

## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

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Introduction

Universities are the seats of learning and specialisation. They are the centres of dissemination of knowledge, projection of thoughts, preservation of culture, introduction of new inventions and discoveries for the progress and welfare of a nation. An effective teaching system coupled with a favourable atmosphere for advanced learning in the universities, is the pre-requisite for speedy development of the subject-matter and for the fulfilment of aims and objectives of specialised education. The presence of an effective teaching system is an index of an efficient system of education. This aspect of the system is directly linked with the courses of study, methods of teaching and evaluation. These three dimensions of the teaching system ought to be able to accommodate for modifications so as to match with the changes that take place with the passage of time and conditions. From time to time teaching system is subjected to critical scrutiny which leads to modification of the entire educational system. This has been experienced in the

had already introduced the semester system. The Indian Institutes of Technology, Delhi (1963) since its inception had semester system.

In India now more than 80 universities (Natarajans' year 1979) have introduced the semester system with all its associated aspects like internal assessment and grade system alongwith a flexible course content. The relationship between the semester system and its associated aspect is only accidental to some universities. In the Indian Institutes of Technology and Agricultural universities the semester system is well structured, where courses are flexible, the grade system, internal assessment with some of the other components of semester system are instituted. In the other universities the semester system has been a combination of the traditional annual system and the new system. The courses in those universities, do not show a marked changes. These universities have combined the internal and external system of examination. Hence, the investigator has undertaken the study of the semester system in Indian universities. The focus of the study is to critically study the effectiveness of the semester system with all its associated aspects.

#### Statement of the Problem

The title of the present study reads as :

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE SEMESTER SYSTEM IN SELECTED  
UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA

### Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study :

1. To study the semester system in selected universities in India with particular reference to :
  - (i) Purposes of introducing the semester system.
  - (ii) Courses of study in terms of : flexibility and freedom in their formulation, provision of choices to the students and provision of credit courses.
  - (iii) Methods of teaching adopted by the teachers on account of <sup>the</sup> academic freedom provided to the students under the semester system.
  - (iv) Evaluation in terms of internal assessment, grade system and question bank.
2. To study :
  - (i) The opinion of the teachers with regard to the academic improvement of the students under the semester system ;
  - (ii) The opinion of the students with regard to their study habits under the semester system.
3. To study the difficulties faced by the teachers and students and their suggestions with regard to the semester system.
4. To study the attitude of the teachers and students towards the semester system.

### Delimitation of the Study

1. The study is confined to ten selected universities of India.
2. The study is confined to the universities / faculties / colleges which have introduced the semester system.
3. The study is restricted only to the students of post-graduate and under-graduate classes of the ten universities.
4. The study takes into account the teachers from the ten universities of India, who teach under the semester system.

### Design and Procedure

The study adopts the descriptive survey method of research. The procedure of the study has been discussed under the following captions :

1. Sample
2. Tools
3. Data Collection
4. Data analysis

### Sample

The investigator has drawn the sample from the universities of India having semester system. The sample includes a random selection of teachers and students from the ten selected universities of India. In all, 583 students and 363 teachers were considered as sample. The ten selected

universities include agricultural, technological, central, state and deemed universities which belong to different states of India. For example Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Himachal Pradesh.

### Tools

In order to achieve the different objectives of the study the following tools were used :

1. Two questionnaires were developed and administered by the investigator to the teachers and students separately to meet the demands of the first, second and third objectives.
2. An attitude scale was also developed and administered by the investigator to know the attitude of the teachers and students towards the semester system. The attitude scale was constructed for the fourth objective of the study.
3. Interviews were held to substantiate the responses given on the questionnaires as and when it was found necessary. Interviews were unstructured.

A copy of each of these tools are included in the appendices.

### Data Collection

In any type of research, the investigator has to collect data keeping in view the objectives of the study. Therefore, the tools developed were administered on the sample by the

investigator by visiting personally the ten selected universities.

### Data Analysis

The data collected are sorted into three sections, pertaining to teachers, students and the attitudes of both the groups.

