

'Kashmir fruit industry suffered Rs 2890 Cr losses in 2014'

- *More than 6 lakh families are dependent on horticulture*
- *Fruit growers, traders urge authorities to compensate losses, ensure future safeguards*

Syed Rafiya/Sumaiya Yousuf

People associated with horticulture sector of Kashmir suffered heavy losses in the last year's devastating flood. According to Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers-Cum-Dealers Union, they have suffered losses to the tune of Rs 2890 crores

The union has sent a detailed communication with breakdown of losses to Prime Minister of India, Chief Minister of J&K, and Union Agriculture Minister.

Horticulture sector contributes sizeable share towards the state GDP. Jammu and Kashmir is among the largest producers of temperate fruits like apple, peach, plum, apricot, cherry, walnut and almonds.

According to Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers-Cum-Dealers Union, more than six lakh families are dependent on fruit trade including transporters and labourers.

Speaking to Samanbal, the New Kashmir Fruit Association's president, Bashir Ahmad Bashir said: "74 lakh boxes got totally damaged in transit during floods. In the year 2013, 17000 trucks were dispatched to terminal market against which only 8000 truckloads were dispatched due to floods. The loss caused due to fall of fruits with floodwater and exposure of fresh fruit and dumping places to incessant rains have been estimated to be at Rs 600 crores."

Similarly, loss due to conversion of "A" and "B" grade due to persistent exposure of fresh fruits to rains on tree and due to flood water on ground after picking has been put at Rs 900 crores. Losses due to total damage of William Pears and Nakh Kashmiri during floods and incessant rains and loss on account of walnut industry has been estimated at Rs 400 crores and 300 crores respectively.

Losses due to extra freight of Rs 50 per box on account of transportation charges on one crore boxes had been put at Rs 50 crores.

Similarly, losses due to floodwater damaging and destroying packing material have been estimated at Rs 100 crores.

Besides, the flood water entered the fruit complex Parimpora, Srinagar, where it remained stagnant for three weeks thereby causing extensive damage to infrastructure viz. shops, godowns,



platforms and vehicles which had been put to Rs 100 crores.

The total loss has been calculated to be Rs 2890 crores, according to Bashir.

The union has requested horticulture department to assess the losses caused to the orchards. The fruit growers and dealers have also urged authorities to compensate the losses besides ensuring future safeguards for the horticulture industry.

They have asked for free supply of fungicides, pesticides, insecticides, and fertilizers for three years. Other demands of fruit growers and dealers include grant of subsidy on cardboard packing material at least for three years. Waiving off interest on fruit loan for 10 years and exemption of fruit loan at least for current year and least for last two years. Grant of interest free loans to the new borrowers at least for three years.

The fruit growers have sought allocation of sufficient funds for development of infrastructure at producer's level and specific attention for upgradation of main fruit market Parimpora, arrangement in advance for ensuring quality plant material to the growers free of cost for three years so that the damaged orchards are rejuvenated.

"Arrangement for availability of vehicles for transportation of fruits on genuine freight to the different parts of the country needs to be made. Empty trucks may be procured from neighboring states, Delhi, Punjab, Amritsar,

From the Chief Editor



Our university has initiated the academic process to implement Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in addition to important measures taken to enhance academic standards and quality of education that includes improvement and revision in curriculum, teaching-learning process, and examination-evaluation system. The university is meticulously pursuing CBCS pattern and is ready to implement the same from next academic session.

The department of Convergent Journalism has revised and programmed syllabi according to CBCS system and through statutory bodies like Board of Studies and School Board updated the course content so as to make it more practical and industry oriented. Specialization has been introduced for final semester students where they will have to choose from four optional courses and a mandatory component of Internship. The students are required to produce a media project in the shape of Film or Documentary, New Media project like a Website, Narrative Journalism and Dissertation work. Unlike the traditional arrangement, there will be no written examination for fourth semester so that students can put the theoretical learning into practical use and come up with a comprehensive product. This novel scheme is aimed to benefit our students in making a strong showreel/ portfolio for themselves, which in turn is going to help them in their placements.

