



TOPIC OF THE WEEK

APR'18 (12 to 18)

Topic: Examination Paper Leak

Education in India is provided by the public sector as well as the private sector, with control and funding coming from three levels: central, state and local. Under various articles of the Indian Constitution, free and compulsory education is provided as a fundamental right to children between the ages of 6 and 14. The ratio of public schools to private schools in India is 7:5.

India has made progress in terms of increasing the primary education attendance rate and expanding literacy to approximately three-quarters of the population in the 7–10 age groups, by 2011. India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to its economic development. Much of the progress, especially in higher education and scientific research, has been credited to various public institutions. While enrollment in higher education has increased steadily over the past decade, reaching a Gross Enrollment Ratio of 24% in 2013, there still remains a significant distance to catch up with tertiary education enrollment levels of developed nations, a

challenge that will be necessary to overcome in order to continue to reap a demographic dividend from India's comparatively young population.

As per the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2012, 96.5% of all rural children between the ages of 6-14 were enrolled in school. This is the fourth annual survey to report enrollment above 96%. Another report from 2013 stated that there were 22.9 crore students enrolled in different accredited urban and rural schools of India, from Class I to XII, representing an increase of 23 lakh students over 2002 total enrollment, and a 19% increase in girl's enrollment. While quantitatively India is inching closer to universal education, the quality of its education has been questioned particularly in its government run school system. Some of the reasons for the poor quality include absence of around 25% of teachers every day. States of India have introduced tests and education assessment system to identify and improve such schools.

In India's higher education system, a significant number of seats are reserved under affirmative action policies for the historically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes and

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Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. In universities, colleges, and similar institutions affiliated to the federal government, there are a maximum 50% of reservations applicable to these disadvantaged groups, at the state level it can vary. Maharashtra had 73% reservation in 2014, which is the highest percentage of reservations in India.

But today's education system is deeply flawed. The education system's attempt to conform the way students think and control every aspect of their learning and life is causing more harm than good.

Examination Paper Leak: Recently there have been many cases where the examination paper has been leaked. Recently this happened with the boards examination both 10th and 12th. Before that similar issues have been faced in SSC examination and some other central examinations. This has become a serious issue as it puts the whole education system under question. There have been talks of retest. Beyond being a huge embarrassment for the authorities, this is unconscionably traumatic for students across the

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country – particularly in a year in which the compulsory Class X board exam was brought back. As for the Class XII retest, it may have a domino effect on several other competitive exams and college entrances. Many students claim that exam papers for other subjects too have been leaked this year. All of this casts a big shadow over the CBSE exam process – affecting 28 lakh students.

A copy of the leaked Class X Maths paper was reportedly delivered to the office of the CBSE chairperson a day before the exam. Usually, separate question papers are set for Delhi, the rest of India, schools outside India, and there's also a reserve. Had this procedure been followed, the leaked paper could have been replaced with the reserve paper, preventing the scandal of test and retest. But this year all the zones were given one common question paper against the usual norm, reducing room to mitigate the leak. It's a classic illustration of the dangers of over-centralized education.

While a criminal syndicate is suspected of carrying out the leaks, the issue of accountability at CBSE can't be

whitewashed. True, scamsters make the most of modern technology. From 'remote' cheating in the online exam for the staff selection commission (SSC) to the Cambridge Analytica case, this is of course a really widespread challenge today. But for that very reason, protecting data calls for sophisticated security measures. CBSE's board exams may determine the future of India's children, but it failed to rise to the challenge.

This is a young country but its leadership does a terrible job of addressing youth issues. From the Vyapam scam in Madhya Pradesh to various school state boards, criminal gangs that guarantee results have mushroomed. But authorities are only able to nab small fry, emboldening masterminds to continue operations. The need of the hour is higher conviction of scamsters, greater accountability of institutions like CBSE, and of course better exam security. Otherwise students will lose faith in the exam system, not to mention that everything in education should not hang on exams in the first place.

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Reasons and Action: Earlier, it was the board that was responsible for setting up the question paper, conducting the exam, allotting centre's, appointing invigilators and the system was successful to a great extent.

Many feel that today it is given to outsourcing agencies. I don't know if they are involved, but when the exam is outsourced it puts a big question mark over the agencies in charge of conducting them.

The HRD minister has promised to put in place a system to make paper leaks impossible in the future.

This is not new, it has happened in the past, too. This is perhaps the third or fourth paper that has been leaked in many years. Knowing that information related to paper leaks was found, these regulators should have evolved a mechanism to block its passage.

The paper was circulated among teachers and students. Nobody took note of it at the time. Only after the exam began did the invigilator find that the same paper has appeared before. This should have been probed at an

early stage. In fact, the CBSE was informed about some handwritten paper being circulated, they denied knowledge of it - they should have taken serious note of it.

Is re-exam a fair deal?

There are so many students and parents who, have come to know, are approaching the high court saying exams for every paper should be re-conducted. The leakage was reported in Delhi.

Now, the question is that if those who have got the access over those leak papers will have some advantage over the others. So, in case they appear for exams knowing answers to the leaked paper, I think there is no way out but for the exams to be re-conducted. The students who are sincere and who have studied well will have an advantage again in this case.

This is not how education should be. Students should be guided to become the optimal, personalized version of themselves, not limited to being defined by grades and their struggle succeeding in a flawed education system.

Suggested Reading:

- ✓ <https://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/toi-editorials/cbse-fails-leaks-of-board-exam-papers-embarrass-the-institution-and-harass-students/>
- ✓ <https://www.dailyo.in/variety/cbse-exam-paper-leak-class-10-maths-reexam-class-12-economics-education/story/1/23162.html>
- ✓ <http://indianexpress.com/article/what-is/what-is-ssc-paper-leak-case-5086643/>
- ✓ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/cbse-paper-leak-delhi-crime-branch-quiz-school-principal-three-teachers/articleshow/63562263.cms>
- ✓ <https://theprint.in/talk-point/talkpoint-can-indias-board-exams-break-out-of-cheating-and-question-paper-leaks/45603/>