The two questionnaires were analysed questionnairewise. The responses were presented in terms of percentages, rank, rho ( $P$ ) correlation and 't' wherever necessary.

Data collected to study the attitudes were rated on a five point scale. The 't' technique were used to find out the significant difference between the means of the groups.

### Major Findings of the Study

(1) The investigation shows that university authorities took the initiative in introducing the semester system in their universities and the experts were involved to help them to some extent. The teachers were also included in such decision-making process.

(2) The teachers spelt out the purposes of introducing the semester system. According to them the semester is implemented to assess the day to day performance of the

students; it gives flexibility to teaching and freedom to the teachers to assess the students. It also gives freedom to the teachers in framing the courses. Semester system again gives opportunity to the brighter and weaker students to make progress at their own pace.

### (3) Courses of Study

- (i) The teachers' opinion is that they enjoy flexibility in the formulation of the courses under the semester system. Due to the flexibility, teacher can introduce new topics at one's pleasure, only course outline is available and therefore, the teacher can fill the details according to the need of the courses.
- (ii) According to the opinions of the teachers, under the semester system, students prefer the courses because it divides the workload and makes provision to improve the grades through continuous assessment. It also allows a greater number of choices to the students.
- (iii) The students also expressed that they prefer the courses under the semester system. On the otherhand it gives facility to improve the grades/marks through continuous assessment. It allows a greater number of choices to the students and in few institutions students can clear their courses at any time.
- (iv) A section of teachers (<sup>below</sup><sub>30%</sub>) felt that the students do not prefer the courses under the semester system, because it keeps the students busy throughout the year. More of routinised home assignment and less time for

the consultation of the reference material are also the reasons for not preferring the courses by the students.

- (v) A section of students (below 50%) do not prefer the courses under the semester system. The reasons are, it keeps the students busy throughout the year, there is more of routinised home assignment; and enough reading material is not available to cope with the syllabus and less time etc.
- (vi) Due to the fragmentation of the courses students do not feel any difficulty in understanding the discipline as a whole.
- (vii) The under-graduate students feel that they have less choice in the selection of the subjects. The courses are compulsory from the university. The post-graduate students mostly select their courses by themselves but sometime it is also partly compulsory.
- (viii) Out of the ten selected universities only six universities are functioning under the credit system of courses. Therefore, 60% of the teachers are satisfied with the credit system. They do not want to change the existing credit system in their universities.
- (ix) Students of the under-graduate and post-graduate classes need the guidance from the advisors (co-ordinators). Advisors are very much necessary for the academic help of the students.
- (x) More than 60% of the teachers are satisfied with the existing courses. But a section of approximately 37% of teachers are not satisfied with the courses under the semester system. They found university was rigid regarding



the syllabus, teachers had lesser freedom in formulating the courses, etc. Therefore, they suggested that there should be more objectivity in the courses' formulation, and more choices in the course construction. More emphasis should be given on practicals, quizzes and seminars etc.

#### 4. Methods of Teaching :

- (i) A large number of teachers ( 60% ) feel that the semester system gives them freedom to use alternative methods of teaching. They follow the alternative teaching methods but still the lecture method is largely used by them. The other methods like seminars, discussions, assignments, quizzes, project work, field work etc. are also used. The programmed learning and team-teaching is not popular among teachers.
- (ii) To a large number of students (60% and 65%) from the under-graduate and post-graduate classes, the present methods of teaching under the semester system is satisfactory. The reasons for the satisfaction are that the lecture, discussion, team-teaching, programmed-learning, quizzes and field work etc. are used by the teachers.
- (iii) A section of students are not satisfied with the methods of teaching under the semester system. The reasons are that the teachers use unstructured lectures and the lecture method dominates the other methods of teaching.

