National Credit Framework (NCrF)

Why in News?

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the implementation of the National Credit Framework (NCrF).

What is National Credit Framework (NCrF)?

- **NCrF** - It an inclusive one single meta framework to seamlessly integrate the credits earned through school education, higher education and vocational & skill education.
- It provides for Assignment, Accumulation, Storage, Transfer & Redemption of Credits
- **Integrated Framework** - NCrF encompass National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and National Curriculum Framework (NCF).
- **Developed by** - It has been jointly developed by UGC, AICTE, NCVET, NIOS, CBSE, NCERT, DGT, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Skill Development.
- **Notional Learning Hours** - For one year of education/ learning across school education, higher education and vocational education, training and skilling, the leaning hours is to be set at 1200 Hrs per year and awarded 40 Credits per year.
- **Credit Value** - Under National Credit Framework (NCrF), one Credit is equivalent to 30 notional learning hours.
- **Credit Activities** – Student can earn credits from diverse activities
    - Classroom teaching
    - Laboratory work, Atal Tinkering Laboratories, Research projects
    - Assignments, tutorials
    - Sports and games, yoga
    - Performing arts, music, handicrafts
    - Social work, National Cadet Corps, National Service Scheme activities,
    - Vocational and skill education
    - On-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships
- **Mandatory Assessment** - The assessment is mandatory for earning credits for all types of learning.
- **NCrF credit levels**
    - School education - Up to level 4
    - Higher education - Level 4.5. to level
    - Vocational education & training from - Level 1 to level 8.
- The total Credit Points earned by the student in a particular year could be obtained by multiplying the credits earned with the NCrF Level at which the credits have been earned.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning**- NCrF enables provisions for Recognition of Prior Learning for students and workers which creditizes their learning through various formal, non-formal, traditional or any other means.

- **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)**- The NCrF would be operationalised through ABC by including credits earned through school education, vocational education, higher education, training and skilling, including apprenticeships, internships, project work etc.

Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) is a virtual/digital storehouse that contains the information of the credits earned by individual students throughout their learning journey.

What are the benefits of NCrF?

- **Balanced Education** - NCrF helps HEIs balance vocational and skill training and knowledge-generating academic pursuits.
- **Multidisciplinary Credit Transfer** - Using the NCrF, higher education institutions (HEI) can give a unified accumulation and transfer of credits across multidisciplinary education, including skill education.
- The NCrF is an enabling framework rather than a regulatory one.
- **Flexible Credit Earning** - The NCrF gives students the flexibility to earn credits from diverse range of activities.
- **Meeting Diversity of Needs** – NCrF understands India's societal, technological, and educational needs and strive to meet those demands holistically.
- **Making Education Dynamic**– It helps in making India's higher education system dynamic and relevant to the country's needs.
- **Creating Competitive Institutions** - NCrF aims to help institutions remain flexible and competitive in keeping with the inevitable rapid economic and technological changes.
- **Fulfilling Employment Needs** – NCrF enables institutions and students to meet the current and future evolution of job requirements by bridging the skill mismatch.
- **Career Growth** – NCrF allow students to pursue their academic and career goals.
- **Upgrading HEIs** – NCrF transform HEIs, besides being havens of knowledge, to equip students with the skills and the competencies needed for emerging roles and self-employment.
- **Creating MERU Institutions** – NCrF enables the transformation of HEIs into multidisciplinary education and research university (MERU) institutions as demanded by NEP 2020.
- **Facilitating Social Mobility** – It makes higher education a tool for students to increase their social mobility by enabling students acquire practical skills and knowledge through a flexible curriculum.
- **Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit**- The NCrF enables the students with opportunities to catch up and re-enter education ecosystem in case they have fallen behind or dropped out at any stage.

What are the challenges in implementing NCrF?

- **Manpower** - Mapping course credits of individual students who take a transfer from other educational institutes needs substantial manpower.

- **Homogenization** - A common framework for courses risks homogenising of institutions' and erasing the uniqueness of them.
- **Large Scale** -Scaling this individualised mapping approach could become problematic as student numbers increase.
- **Mapping Credits** - Understand a student's prior learning and mapping it with a particular university's courses poses implementation difficulties.
- **Possibilities of Rejection** – Universities may accept or reject the credits earned by the learner thorough prior learning.
- **Standards of Learning** – Standards of teaching and learning across institutions vary and accommodating the differences into the framework poses challenges.

Way forward?

- Use of Information Technologies to integrate the educational reporting systems.
- Accommodate the diverse education models across the states.
- If a university does not accept a student's credits, it needs to inform him/her why the credits are not accepted.
- Raise awareness among students and address challenges in understanding the framework.

References

1. The Hindu | National Credit Framework
2. UGC | NCrF

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