

PERCEPTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TOWARDS SEMESTER SYSTEM-A SURVEY

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Abstract

Examination is a part and parcel of any educational system. The success and failure of any system in general and that of the students in particular get exposed by means of a well co-ordinate examination system. Examination provides a basis for planning and redesigning any system at work. Examinations have been of a vast variety, answering to a vast variety of purposes. There is the regular, annually recurring examination, through the several stages of a person's educational career. Examinations may be classified on the basis of type of questions i.e. essay type, short answer type and objective type, carefulness in the construction of examination papers, honesty in the administration of examinations, centralized evaluation of answer books and its overall nature. Generally, in higher education institutions examination is conducted once or twice a year. When examination is conducted twice a year it is designated as the semester system of examination which is found to be in practice in most of the higher education institutions now days. The human being when get associated with some system, naturally he/she may develop some sorts of positive or negative feelings towards it. As such, when the university students are given the opportunity to go through the semester system, naturally they are supposed to develop some degree of perception towards it, which is the subject of investigation of the present study.

KEY WORDS: Examination , Semester System

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Introduction

Generally, a session of a class in our country is of one year duration and the examination is conducted at its end. Some universities divide the session into two sessions of six months each, and conduct the examinations at the end of each six months session. Thus, a three-year degree course is divided into six equal sessions, and two-year postgraduate course is divided into four sessions. Such a system is called as the semester system. The shorter Oxford English Dictionary gives the following meaning of the word Semester, "A period of term six months, especially in German universities and some US college, the college half year". According to the Dictionary of Education edited by Carter V. Good, "Semester means half of the academic year usually 16 to 18 weeks. It is thus clear that the semester signifies the division of the academic year into two parts, just as the trimester implies the division of the academic year into three parts". Division of the academic year also implies that courses are designed to cover one semester (instead of a year) and that final examinations are held twice a year. If a one year course is divided into two parts, it will lead to more intensive coverage of each part. Semesterization also facilitates for the better use of credit system, greater reliance on home study, and internal assessment. Each university should decide for itself the pattern of the semester system, keeping in view the student enrolment, level of instruction, nature of courses and unitary as affiliating nature of university. Most of the universities have implemented the semester system, the semester system in postgraduate and undergraduate level should be introduced after much careful planning and discussion at various stages.

This system has been applied in several universities of our country, but could not be run efficiently in general courses (B.A., B.Sc., and B.Com.), of course, this system has proved effective in some technical courses. Emphasis is not being given to apply it at secondary level. It goes without saying that this system can be applied only in the field of higher education and that too in these curricula which can be divided into semesters and where the number of students is limited. In our view, it should be applied in higher technical courses only and that too with continuous improvement. Improvement is a continuous process. Semester system in colleges and universities should back joy into leaning. About 2,500 years ago, Socrates said that education is the kindling of flame, not the filling of a vessel. It is a mantra that still holds well in the 21st century.

Rationale of the Study

Semester system helps in reducing the burden of large syllabus. It gives more scope for not only imparting vast knowledge of vibrant areas of current needs, but also enriching the knowledge of the students. This system provides an opportunity for students to interact with teachers and solve their doubts in the subjects or otherwise, which also enhances their personality development. One other important implication of semester system is that better and effective methods of student performance during and at the end of the semester are to be adopted. In this system, a student failing in one subject in one semester is not declared to be failed rather is admitted to the next semester and is given an opportunity to re-study the subject and reappear at the examination in that subject in that semester. Semester system has been introduced in different post graduate courses of H.P. University, Shimla and now semester system introduced under Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) at undergraduate course from 2013-14 academic sessions. There are about 150 degree colleges, including 66 government degree colleges, affiliated to Himachal Pradesh University which would be arrested by semester system, they added. Due to difficult topography and variance in weather conditions, the colleges close for summer and winter vacations at different periods of time. While the colleges in mid and higher hills close for winter vacations, the colleges in lower hills are closed for vacations during summer. But the sudden change from the traditional to semester pattern of examination very often confuses children and they fail to keep cope with such a pattern. The success of semester system depends upon the positive attitude of students towards it. As such, the investigator decided to conduct a study in order to know the attitude of university students belonging to gender and different streams towards semester system.