- (iv) The teachers feel that continuous progress and interaction with the students gives feedback to the teachers for teaching. To cope with the teaching methods, the teachers have to read. Reading is necessary to plan assignments and to guide in the projects and dissertations. Reading helps to update the course.
- (v) Assignment motivates the students to work hard. Teachers always involve all the students in the allotment of the assignments and distribute work according to the student's abilities. Teachers check the assignments and return it with remarks and discusses the paper in the class. Only a few teachers discuss assignments individually.
- (vi) 50% teachers agreed that it is not difficult to bring change in the teaching methods. The reason for the satisfied teachers stands as the teacher is free to use any method to make teaching effective. 38% felt it is difficult to bring change whereas 12% of the teachers were silent on the issue.

## 5. Evaluation :

- (i) Out of the ten universities nine universities assess the students through the internal assessment. All the universities (nine) follow the continuous internal assessment. Simultaneously with the internal assessment, external examination, grade and mark system prevail in the universities to assess the students. The percentage of weightage of

internal and external assessment differs from university to university. The different components of internal assessments are texts, assignments, discussions, project work, seminars, quizzes, field work and viva-voce etc.

- (ii) The teachers feel that the freedom they have due to the internal assessment increase the cordial relationship with the students and encourages the experimenting of innovations in teaching methods. But the internal assessment increases the workload of the teachers. 50% of teachers are satisfied with the internal assessment but a section of 30% teachers are not satisfied with the internal assessment. The dissatisfied group of teachers suggested remedial measures for the internal assessment. The suggestions are - the addition of more staff and the internal checking and control to maintain objectivity in the evaluation process.
- (iii) Students from the under-graduate and post-graduate classes feel that the present evaluation is sound under the semester system. Reasons for the soundness are the following - it is through the continuous evaluation, grade system, seminars, field work, project work, assignments and quizzes. The different devices are made to assess the performance of the students.
- (iv) Approximately 41% of students from both the classes felt the evaluation is not sound under the semester system. The reasons are, there is an element of subjectivity in the internal assessment, grading system is not proper and there is less importance on field work,

project and seminars etc.

- (v) Students gave priorities for evaluation upon tests, assignments, quizzes, laboratory practicals, seminars, field works, discussions and project work etc. for evaluation. These make them to be more regular in studies and to work hard. These components of evaluation also help in consulting library.
- (vi) Students reaction towards the internal assessment is that it ensures a variety of educational techniques, regular and uniform work, better assessment of the students performance. Students are able to develop better methods of study due to internal assessment.
- (vii) Under-graduate students (60%) favoured 50% internal and 50% external assessment. 52% post-graduate students favoured cent percent internal assessment. The percentages of respondents differ at .01 level.
- (viii) External examination is also functioning in all the universities. The percentage of weightage differs from university to university. For example, in one university 100% external, in two universities 60 : 40, in one 50 : 50 and in others less percentage for laboratory practices and dissertation viva-voce.
- (ix) Out of the ten universities only eight universities are functioning under the grade system with grade point average. Majority of teachers felt the grade system is better than the numerical marking system. Different universities follow different point scale

for grading the students. For better functioning of the grade system, direct grading has been suggested by the students.

- (x) Students are also satisfied with the grade system. But still they made suggestions for the better functioning of the grade system. Grading needs to be objective and scientific. Direct grading is necessary and a group of teachers should be involved in the final grading.
- (xi) Not a single university (out of ten) has adopted the question bank. 40% of the teachers felt the need for the introduction of the question banks for the under-graduate classes. Teachers are not in favour of the introduction in the post-graduate classes, agricultural and technological institutes. Teachers, of course, expressed that question bank may help in the teaching-learning process. But a section of teachers felt that question bank may lowered down the standard of education.

