

## Examination System in India: Prevailing Defects and Suggestions for Improvement

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**Abstract:** Education is a comprehensive concept and it is concerned with the all-round development of the human beings keeping in view their diverse capabilities. This development of human beings should be evaluated and assessed by appropriate methods covering all aspects of human development and not only judging the intellectual development as prevalent in present day examination system. The examination system in India is criticized for its defects from time to time but even today the main focus of examination system is on knowledge aspect thus ignoring the skill and attitude components. This paper contends to explore the existing defects in prevailing examination system in India and offers some practical suggestions to improve the system. The main defects highlighted by this study are emphasis on memory/rote learning, cheating, subjectivity, optional arrangement, more theoretical in nature and techniques of paper marking used by examiners. Sometimes, these defects seriously hinder the overall development of child due to undue stress. The defects need immediate and serious attention from the educational policy planners, teachers and other stakeholders of the teaching learning process. Some practical suggestions are presented to improve the existing examination system and to reduce the burden of the students.

**Keywords:** Education, Rote Learning, Cheating, Examination reforms

### Introduction

The success of any country now-a-days depends upon its human resources and their proper utilization in the economic and social development. The education system of any country can make a huge difference in the quality of its population. India is the second most populous country of the world and majority of its population fall under youth category. This youth can be utilized for overall development and prosperity of the nation through the ideological education system. The comprehensive concept of education aims at making individuals capable of becoming more responsible, productive and having critical understanding of social, economic and political aspects. It is through the education process that students learn to analyze their experiences, to critically examine the various aspects of life, lean to doubt, to question, to investigate and to think independently. The knowledge, skills and attitudes of the individuals should be modified in the due course of the education. And this modification should be assessed by using comprehensive means of evaluation and examination. The examination system of India is criticized from time to time due its defects. The University Education Commission (1948) was quite vocal regarding the defects of the examination system of our country. After this Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) and Kothari Commission highlighted the defects of examination system and gave recommendations for the improvement of this system. But even after so many reforms, the prevalent examination system still has many defects as listed below:

#### 1. Emphasis on Memory/Rote Learning/ Ratta System

The examination system of India put more emphasis on the 'Ratta system' and this is the

major defect which needs serious attention. The memorization of content occupies more dominant place and due to these comprehensive educational objectives, such as understanding, critical and independent thinking, creativity, problem solving ability, reflective thinking, skill development and application of knowledge in real life are ignored. This defect is highlighted by many educational commissions and even by Bollywood movies such as 'Three Idiots'. This 'Ratta system' also create phobia and nervousness among examinees and sometimes this nervousness leads to the use of unfair means in examination. In Indian examination system, from the very beginning, cramming is being promoted as means to get higher marks and this creates a stressful environment for the children. National Education Policy 2019 considers that harmful coaching culture is the result of emphasis on rote learning in board examinations.

#### 2. Cheating

Cheating in examination at all levels of education in India is well known and from time to time the media presented such incidences. Cheating is done by students because examination demands memorization of large number of facts and figures and this demand put a lot of stress on the minds of the students. And thus, they use unfair means such as slips, mini photocopies of their help books, Bluetooth headphones concealed under their caps or turbans etc. The understanding and analytical ability of students is ignored in prevailing examination system. Due to the privatization of education and more emphasis on the marks or grades of students are the major reasons for promoting cheating in examination. In school board examination in different states of the country, cheating is done by students with the

help of teachers and invigilators. Cheating practice is increasing day by day and for this all stakeholders of education are responsible from policy planner to parents of the students.

### 3. Subjectivity

Subjectivity is another major defect of our education system. It occurs at three levels namely first at the level of paper setting by the examiner, second at the level of student who writes answer according to his/her own subjective nature and third at the level of evaluator who is evaluating the answer given by the student. Different persons have different views regarding the answer of the same question. The same answer evaluated by different persons have different marks. The vagueness of the question set by paper setters increases the subjectivity of the answer given by the students and also create difficulty for the proper assessment of the answer by the evaluator. Subjectivity in examination system is quite dangerous and leads to many difficulties and problems for the students as well as to the evaluators also.