Meanwhile, Samanbal continues to serve as a valuable platform for students to hone their news reporting, writing and editing skills.

Happy reading!

Asif Khan

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Haryana, UP so that freight escalation is checked,” the union has demanded.

It has also requested that funds may be made available for development for cold store/ CA store in all the markets of Kashmir valley at tehsil level. “Those fruit growers /dealers who have not raised any CC limit and have invested their own money have suffered heavy losses due to damages of fruit in the flood and such suitable package considered for them,” said Bashir Ahmad Bashir.

“The Bangladesh government is charging heavy taxes on import of fruits from Kashmir valley; this matter may kindly be taken up with the Bangladesh government for exemption of these taxes and a delegation of fruit growers/ dealers of the valley may also kindly be sent to see Prime Minister of Bangladesh,” he added.

Parimpora Fruit Mandi: Victim of official neglect

Sumiya Yousuf / Syed Rafiya

Lack of proper sanitation and facilities like proper electricity and macadamized roads is affecting the business activities at Parimpora Fruit Mandi.

“One can find huge heaps of garbage at the entry point of the mandi and the foul smell repels buyers as well as visitors. Roads damaged in last year’s devastating floods have not been repaired so far,” Kashmir Fruit Association’s president, Bashir Ahmad told Samanbal.

Parimpora Fruit Mandi is the second largest market of its kind in north India spread over around 324 kanals. From 1962 to 1963, it was located in Maisuma area of the city before it was shifted to Hazuri Bagh. Due to lack of space it was finally shifted to Parimpora in 1982.

“At that time government financed construction of block A of the Mandi. Rest of the three blocks were completed by Srinagar Development Authority with contribution from fruit mandi association,” said Bashir.

“In 2007 it was transferred from SDA to the hands of Horticulture Department,” he added.

Parimpora Mandi exports various fruits including apple, pear, apricot, cherry and walnut to other parts of India. “Fruits like Mango, Grapes, bananas and pine apple are also imported from other states of India,” Bashir said.

“Since 1982 government has done little for the development of the mandi,” he said.

There are four blocks. There is only one entrance gate of block A through which all the customers enter the mandi.

“Our shop is in block D and all the customers do not reach us because they prefer to go to block A because of the distance they have to travel so we want a separate entrance for each block,” said Rashid Ali Zargar, who runs a vegetable shop in the mandi.

Zargar said they are also in dire need of parking facility.

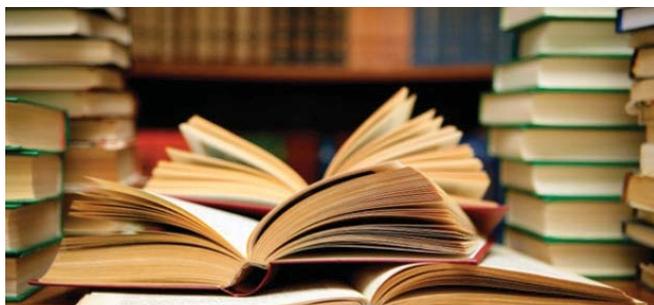
CHOICE BASED CREDIT SYSTEM IN CUK: A BRIEF

Prof. N. A. Nadeem

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has taken quite a few measures to bring equity, efficiency and excellence in the higher education system. The important measures taken to enhance academic standards and quality in higher education include innovations and improvements in Governance, redefining aims of education, restructuring curriculum, redesigning teaching methodologies, reorienting teaching-learning process, reforming examination and evaluation systems. The academic reforms recommended by the UGC in the recent past have led to qualitative enhancement in the higher education system. However, given the significant diversity in the system of higher education, there are multiple approaches followed by the universities towards curriculum, teaching strategies, examination, evaluation and grading system. While the higher education institutions must have the flexibility and freedom in designing the examination and evaluation methods that best fits their curriculum, syllabi and teaching-learning methods but still there is a need to devise a sensible system for awarding the grades based on the performance of students. Presently the performance of the students is reported using the conventional system of marks secured in the examinations. To overcome this disparity the University Grants Commission has come up with the concept of Choice Based credit system.