## 6. Academic Improvement

- (i) Teachers feel that semester system helps in the academic improvement of the students. Semester makes the students to study systematically all through the year. Continuous assessment has helped the students to improve academically, because these motivate to prepare themselves for examination. This naturally leads them to study continuously. These regular tests etc. help the teachers to detect the weaknesses of the students. Due to the division of the academic year into two parts, therefore, students get time to cover the

## 9. Suggestions

- (i) For the efficient functioning of the semester system teachers made a number of suggestions. Teachers need better clerical facilities and cyclostyling, xeroxing and well equipped laboratories. Suggestions were made that there should be also complete freedom of the teachers, and there should be more of the teaching time. Better teacher-student relationship, more staff members and co-operation among administrators and departments were also suggested.
- (ii) Students also made few suggestions for the improvement of the semester system. Following are the suggestions according to the students :
  - (a) proper planning of the courses, (b) more use of seminars, quizzes, discussions, and project work etc., (c) more of reading and cyclostyling materials (d) for evaluation uniform and direct grading with the sincerity of the teachers, (e) Lastly they emphasised the training course for the teachers to teach under the semester system.

## 10. Attitude of the Teachers and Students Towards the Semester System

- (i) The overall attitude of the teachers and students is favourable towards the semester system.
- (ii) There is no significant difference between the teachers and students in their attitudes towards the semester system.

- (iii) The M.S. University of Baroda teachers are having highly favourable attitude than the other university teachers. The least favourable attitude is from the Himachal Pradesh university teachers.
- (iv) In the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, students show the most favourable attitude towards the semester system. The least favourable attitude towards the semester system is shown by the Himachal Pradesh University students.
- (v) Out of the 45 comparisons of attitude towards the semester system of the ten university teachers, 28 comparisons do not differ at any level. 17 comparisons of attitudes show significant differences. Therefore, it is clear that majority of the teachers have favourable attitude towards the semester system.
- (vi) For the ten university students there are 45 comparisons of attitude towards the semester system. 28 comparisons do not differ and 17 differs in their attitude towards the semester system. It shows the majority of the students are in favour of the semester system.
- (vii) In the comparisons between the teachers and students within the university, three universities differ in their attitudes out of the ten universities of India. This shows favourable attitude from the majority point of view.
- (viii) Teachers and students showed ( favourable ) attitude towards the different aspects of the semester system. Respondent rated the different aspects of the semester system. Teachers gave I rank to the advantages,

and students gave I rank to the study habits. Likewise, the teachers gave II rank to study habits and the students gave II rank to advantages. The III, IV, V and VI ranks were given to the courses of study, teaching methods, evaluation and disadvantage aspect of the semester system. The correlation differs at .01 level (.94) which shows a no difference in ranking between the teachers and students in their attitudes towards the different aspects of the semester system.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

A research investigation can never be exhaustive and final. It raises further problems, queries and issues to be tackled. It is hoped that the present study will encourage, stimulate and even provoke further researches in the area of semester system. A few suggestions for such studies are presented below :

1. A comparative study of the semester and annual system of education can be undertaken.
2. A study of the semester system on the academic improvements of the students.
3. A study of the internal assessment and its bearing on the teaching-learning process in the universities/ colleges.
4. An experimental study on the effects of the question banks in India.
5. A study of the factors of resistance towards the semester system in universities / colleges.



### Conclusion

The Education Commission (1964-66) has stressed the need for the improvement of teaching and evaluation in higher education allowing flexibility and freedom to the teachers and students. The University Grants Commission (U.G.C.), recommended the introduction of the semester system which promised the necessary reforms. A few of the Indian universities accepted the U.G.C.'s recommendation and adopted the semester system either fully or partially. The present study aims to critically investigate the functioning of this innovation. The investigation answers a few questions raised at the beginning of the study, and at the same time also raises a few issues.

It has come out from the study that due to the semester system, universities were able to achieve more or less a few of Education Commission's (1964-66) suggestions. From the point of courses of study, and methods of teaching, it seems students and teachers are satisfied to some extent. Internal assessment also shows a favourable effect on the students. There, internal assessment is preferred by the post-graduate students than by the under-graduate students. The post-graduates prefer the cent-percent internal assessment whereas the under-graduates prefer the 50% internal and 50% external examination. The universities which are more or less residential like the Indian Institutes of Technology,

agricultural universities and the other universities which have adopted the semester system have shown favourable attitude towards the semester system than the affiliated universities. The student teacher ratio may be one of the reasons for this. In the universities/colleges which, from the very inception under the semester system, are functioning the semester system smoothly.