### 4. Theoretical in nature

The knowledge, skill and attitude of the students should be assessed to properly evaluate his/her performance in the course, but the present examination system only focus on the knowledge aspect of the students. The students are encouraged to read books and the examination are based on bookish knowledge. The theoretical nature of examination is responsible for the lack of skills even after the completion of degrees with good grades by different doctors, engineers, teachers and other professionals. Most of the computer graduates and even post graduates of our country lack the basic skills such as to switch on/off the computer, to take print outs and to do other such simple tasks. The situation is same in other professions also.

### 5. Poor Content Coverage by Papers

The examination system is based upon the optional nature of question means a student has the option to answer one question from two or more questions and so on. This optional nature of paper setting is responsible for poor content coverage. The students deliberately ignore major portion of the content and prepared according to the option available. Most of the time, students do not have any idea or basic understanding of the whole syllabus and they rely only on some parts of the syllabus for passing the examination. This ineffective coverage of content by examination pattern is quite dangerous as it leads to selective study by the students and in some cases selective teaching by the teachers.

### 6. Techniques of Paper Marking used by Examiners

Paper marking/ checking by teachers is becoming quite defective these days. The teachers mark the paper with bird's eye view by just counting the number of pages written by student for a particular answer. The teachers are

more concerned about the number of answer books evaluated by them as checking of more answer books will help them to claim bills of thousands of rupees. Paper checking became a means to earn more money by the teachers and this type of checking is harmful for the students who are hardworking and studies a lot for examination. The marks are given without looking at the content and this trend is quite discouraging for good students.

### Suggestions for The Improvement of The Examination System

Regarding the school board examinations, the National Education Policy (2019) points, "Examinations should also be learning experiences from which one can learn and improve in the future; the current Board examination does not line up with these goals". Indian examination system either school board examination or university examination system need urgent reform. The existing examination system is based on British system; however, the British system has not moved to a more humanistic and holistic way of assessing the child's knowledge, but even today, India is following the original and unchanged British system. This system is quite defective and suffers from many ills. The objectives of examination are not fulfilled through this kind of system. So, some humble and practical suggestions are presented here to improve this system:

1. Examination should be based on understanding and analytical ability of the students. Different forms of questions should be framed so that different abilities of the students can be assessed according to the instructional objectives of a particular course. Memory based questions should be avoided as far as possible.
2. Proper arrangements such as CCTV cameras, strict invigilators in the conduct of examination and adequate guidance to students to avoid unfair means in examination should be done to control cheating in examination. The examination center which promote cheating should be cancelled.
3. All types of subjectivity should be avoided and as far as possible question papers should be prepared with utmost care and clear-cut directions for marking the answers. The paper setters should be encouraged to prepare modal answers to evaluate the answer sheets of the students.
4. The evaluation work should be done under proper vigilance and marked answer sheets should be randomly check to make the evaluator more accountable. In marking the answers sheets, due weightage should be given to the original ideas of the students, their conceptual understanding and creative expression. More stress should be placed on quality of the answers rather than just counting the number of sheets filled.

5. Proper care should be taken to avoid optional arrangement of paper setting. Paper should be framed in such a way that it should cover the whole syllabus and there should be minimum scope of selective study by students.
6. The teachers should realize that examinations are very crucial for the all-round development of the child in right direction so these should be conducted in an organized way.
7. An attempt should be made to bring necessary examination reform in the educational system to improve the efficiency of examination system.
8. Teachers should be trained with new developments in the examination pattern.
9. Examination should be treated as means and not as the end because the purpose of examination is to help the child to learn more to achieve the educational objectives.
10. Examination should be planned in such a way that these teach the students to organize and utilize their knowledge effectively.
11. Proper weightage should be given to the practical components.
12. The timings for theory examination which is mostly three hours should be reduced.

#### **Conclusion**

The examination system in India is criticized for its defects from time to time but even today the main focus of examination system is on knowledge aspect thus ignoring the skill and attitude components. This paper contends to explore the existing defects in prevailing examination system in India and offers some practical suggestions to improve the

system. However, it is strongly recommended that Indian examination system need immediate revamping. The recent policy that is National Education Policy have suggested some reform in the examination system, but to achieve flexibility and to reduce stress among students regarding examination, India needs to restructure its examination system. The reforms in examination system should be targeted to lessen the burden of examination on the students and their parents. The examination system should be more holistic, humanistic and genuine so that students should learn from their examinations.

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