Central University of Kashmir is trying its best to make the curriculum interdisciplinary. Interdisciplinary approach enables assimilation of perceptions, assumptions, technique, theories and perspectives from two or more areas to advance basic indulgence or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline.

The new choice based credit system has been designed to ensure that the system is completely learner centric.



Open Electives (any one to be opted)

To begin with, this pool of courses may consist of (11) eleven courses, (01) one from each Department.



In this regard Central University of Kashmir has taken several initiatives which have been reflected in CBCS viz. semester system, interdisciplinary approach and comprehensive continuous evaluation (CCE).

Since, the University is in its infancy, therefore it cannot just afford to stand static and sidetrack from the distinguished status of being a Central University. Hence, the University is stepping towards credit based choice based continuous assessment and grading pattern.

Central University of Kashmir through CBCS is focusing on the following areas:

1. Learn at their own pace.
2. Choose electives from a wide range of courses.
3. Undergo additional courses and acquire more than required number of credits.
4. Adopt an interdisciplinary approach in learning.
5. Intra-University transfer of Credits will also be made possible.

As per the UGC guidelines different courses have been put in different categories by the Central University of Kashmir. These are mentioned as following:

1. Compulsory Foundation Courses (any two to be opted). These courses include:

Life Skill Development, Peace Education, Human Rights, Comparative Literature, Regional Geography, Environmental Education, Disaster Management, Mental Health & Adjustment, Social/Community Work, Legal Aid Service & ADR, Education for Citizenship, Women Studies

2. 'Elective Foundation' Courses (any one to be opted)

These may include:

Information & Communication Technology (ICT), Communication Skills (Bi-lingual), Personality Development Skills (PDS), Management Skills (MS), Citizen Journalism (CJ), Educational Technology-Multimedia (ETM), Language Proficiency (Bi-lingual), Entrepreneurship Development Skill (EDS), Adventure Tourism (AT), Photography/Videography, Foreign Language (FL), Public Adm. & Governance (PAG)

Department

Convergent Journalism
Economics
Education
English
Information Technology
Law
Management Studies
Mathematics
Political Science
Tourism Management
Urdu

Open Elective

Advertising Management and PR
Introductory Econometrics
Value Education
Functional English
Database Management System
Human Rights Awareness
E-Marketing
Mathematics and Society
Politics and Governance
Principles, Policies and Products of Tourism
Functional Urdu

The writer is the Dean & Head, School of Education, Central University of Kashmir.



Ambulance driver's diary: RACE AGAINST TIME

Insha

Abdul Rashid Warsi, 60, is an ambulance driver and has held the nerve racking job for nearly 30 years.

Hailing from Bandipora district of north Kashmir, Warsi was appointed as a conductor for an ambulance at the SMHS hospital in 1984. Every new driver is required to work as a conductor first before taking over the steering wheel of the ambulances. Warsi was, meanwhile, trained in first-aid treatment.

“I used to travel to the hospitals along with the ambulance drivers and learnt a lot like how to give atropine to patients. After one year I was appointed as a permanent driver. I worked at SMHS hospital for 13 years after which I drove Government Medical College bus and with my growing experience I was finally appointed as a permanent driver for Radiation Oncology department,” said Warsi.

According to the duty schedule, he is supposed to be available in the department for six hours only, but he stays there beyond duty hours so that no patient suffers as he is the only driver at the department. On average, he carries six to eight patients per day besides dead bodies.

Warsi has many experiences to share about his job.

“Once on a hot summer day in the year 2000, a patient suffering from severe head injury had to be shifted to SKIMS Soura immediately and I was unfortunately stuck in traffic jam when I reached Hawal. I honked the horn relentlessly but there was no way out of the jam so I took the patient on my shoulders and walked some distance before hiring an auto-rikshaw and took him to the hospital on my own. Later I came to know that the patient had survived and I felt really glad,” recalled Warsi.

In another case, there was a patient with a broken leg admitted in the SMHS hospital and he was to be shifted to Bone and Joint hospital immediately or else his leg would have been amputated. Warsi saw it as a challenge and took him to the hospital in just six minutes. After this the patient was treated and Warsi was awarded with increment.