Those universities where there was a switching over from the annual to semester system have posed some difficulties. The issues that has been mentioned emerged due to the factor of affiliated colleges and, the factor switching over from annual system has been felt in the affiliated colleges of Meerut University. In 1979, the affiliated colleges of Meerut University reverted to the traditional pattern of annual system from the semester system which they had adopted in the year 1967. This switch over did not effect the post-graduate departments ( Institute of Advanced Study ) in the Meerut University Campus. As a result of an investigation, the investigator came to the conclusion that the main reason for the discontinuance was of an administrative nature. The main administrative problem arose as a result of the students being allowed to continue their further courses beforehand without completing their previous courses. This led to an administrative difficulty

of identifying the students classwise. This was felt all the more because the student teacher ratio was high due to the high number of affiliated colleges within the university.

Another university which faces certain problems under the semester system is the Himachal Pradesh University. Here the problem is mainly because semester system is not being adopted in its true sense but the academic year has just been arbitrarily divided into two parts without following the principles and many of its associated aspects of the semester system. This would naturally lead to many of the difficulties.

#### Future of Semester System in India

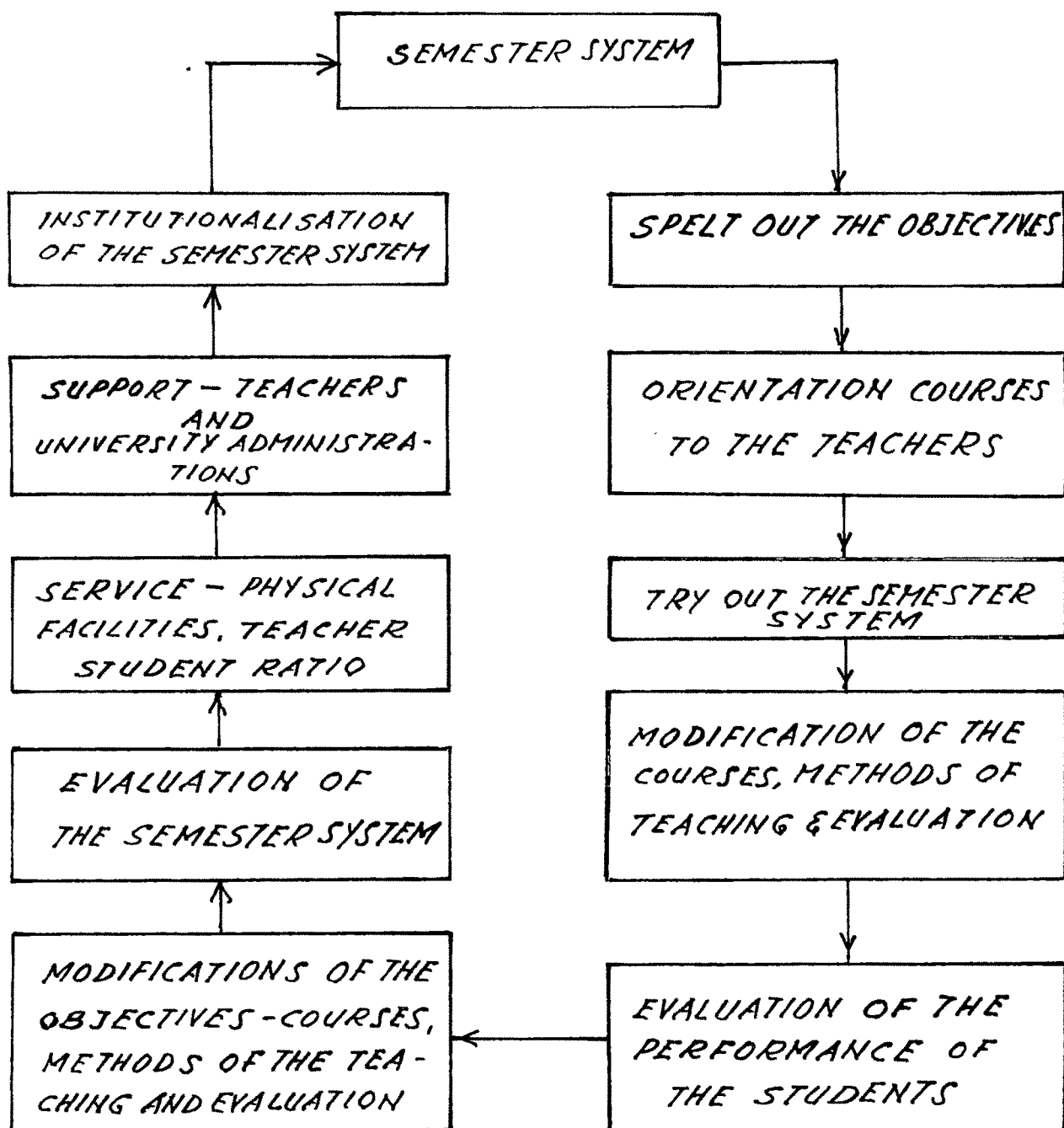
From the aforesaid discussion, it becomes obvious that except the two universities, the students and teachers have favourable attitudes towards the semester system. The teachers and students have also favourable reactions to many of the associated aspects of the semester system. On the basis of the sample it can be inferred that many of the objectives of the semester system have been achieved.

