

## Examinations under Scrutiny

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Synopsis: The increasing number of suicides among students because of failures and poor performance in the examination underline the need of urgent reforms. The overburden of books and rote-learning has deprived the children of their precious childhood. The whole approach of the examination is wrong and negative. We are still following the old, outdated and rotten British system of education and examination to a great disadvantage of the student community. There is too much subjectivity in the whole system which has failed to deliver results. Success in the examination has become now more a matter of chance. Consequently, the examiners resort to all sorts of unfair means. There is need of fundamental changes and restructuring of the entire system, cosmetic remedies will not help. The whole system has become totally irrelevant, corrupt and without any accountability in respect of conducting the examination, evaluation of the answer books and developing the required skills, aptitudes, abilities etc. among the students. At elementary levels, examination can be dispensed with altogether.

Examination reforms are overdue but nothing concrete has been done so far. Consequently, the student's community is under great pressure and tension and sometimes there are suicides because of failures and tension. The papers are often unduly tough and questions out of the course. The paper setters fail to come down to the standard of the students to be examined and put themselves in their shoes. Old and rotten system of education and examination has put the future of the students in great risk and things do not seem to be on the right track. The government's myopic, ad hoc and gauge policies in the matter have caused a lot of frustration and anxiety among the students. They feel neglected, cheated and directionless for want of clear policy, aims and objectives.

The children in schools are too much burdened with book-learning and they have acutely lost all the fun and enjoyment of precious childhoods in the process. The over-emphasis and competition to fare well in the examination at the cost of everything else have satisfied the spirit of the young student. It is high time that their childhood is restored and the burden of rote-learning is reduced. The approach of our examination system is totally wrong and negative as there is always emphasis on trying to find out how much a student does not know instead of trying to find out how much he knows. This is like putting a cart before the horse.

Even after 50 years of our independence we are still following the age-old British system of educational and examination while the British themselves have changed their system. It is a kind of mental slavery; As a result, education has become a source of torture instead of learning, enlightenment and joy. The backs are bent of the small children with the heavy burden of their school bags and anxiety can lot sans, hope, guidance and encouragement. They commit suicide, turn violent and indiscipline or take to evil practices because of poor performance in the tests and examinations. The questions are often though, vague, length, out of syllabus and too general. The present systems of written examinations is no test at all of a student's abilities, skills, intelligence and grasp of the subject, it promotes bookish knowledge, rote-learning and dependence on luck. There is a lot of subjectivity in the paper-setting and evaluation of answer books. The whims of both of them can cause havoc with the examinees. They may suffer from prejudices and mental gravitation and fixations. The yardsticks differ from examiner to examiner. An examinee may suffer from illness, bad mood or some such other physical or mental stress and may perform poorly in the examination though he or when may be a very goo student with thorough knowledge of the subject.

Success in the examination has, more or less, become a matter of chance that that of learning, labour and perseverance. It has turned examination and studies into a pure speculation. Throughout the year students idle away their time and a few weeks before examination they mug up some important and expected question or resort to copying. The good, hardworking students are at great disadvantage because of the prevailing system of examination. It encourages rote-learning which is forgotten as soon as the examinations are over. It has become a game of mere memory which relegates assimilation and integration of genuine knowledge and learning to nothing. In this age of computers what is the use of storing facts and figures and bits of knowledge in the mind for the occasion of examination; it is sheer waste of human resources. This system is not conducive at all to the development of skills, abilities; required aptitude and transfer of knowledge form the areas of learning to practical life. It does not help in developing self-reliance's and self-stuffy. Consequently, the market is full of cheap notes and tuition shops. It has commercialized education is a manner which is very cheap and in bad taste. Papers are leaked, favors given by the examiners for personal financial gains. Every dog has his price and this applies to the present-day examiners and paper-setters, too.

Some attempts are being made to check these defects and undesirable tendencies by introduction of objective type tests, coca voce etc, but it is not

enough, these are just cosmetic remedies while there is need of fundamental changes in the whole education and examination system. There is a demand from a large section of students that jobs should be delinked from degrees and examinations. The prospective candidates should be tested for their grasp of the subject, aptitude, attitude, skills, adjustability etc.

In the present situation the students just aim at getting the degrees and diplomas by hook or crook. Even parents want that their children just to get high grades irrespective of the means, fair or foul. Even UPSC and State services commissions are beset with many corrupt and dishonest practices. The use of unfair means is a common knowledge. False and fabricated degrees, diplomas and certificates are in large circulation. The touts making a fast buck and there is a mushroom growth of teaching shops. There is a big class of agents and brokers who can help you get any degree, diploma or certificate against a hefty payment. They can help you in approaching an examiner or paper-setter or assist you in copying in the examination hall without being caught in the act. The malaise is deep and widespread and needs matching remedies and efforts.

Examinations have been reduced to a force- only to memory tests. The students go to the examination with bits of information and knowledge stored in their minds and then empty it out in the answer books and return home with empty minds and hollow brains. The whole education and examination system should be so restructured as to help student's community develop their potentials, inner talents, skills and wisdom. The students need to be inspired with hope, confidence, purpose and a deep sense of relevance and belonging. There should be proper accountability and responsibility on the part of teachers, examiners and policy-planners in the field of education. There are too many deficiencies and anomalies to be counted and the system has utterly failed to deliver results. The erosion of secrecy in regard to examination papers, evaluation etc. is on the increase because of corrupt staff and open play of the money and muscle power besides political interference.

The accountability of both teachers and students should be secured by introduction of transparency by having student-teacher interface in the evaluation process. Instead of one-time written examination at the end of the academic year, the work and performance of the students should be evaluated by their own teachers. This evaluation system should be continuous and broad based. The students are under too much pressure both at home and school and it should be relieved. At elementary levels, we can dispense with examinations altogether. There is too much emphasis on the development of intellect and nobody and spirit are totally neglected. As a result, the students suffer from lop-sided

development and lack integrated human personalities. The students are becoming more and more passive, indolent and dependent learner. They lack initiative, drive and self-reliance. They know too little of nature and their immediate environment. The personal touch between the teacher and the taught is being marginalized and the whole process is becoming more and more mechanical and there is hardly any scope for character-development. Educating should not be reduced to mere storing of information, facts and figures, and bits of knowledge and possession of paper qualification through passing the examinations.