“Though ambulance driving is an emergency driving but still I never violated any traffic rule. I can understand the suffering of a patient. In one of the cases, I had a pregnant lady in my ambulance. She gave birth on way to L.D. hospital but the new-born baby developed serious complications and could not breathe so I kept the lady there with the attendant in the ambulance and took the baby immediately to the Children’s Hospital in an auto-rikshaw,”

recalled Warsi.

Fortunately, the baby was treated there as we reached on time. Again I was rewarded with an increment,” he added.

Warsi said during the 2008 agitation, he was carrying a patient with a bullet injury to the hospital. “I was stopped by Army men and they asked me to drop the patient at the hospital and come back. When I reported back, they took me to the nearby (Sher-gari) police station as they accused me of carrying a militant in my ambulance. After interrogating me for about two hours, I was released,” he said.

Warsi said he once carried a dead body from hospital to Soura. “On reaching the home of the deceased person as his body was being taken off the stretcher he suddenly woke up to everyone’s shock. The patient was very critical and was declared dead, but he was alive. On way to home, the attendants were sobbing in the ambulance. On realising that the patient was alive they were so delighted and gave me Rs 500. The patient was then again taken back to the hospital for further treatment.”

Warsi said ambulance drivers mostly prefer vans. “Though they are not well equipped but ambulance drivers prefer them because



at times they need to drive through narrow lanes and traffic jams. It is difficult to drive huge ambulance buses so wherever possible we drive the ambulance vans.”

The vans just have a first-aid box and a stretcher. When the patient needs oxygen, they carry portable oxygen cylinders in the van. Warsi believes the ambulance vans should also get well equipped like the critical care ambulances.

Shafqat: Lending a compassionate hand to special kids

Irfan Rashid

Aaqib (name changed) was lucky to survive the deadly tendency of his father, thanks to his maternal uncle who saved him in nick of time. One day his father asked his brother-in-law to help him throw his 5-year-old kid Aaqib under a fast running vehicle. Aaqib was physically and mentally disabled. It was decided that Aaqib will be admitted in a special school at Bemina- ‘Shafqat’. It has been three years now and he is growing up as a normal child now.

This special school for mentally challenged and multiple disabilities is run by Voluntary Medicare Society (VMS) of J&K. VMS was established in year 1970 though the foundation stone of the school was laid on 7th November 1995 by Dr Mohammad Maqbool and practically the school operated only since 2000.

The VMS is a medico-social organization dedicated to the care, treatment and rehabilitation of poor, disabled and mentally challenged persons. Initially, the society visited far-flung areas of the valley and treated hundreds of ailing patients. Special-ist care and treatment was provided at their doorsteps and those needing hospitalization or surgery were brought to SMHS.

There are about 70 million people with disabilities in India, one of three in them are children and only less than 1 per cent have access to education. In Kashmir, there are no statistics available in this regard.

As there was no special school for mentally challenged and disabled children in the valley, ‘Shafqat’ began admitting children in the school after proper assessment of type and degree of disability.

‘Shafqat’ has a total enrolment of 70. At present nearly 66 special children, including 20 girls, are enrolled in the school. They come from different localities of the city. Every morning at 8 am, school buses ferry these children and drops them back after 4 in the evening.

“It is very hard to motivate parents to send their girl child here. Parents think if their children come here, what will society think about their children particularly girls,” said Dr Bashir Ahmad Lone, administrator of the school.

For children outside the city, ‘Shafqat’ organizes camps, gives home programmes and treats them in their out-pa-



tient department also throughout the year.

Since year 2000, nearly 300 children have been admitted in 'Shafqat' and nearly 3000 have been treated in OPD, said Dr Lone. As per the Disability Act 1955, education is a basic right of children. After struggling for five years to get registration for formal school education, 'Shafqat' achieved it in 2012 under the banner "inclusive school" where formal education from class first to 5th is imparted. Presently, 19 students are enrolled here, including seven girls. The admission to this school is given after taking into consideration the level of disability.