Now, the major question arises whether universities in India will go for this innovation or just continue with the annual pattern. The demand for reform of education cannot be simply solved by introducing and discontinuing an innovation.

The success of any system of education depends upon the persons who operate it and the environment wherein it has to be introduced. The students, the teachers, the management and office staff all have to cooperate in making the system a success. In order to have the cooperation of all the above mentioned people, it will be necessary to gain their faith in the system. For this, the objectives of the semester system have to be made very clear to them.

Semester can be <sup>made</sup> successful in the Indian universities with certain modifications. The success of the system depends on the willing acceptance by the teachers, students and the university personnel. The teachers and the students are to be well motivated for this innovation and the work load of the teachers have to be taken into consideration. In the same manner, the work load involved on the office staff has to be properly planned and organised so that the academic system does not fail due to administrative machinery. With the advancement of educational technology, the concept of open university and the teaching through audio visuals have become a reality. In such a situation semester system can be implemented with necessary modifications depending on the local needs. In this regard, the investigator has developed a Paradigm for the semester system which is shown in the next page.

## PARADIGM OF THE SEMESTER SYSTEM



For an efficient functioning at the very outset, the objectives have to be precisely spelt out defining the aims and functions of the semester system. As the next step, the teachers have to be oriented with the concept, philosophy and the actual process of semester system. With this orientation, the teachers would be in a position to try it on for a period and test its applicability in their universities along with its local needs and environmental background. With the tryout, scope for necessary modifications and changes would be revealed along with the lines of which the semester system has to be rescheduled and patterned. Thereafter the success of the semester system will have to be evaluated in terms of the students performances in the academic activities. This would lead to the knowledge of the areas in which the semester system has succeeded or fallen short of expectations. On the basis of this data, again modifications have to be done in the course content, methods of teaching and evaluation techniques. The seventh step will be the evaluation of the semester system. This evaluation will eventually give the total picture of the semester system as perceived by the teachers, students and administrators. This conceptual support makes the semester a success. The semester system

does not only require a total commitment but it should also ensure service to the teachers and administrators by providing various types of physical and human facilities. Their needs and expectations will enable the semester system to be accepted and institutionalised eventually. Though apparently the process may end here, it is needless to say that a constant review of the system in terms of the educational objectives and their behavioural outcomes has to be done. Institutionalisation does not mean that the semester system has become static but within the framework it has to be made dynamic.

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