Objectives of the Study

The investigator has formulated the following objectives for the purpose of the investigation;

1. To study the perception of university students towards semester system with regard to:
 - Curriculum under semester system.
 - Syllabus or course coverage, Regularity, Interaction, Discipline and Knowledge Enhancing.
 - Evaluation and feedback procedure.

Research Method Used

The present was conducted by adopting descriptive survey method of research since the basic purpose of study was to access the perception of university students towards the different aspects of Semester System of Examination.

Sample

Considering the feasibility of the study the investigator selected 150 university PG students of Himachal Pradesh University Shimla by adopting simple random sampling technique:

Table No. 1 (Distribution of Sample)

Sr. No.	Stream	No of Students	Total
1	Arts	50	150
2	Science	50	
3	Commerce	50	

Tool Used

The required data to meet the objectives were collected through administering questionnaire prepared by the investigator himself.

Statistical Technique Used

The researcher of the present research work used percentage statistical technique to analyzed the data

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Item wise Analysis of the Perception of Total Postgraduate Students towards Curriculum of Semester System

1. Satisfaction with the relevance of curriculum with present needs.

On this item out of 150 sample 98% postgraduate students responded to 'Yes' where as 2% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 98% postgraduate students view that curriculum of semester system relevant to meet present needs of students.

2. Satisfaction with the curricular activities in curriculum of semester system

To this item out of 150 sample 95% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 5% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 95% of PG students were satisfied with the curricular activities organized in semester system.

3. Opportunities to project work, field studies, tutorials, seminars, group discussion etc.

To this item out of 150 sample 82% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 18% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 82% PG students believes that maximum opportunities are given for project work and other field work.

4. Satisfaction with the specification of various contents in the syllabus and curriculum distribution.

On this item out of 150 sample 58% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 42% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 58% PG students viewed that the curriculum distribution of semester system is good where as 42% PG students are not satisfied with this statement.

5. Allows greater flexibility in formulating the course.

In this item out of 150 sample 42% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 58% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 42% PG students are satisfied with this item and 58% PG student's teacher educators are not satisfied with this item. Though it means the current curriculum doesn't allow flexibility so it should focus more on it.

Item wise Analysis of the Perception of Total Postgraduate Students towards Course Coverage, Regularity, Interaction, Discipline and Knowledge Enhancing

1. Coverage of course contents within stipulated time.

In this item out of 150 sample 62% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 38% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 62% PG students satisfied with this item that syllabus in semester system covered in proper time. Such result shows that coverage of course contents need be supplemented by some other ways.

2. Students attend the classes regularly.

In this item out of 150 sample 78% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 22% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 78% PG students viewed that during semester system students attend class regularly.

3. *Provides an opportunity for students to interact with their teachers and solve doubts.*

In this item out of 150 sample 66% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 34% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 66% PG students viewed that semester system definitely provides an opportunity for students to interact with their teachers where ever 34% students were against with this statement so other measures to be adopted to solve this problem.

4. *Problem of indiscipline among students is diminished.*

In this item out of 150 sample 84% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 16% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that in this system the problem of indiscipline removed.

5. *Enhance knowledge of students.*

In this item out of 150 sample 88% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 12% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that semester system helps to enhance knowledge of students.

Item wise Analysis of the Perception of Total Postgraduate Students towards Evaluation and Feedback

1. *Understand and satisfied with the CGPA system*

In this item out of 150 sample 46% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 54% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that only 46% PG students viewed that they have knowledge about CGPA system and 56% PG students have no idea about CGPA system so this area require great needs for improvement.

2. *Grading system reduces subjective biasness in evaluation.*

In this item out of 150 sample 54% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 46% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 54% PG students viewed that no doubt that grading system reduces subjective time period of practice teaching is not sufficient and more time is needed for this programme

3. *Internal Assessment and overall evaluation is transparent.*

In this item out of 150 sample 58% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 42% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that only 58% PG students believes that overall evaluation in

semester system is transparent but with regard to the negative responses it may be concluded that internal assessment and other evaluation procedure need be more transparent in nature.