Dr Lone divides these levels into four types. "Mild, moderate, severe and profound disabilities where we allow only mild disabled

to get formal education."

Till date, nearly 100 students have been discharged successfully from this formal school and are now getting education in normal schools.

Presently, 43 professionals, that include 20 special educators, are working in the school. Talking to Samanbal, Dr Lone said: "Firstly early intervention is to be focused otherwise conditions may lead to permanent disability. Role of parents is important. They need to think beyond the society myths."

Traffic jams add to woes of Tengpora residents

Newsheeba

Residents of Tengpora have complained of frequent traffic jams in the area caused by the diversion of vehicular movement.

Following the closure of the busy Jahangir Chowk-Rambagh road owing to the construction of a flyover, traffic was diverted through alternate routes including Tengpora, posing inconvenience to the local residents.

According to the residents of Tengpora, the area has been facing the problem of traffic congestion for over a year now. They accuse the government of ignoring their repeated requests to address the problem.

The Tengpora link road, which serves as a vital connection between Bypass and Batamaloo, witnesses traffic bottlenecks at several places.

According to local residents, frequent traffic jams on the route result in congestion and air pollution due to which health related problems have increased.

"My wife has been suffering from chronic bronchitis. The smoke and dust produced by vehicles has worsened the condition of my wife especially after the traffic flow through the area has increased following the floods. I have hospitalised her three or four times since then," said Hamid Khan, a local resident.

"I am myself taking antibiotics and anti-allergics since I was exposed to the dust due to heavy traffic flow," said Mushtaq Wani, a local chemist.

Wani said he sold many masks in the area. "People came to me with throat infections and chest allergies. I recommend them to have mask as I myself do."

Another shopkeeper, Abdul Majeed said whenever he keeps his products open, dust settles on them. "And people won't buy those products due to which I have suffered losses."

Students from this area suffer from distressing situation as they do not reach schools and colleges in time. "I usually get ready for the school on time but due to the diversion our bus gets stuck in traffic. As a result, I reach school late and most of the times miss morning classes," said Burhan Bashir, a 10th class student.

According to some other locals the mismanagement of traffic is proving hazardous to their structural properties as well. "As the heavy vehicles pass by this road, it has caused great damage to our houses," said Bashir Ahmad, residing in a poorly constructed house. "My house was already damaged in the recent floods. But this traffic mess has added to our woes. I request the government to look into the matter as soon as possible as we can't bear more inconvenience," he added.

The locals blamed traffic authorities of ignoring their repeated requests to address the problem.

"We approached the officials many a times but so far nothing has happened," said Habibullah Khan, mohalla president.

SP Traffic (City), Maqsood-u-Zaman said: "I can't comment on the issue as I was recently posted as SP Traffic. It will take time for me to understand the traffic management in the city."

However, he assured he will look into the matter and find out a solution as soon as possible.



Online shopping gains popularity in Kashmir

Younis Kaloo

Online shopping has emerged as a popular means of buying various products in Kashmir, especially among the youngsters. The ease of shopping combined with the wide range of products and attractive prices are some of the benefits associated with online shopping.

“There is a 20-30 percent price difference between products we buy online and through traditional shopping. And there are products online which you do not find on shops,” said Wahid Khan from Narbal who shops frequently online.

E-commerce companies such as Snapdeal, Flipkart, Amazon and others offer a wide range of products to choose from. The home delivery feature makes online shopping an irresistibly attractive proposition.

“We receive 1,65,000 shipments on an average every month,” said branch head of Ecom Xpress (an online service provider) Hyderpora, Irfan Sheikh.

Unlike traditional shopping where you find the same collection for weeks, these companies keep adding new products every day.

“If there is new trend in fashion, you come to see that online. It keeps you abreast of the changes in the world of fashion,” Wahid Khan added.

One of the important factors that keeps luring the buyers to online shopping is the heavy discount on products. Almost each product appears with two price tags- market price and the online price.



“I wanted to buy a Lenova phone. It would cost me Rs 9000 from a shop. I bought the same phone from Snapdeal at Rs 5300 only,” Reyaz Ahmad said.

