerned semester examination.

Need of the Study

Mizoram is considered as one of the most literate state in India where semester system has been introduced at the college level since 2011 academic session. But, the introduction of semester system at the college level has brought about tremendous changes in the teaching-learning process at the college level. In India, the introduction of semester system has brought a division among the educationists, teachers and academicians who supported this system and those who opposed it. We have seen articles in support and against of this semester system. Unfortunately, a study in this related issue is not seen. Some section has an opinion that semester system should be introduced only after the infrastructure and the required teachers are met. While there is another section who opposed to this idea that introduction of semester system is too much for the students and for the teachers. In India, after this new system started at the college level, a number of theoretical articles were published in newspapers and journals. The authors of these articles, no doubt have logically express their own opinion on various issues related to semester system, but the opinion of the college students are marginalise. Besides, there are many questions relating to semester system. Some of the questions are- what is the opinion of the students on semester system? What is the attitude of male students towards semester system? What is the attitude of female students on semester system? Whether introduction of semester system is good for the students? These and many more questions relating to semester need to be studied.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study.

- i) To construct an attitude scale towards semester system
- ii) To study the attitude of students of Government Aizawl West College towards semester system.
- iii) To study the attitude of male students of Government Aizawl West College towards semester system.
- iv) To study the attitude of female students of Government Aizawl West College towards semester system.

Delimitation of the Study

The present study has been delimited to the Government Aizawl West College only and the enrolment of the students is confined only to 2012 academic session.

Review of related literature

In India research work in this area is very dry as this is an innovative programme which is introduced in India recently but there are some articles which are mentioned below:

Gupta (2011) pointed out that the old system of annual examinations was faulty and did not encourage scholarship. Despite the semester system having some faults, it is by far a better method of education till we innovate and get an even better system.

Mandawra (2011) supports the views of credit hours linked to the semester and continuing comprehensive evaluation provide direction to learners and this ultimately develops confidence in them and learners find themselves equipped with desired abilities.

Patil (2011) reveals that semester system will help teachers to test the students better on the subject, at the same time the students once appeared in the exam will not look back to see the part covered already, in this way for students, it become very easy to prepare and give the exams, secondly due to autonomy of institutes students are asked that part only which is covered in class, the rest is left aside neither the students care nor the professor, this degrades the quality of students, because there is no outside agency to evaluate the professors and the students ability or performance, as professors sets paper according to their wish and keep their result best by asking that part only which they are able to cover in the class.

Sarah (2011) noted that semester system has some pre-requisites like willingness of the students and teachers to go beyond the prescribe syllabus by writing assignments, submitting projects and participation in seminars, discussions and making presentations. Most Indian universities do not provide such opportunities and therefore this system has become different from the annual examination system that encourages rote learning which has become redundant with digitization of information and knowledge.

Chowdhury (2013) reveals that a semester system is desirable as it would help integrate Delhi university with other places making exchange programmes with foreign universities possible. This way they will have more opportunities at hand.

Methodology

Sample: The sample of the study consisted of 200 college students consisting Govt. Aizawl West College which is affiliated under Mizoram university. The sampling design adopt is simple random sampling technique.

Tools and techniques of data collection: To find out the attitude of college students on semester system, there was no readymade scale, hence the investigators constructed a scale to find out whether the students at the college level supported the semester system.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Scoring of the attitude scale: For scoring the attitude scale, the investigators followed the pattern of Likert Attitude Scale. Scoring for each item of the Attitude Scale was done by giving a score 4,3,2,1 and 0 for positive statements and 0,1,2,3 and 4 for negative statements respectively for responses- strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The scores of all 200 respondents were tabulated separately in terms of criterion variables.

The attitude scale consists of 10 statements to measure the attitude of respondents towards semester system at the college level. Each statement is followed by responses that is strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree which carried a score of 4,3,2,1 and 0 respectively for positive statement and 0,1,2,3 and 4 respectively for negative statement.

Table 1**The cut-off score shows the Positive, Neutral and Negative attitude**

No. of statements	Negative Attitude	Neutral Attitude	Positive Attitude
10	Below 15	15-25	Above 25

A cut-off score for positive attitude is taken as 2.5 of a score which is the upper limit of 2 (a score for undecided response). On the other hand, a score of 1.5 is taken as a cut-off score for negative attitude which is the lower limit of 2, Therefore, a score which is above 25 on the whole score is regarded as a positive attitude towards semester system. A score that fall below 15 on the whole score is taken as negative attitude. Similarly a score that falls between the cut-off score for negative or positive attitude has been interpreted as neutral attitude,

Table 2**Mean Attitude score of students towards Semester system**

Number of students	Mean Score
200 students	28.23

Overall attitude of students towards semester system: The overall mean score of 28.23 of student respondents which is above 25, shows that in overall the student have positive attitude towards semester system at college level. Therefore, the overall attitude of college students towards semester system at college level is positive; a detailed analysis show that out of 200 students 145(72.50%) have positive attitude while only 20 (10%) have negative attitude and the rest 35 (17.50%) have neutral attitude towards semester system at college level.

Table 3**Mean Attitude score of male students towards Semester system**

Number of students	Mean Score
100 students	27.8

Attitude of male students towards semester system : The overall mean score is 27.80 in male students which is above 25, shows that in overall the male students have positive attitude towards semester system at college level. Therefore, the overall attitude of male students on semester system at college level is positive; a detailed analysis shows that out of 100 student respondents, 74 (74%) have positive attitude while only 12(12%) have negative attitude and the rest 14(14%) have neutral attitude towards semester system at the college level.

Table 4
Mean Attitude score of female students towards Semester system

Number of students	Mean Score
100 students	28.2

Attitude of female students towards semester system: The overall mean score 28.2 of female students which is above 25, shows that in overall the female students have positive attitude towards semester system at college level. The overall attitude of female students on semester system at college level is positive; a detailed analysis shows that out of 100 student respondents, 73(.73%) have positive attitude while only 7(7.%) have negative attitude and the rest 20(20%) have neutral attitude towards semester system at the college level.

Findings

The major findings of the study are as follows:-

1. The overall attitude of college students towards the introduction of semester system at the college level is positive.
2. The overall attitude of male respondents towards the introduction of semester system at the college level is positive.
3. The overall attitude of female respondents towards the introduction of semester system at the college level is positive.
4. Majority of the students believed that in semester system there is closer teacher-pupil interaction and it is more transparent than annual system.
5. Majority of the students also agreed that the state government did not provide the required amount of funds needed for the effective implementation of semester system at the college level.
6. More than half of the respondents believed that there was a homogeneous distribution of teachers' workload throughout the semester.
7. Majority of the students agreed that in semester system there were integrity and accountability of the teachers and administrators.

Suggestions

The following are some of the suggestions made from this study

1. There is a need to sensitize teachers and students about the need and importance of semester system, more seminars, consultations be organized in order to develop confidence among the teachers and students.
2. Studies with regards to semester system can be conducted in other colleges.

3. A study of the relationship between male and female students can also be taken up.
4. Studies with regards to the attitude of teachers on semester system can be conducted.

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