

P R E F A C E

The desirability and feasibility of replacing the traditional pattern of academic calendar with the Semester System in the Institutions of higher learning in Madras has been a much debated question among the college communities of Madras for sometime now. With the policy decision as to the introduction of the Semester System taken at the highest level, and the college teachers having had little orientation in the modalities of a Semester System, many doubts have been raised as to the success of the Semester System in improving university education as envisaged by its protagonists. Moreover, the University Grants Commission is now seized of the problem of examination reform of which the introduction of Semester System is an integral part, and the University of Madras is one of the Universities selected by the UGC to try out its action programme of examination reform. It is in this context that the investigator chose the problem for the study, the outcome of which he hopes would help the educationalists and the college teachers to gain a better perspective of the Semester System as is understood, and to evolve a frame of reference for its implementation and practice.

In making the study, the investigator incurred indebtedness to many persons. With a grateful heart he acknowledges their guidance and counsel, the chief among whom are the

late Dr. D.M. Desai, the former Professor and Head, Department of Educational Administration, and Dr. D.R. Darji, Reader in Educational Administration in the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University, who were his guides in this research. In spite of indifferent health, the late Dr. D.M. Desai took keen interest in the investigator's work and guided him almost to the end but as misfortune would have it, Dr. D.M. Desai passed away suddenly without seeing the investigator's work completed. Taking the thread from where he left, as it were, Dr. D.R. Darji guided the investigation and saw to its completion. The change of guide in this regard had been smoothly effected without any interruption and dislocation to the research work, thanks to the administrative acumen and personal understanding shown by Dr. D.B. Desai, Dean, Faculty of Education and Psychology, and the Head, CASE, M.S. University of Baroda.

In building up a theoretical model of a Semester System and in drafting and standardizing the Semester System Description Questionnaire used in this study, the investigator received valuable help from Prof. M.D. Devadason, former Dean, Regional College of Education, Mysore, Dr. G.S. Davies, Assistant Professor of Chemical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, Mr. Mariruthu George, an old student of Spicer Memorial College, Poona, where American System of Semester Calendar is followed.

For data processing in this study and for statistical work, mechanical calculators and computers have been used. In this regard valuable assistance has been received from the staff of the Computer Centre, Madras Engineering College, and the Department of Statistics, Madras Christian College, Tambaram. In terms of statistical formulation, much assistance has been received from Mrs. J. Davis, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Meston Training College, Madras and Mrs. P.B. Dekhtawala, Lecturer in Educational Administration, Faculty of Education & Psychology, M.S. University of Baroda.

Much-cooperation has been received from the administrative and faculty heads of the institutions of the study listed elsewhere. The investigator owes a debt of personal gratitude to the individual teachers of the various institutions for answering the questionnaire and making this study possible.

The thesis is presented in six chapters. A theoretical frame of research is developed in the first chapter. The second chapter deals with the research design, and the third, the research tools and their selection, and the development of the Semester System Description Questionnaire. An analysis of the data and the findings are treated in the fourth chapter.

A factor analysis of the salient variables of the study and the factors extracted are dealt with in the fifth chapter. The concluding chapter gives a summary of the findings and their educational implications.

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