He further said that he found the same issue with other products he wanted to buy from shops such as bike riding suit and a body cover for his bike. Abu-Bakar Fayaz, a class 6th student, bought a computer mouse online. “Benefits apart, it feels nice to shop online.”

“The range of products are worth millions which is not the case with traditional shops,” said Omar Shaikh, a student of Amar Singh College, Srinagar.

Given the magnitude of orders to deliver, Manager Ecom Xpress, Bilal Ahmad, who is currently looking after eleven branches across the valley, is looking for further expansion of his services. “Our efforts will be to reach the remotest places of Kashmir,” he said.

EVENTS

CUK Chancellor interacts with faculty, scholars

Central University of Kashmir (CUK) Chancellor, Dr. Sriku-mar Banerjee interacted with the faculty members at Nowgam academic block of the university on May 20.

Dr. Banerjee asked the faculty members to put in their efforts in making the university a world-class institution of higher learning.

CUK Chancellor underscored the need of having linkages with other institutions of higher learning in and outside the Jammu and Kashmir State.

The Chancellor emphasized the need of bringing the Central University under one roof. “The varsity is currently functioning from three different areas and there is a dire need of bringing all the departments and administrative set up under one roof so that the students get a feel of academic environ-

ment and the campus,” the Chancellor added. He asked the Departments to consolidate the data regarding the pass out students who are employed or jobless at present.

He said the construction of Pre Engineered Buildings PEBs at the Ganderbal campus has met some glitches and these are being sorted out on priority.

Earlier, Prof. Mehraj-ud-Din, officiating Vice-Chancellor gave a brief resume about the University functioning and the activities and programmes organised by various departments and Directorate of Students Welfare.

CUK-UGC workshop held at SKICC

Need to strengthen faculty for CBCS implementation: Governor

The universities and colleges in J&K have significant vacancies and therefore it is difficult to implement Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in these institutions, said Governor, N. N. Vohra.

Vohra said he had already communicated the apprehensions about the implementation of CBCS in the higher educational institutions of the state.

Speaking at a one-day workshop on CBCS organised by the Central University of Kashmir in collaboration with University Grants Commission at SKICC on May 6, the Governor said the universities across the State could become leading centres of higher education if they improve their teaching standards and grading system in examinations.

Referring to the establishment of the Central University campus at Ganderbal, Vohra said the water level at the campus is high and the university is confronting acute difficulties vis-a-vis on-going constructions.

“There is a requirement of finding a viable solution on this front,” he added.

He underscored the need of promoting research in the Humanities. “We have nine universities functioning across the Jammu and Kashmir and all of them are doing relatively much better particularly with respect to the Science programmes. However, the Humanities stream needs to be strengthened further,” Vohra said

Prof. H. Devraj, UGC Vice-Chairman said the Commission is making every effort to improve the quality of higher education across India.

He asked the Central Universities to collaborate with each other in the matter of academics and on other issues. Prof. Devraj also stressed on the need of introducing skill based courses in the institutions

CUK officiating Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj udDin gave a brief account about the varsity and the programmes offered.

Prof. Mehraj udDin said the University had started the process of introducing CBCS and the faculty members have been assigned the task to come up with a framework.

CUK Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar said the CBCS provides enhanced learning opportunities for the students, matches student scholastic needs and aspirations, inter institution transferability of students, and credit transfer opportunities.

Prof. N.A. Nadeem, Dean, School of Education, and the organising secretary of the event presented the vote of thanks.



CUs of Jammu, Kashmir and HP ink MoU

As a major development in implementation of CBCS, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked between the Central Universities of Jammu, Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh on May 6.

The three central varsities have agreed to collaborate in many areas including formulation of Common minimum curriculum in the listed courses being taught in all the Universities; inter-departmental visits of the research scholars

and students, exchange of faculty during winter and summer vacations; collaborative research and consultancy; joint organization of conferences/workshops/symposia/seminars; sharing of library services and other resources; collaboration in respect of any other academic/administrative matter of mutual interest.