

Students' and Teachers' Knowledge and Attitude towards the Semester System of Higher Secondary level in West Bengal

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Abstract: The West Bengal Council of Higher secondary education (WBCHSE) has introduced a semester system for classes 11 & 12, starting from the 2024-2025 academic session for class 11 and 2025-2026 for class 12. This reform aims to promote continuous evaluation, reduce exam stress, and align with higher education systems. The semester system replaces the traditional annual exam structure with a four semester frame work. This study aims to investigate the attitude of students and teachers towards this new system, identifying benefits and challenges.

Keywords: Semester System, West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education, Continuous Evaluation, Exam Stress Reduction, Higher Education alignment.

Introduction: The Semester system refers to an academic structure where the academic year is decided into two (or sometimes more) terms or parts, each lasting about 5 to 6 months. Each semester generally includes midterm assessment, and end Semester exam, as well as continuous evaluation through assignments, Projects, and Periodic tests. The purpose of these systems to provide a more balanced and organised approach to education by spreading the workload evenly and allowing. Here higher secondary level means the educational stage of class 11 & 12, covering students aged group 16- 18 years. It marks the final years of school education before tertiary or higher education such as college or university studies. The attitude of both students and teachers refers to their perceptions, feelings and behavioural inclination towards the semester system. System explores the preparedness and perceptions of the primary stakeholders of the system – students and teachers. The insights derived from this research will guide policymakers and educators in tailoring the semester system to address specific challenges and gap in its implementation. Understanding the knowledge and attitudes of stakeholders can bridge the divide between policy and classroom reality, ensuring the reform is practical and effective (Gupta & Patel, 2021). By addressing local contexts and perceptions, this study will contribute to shaping a system that aligns with the educational needs and aspirations of students and teachers, while fostering a suitable learning environment (Chakraborty & Sen, 2021).

Significance of Semester system– Educational system is continuous evolving to meet the needs of learners and society. One of the reforms in recent years has been the introduction of the semester system in Higher secondary Education. This system, which divides the academic year into two terms, aims to provide a structured approach to learning, promote continuous evaluation and reduce the pressure associated with end-of-year examinations (Gupta and Patel, 2021). In West Bengal

this reform aligns with border National educational objectives, as outlined in the National educational policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes holistic and flexible learning environment (Ministry of education, 2020).

The semester system offers several potential benefits, including the opportunity for students to engage deeply with their subjects through regular assessments and timely feedback (Sharma 20 19). Teachers, too, can benefit from this approach, as it allows for more focused planning and periodic curriculum adjustments. However, despite these advantages the success of the semester system depends significantly on the attitude and understanding of its primary stakeholders—students and teachers. Without adequate knowledge of the system’s objectives and methodologies, stakeholders may struggle to adapt, leading to resistance and potential set back in implementation (Banerjee, 2022). In the context of West Bengal, the higher secondary level serves as a critical stage in a student academic journey, laying the groundwork for future academic or professional pursuits. The shift from an annual to a semester – based system has generated diverse responses among students and teachers. While some perceive it as an opportunity to reduce academic stress through continuous assessments, other express concerns about increased workload and insufficient time for syllabus coverage. Furthermore, variations in institutional resources, teacher preparedness, and students’ readiness exacerbate these challenges, potentially affecting the system’s overall efficacy (Chakraborty & Sen, 2021).

Understanding students’ and teachers’ knowledge and attitudes towards the semester system is therefore vital for evaluating its implementation and impact. Studies have shown that a positive attitude towards educational reforms is often correlated with their successful adoption (Roy, 2020). Conversely, limited awareness and negative perceptions can hinder progress and amplify existing inefficiency. This research aims to bridge these knowledge gap by assessing this level of awareness, attitudes, and perceived challenges associated with the semester system in West Bengal Higher secondary education landscape. A comprehensive analysis of these factors will provide valuable insights for policymaker, educators, and administrators. For instance, if teachers’ preparedness and training emergency as sufficient issues. targeted professional development programmes can be designed. Similarly, understanding students’ concerns about workload or assessment patterns can help refine the implementation process, ensuring that the system benefits all stakeholders.

Moreover, this study aligns with the growing body of research advocating for evidence-based educational reforms. By examining localised experiences and perceptions, it contributes to a nuanced understanding of the semester system ‘s practical challenges and opportunities. As such, the findings will not only support the ongoing implementation of the semester system in West Bengal but also inform similar initiatives in other regions with comparable educational contexts. The semester system represents a significant shift in West Bengal’s higher secondary education framework. Its success hinges on the collective engagement of the students and teachers, guided by a clear understanding of its objectives and potential benefits. By investigating their knowledge and attitudes, this study seeks to provide actionable recommendations that can enhance the semester system’s effectiveness and sustainability, ensuring that it fulfils it’s intended goals.

Conclusion: This study will examine the knowledge and attitudes of students and teachers regarding the semester system in West Bengal's higher secondary education. By analysing stakeholders perceptions, it aims to identify barriers, propose actionable recommendations, and contribute to the enhancement of the semester system's implementation and success.

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