4. *No student or examinee is declared to fail in it.*

In this item out of 150 sample 94% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 6% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 94% PG students know that no student is too declared to fail in it.

5. *Results are declared in time.*

In this item out of 150 sample 18% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 82% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 82% PG students viewed that in semester system results are not declared in time so relevant steps to be followed in this section.

6. *Teachers show script of examination, and assignment regularly or have to work hard.*

In this item out of 150 sample 72% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 28% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 72% PG students believes that in this system teachers have to work hard to show script of examination and 28% PG students believes that no teachers have to work hard or assignment regularly.

7. *Get constructive feedback from teachers*

In this item out of 150 sample 46% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 54% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 46% PG students believes that in this system constructive feedback get from teachers and 54% PG students believes that they don't get any feedback from teachers.

8. *Students have more examination oriented*

In this item out of 150 sample 37% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 63% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that 37% PG students believes that in this system students have more examination oriented 63% PG students believes that students have no more examination oriented.

9. *Due to the frequent examinations it creates anxiety among the students.*

In this item out of 150 sample 11% PG students responded to 'Yes' where as 89% responded to 'No'. From this response it is clear that only 11% PG students are anxious towards examinations and 89% PG students believes that no student is anxious about examination.

Table No-2

Summary of the Item wise analysis of the Perception of Total Postgraduate Students towards Curriculum of Semester System

Sr. No	Items	Yes %	NO %
1	Satisfaction with the relevance of curriculum with present needs.	98%	2%
2	Satisfaction with the curricular activities in curriculum of semester system	98%	2%
3	Opportunities to project work, field studies, tutorials, seminars, group discussion etc.	32%	68%
4	Satisfaction with the specification of various contents in the syllabus and curriculum distribution.	58%	42%
5	Allows greater flexibility in formulating the course.	42%	58%

Table No-3

Summary of the Item wise analysis of the Perception of Total Postgraduate Students towards Course Coverage, Regularity, Interaction, Discipline and Knowledge Enhancing

Sr.No	Items	Yes%	NO%
1	Coverage of course contents within stipulated time.	52%	38%
2	Students attend the classes regularly.	78%	22%
3	Provides an opportunity for students to interact with their teachers and solve doubts.	66%	34%
4	Problem of indiscipline among students is diminished.	84%	16%
5	Enhance knowledge of students.	88%	12%

Table No-4

Summary of the Item wise analysis of the Perception of Total Postgraduate Students towards Evaluation and Feedback

Sr.No	Items	Yes%	NO%
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1	Understand and satisfied with the CGPA system	46%	54%
2	Grading system reduces subjective biasness in evaluation.	54%	46%
3	Internal Assessment and overall evaluation is transparent.	58%	42%
4	No student or examinee is declared to fail in it.	94%	0%
5	Results are declared in time.	18%	82%
6	Teachers show script of examination, and assignment regularly or have to work hard.	72%	28%
7	Get constructive feedback from teachers	46%	54%
8	Students have more examination oriented	37%	63%
9	Due to the frequent examinations it creates anxiety among the students.	11%	89%

Suggestions for the Further Research

It is one well established fact that it is too difficult to complete a research project without any limitation or from all the perspectives. Whatever core one may take no doubt something important is left behind which may get visible later on. As such, the investigator of the present study would like to have the following suggestions for its subsequent improvement;

- The scope of perception towards semester system of examination can be broadened in terms of covering sample from different universities.
- The perception of the P.G students towards semester system of examination can be studied in relation to the socio-economic background of the students.
- The impact of perception towards semester system on academic performance can also be studied.
- The perception of Post Graduate students belonging to various social categories towards semester system of exam can also studied.

Conclusion

Semester signifies the division of the academic year into two parts. It also implies that courses are designed to cover one semester (instead of a year), and that final examinations are held twice a year. It may be concluded that the students having positive perception towards semester system can success well. The Post Graduate students shows positive attitude towards semester system.

Most of the students opined that semester system is an admirable step of H.P. University. It reduces the examination burden of students. Teachers are much worried because they have to complete their syllabus within six months. As a whole university students show favorable and positive perception towards semester system and same changes may be done for the improvement of the present semester system.

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