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## **MALPRACTICES IN EXAMINATIONS**

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The quality of education that we impart to our youth and the priority at which we rate it contribute largely to the formation of the attitudes they carry over into public life. So whatever kind of seed we sow in the classroom, the manner in which we nurture it and the strength which it imbibes in its various stages of growth will all determine the harvest that the nation will reap in the form of its educated youth coming out of the schools, colleges and universities. The imprints of these institutions of learning will become indelible marks clearly visible in all fields of our national life; this great impact of education on the national character is understandable once we recognize both the short term as well as long term power education wields over all who go through its process.

Examination is the pivotal point around which the whole system of education revolves and the success or failure of the system of examination is indeed an indicator of the success or failure of that particular system of education. It would be pertinent to examine the present system of examination with a view to determine as to whether it actually serves the purposes it purports to serve.

### **THE MEANING OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES**

Examination malpractice is defined as a deliberate wrong doing contrary to official examination rules designed to place a candidate at an unfair advantage or disadvantage. Examination malpractice is any illegal act committed by a student single handedly or in collaboration with others like fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, and anybody or group of people before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades.

### **FACTORS ENCOURAGING MALPRACTICE IN EXAMINATION**

Examination malpractice, a variety of corruption is sustained by whatever sustains corruption in the country. Political activism has eroded the moral values of the Indian society. Social, economic, political, religious and educational vices are celebrated and rewarded in the country while virtue is punished. How can students, teachers and others shun examination malpractice when they “see criminals being set free through legalisms and court room gymnastics or worse, through wretched and criminal influence peddling?”

The phenomenon of examination malpractice is influenced by many factors, lack of confidence as a result of inadequate preparation, peer influence, societal influence, parental support and poor facilities in schools are some of the factors responsible for examination malpractices. Writing in the same vein, many research scholars identified school programmes, teaching learning environment, the teacher, the student, over value of certificates, and parental support as some factors responsible for examination malpractice in the contemporary educational system

Contemporary Indian society places great emphasis on success goals without equivalent emphasis on institutional means of attaining these goals. The society is characterized by a heavy emphasis on success and wealth without a corresponding emphasis on legitimate means and avenues to be used in achieving success.

Everything in India these days is driven by the desire for success irrespective of the means used in achieving success. The country has become a commercial venture and no longer a place for selfless service. Everyone is out to make quick money and patriotism is endangered. A society that places exceptionally strong emphasis on goal achievement without a corresponding emphasis on institutionalized means of achieving these goals is bound to exert pressures on some members of the society that may eventually resort to the use of any technically expedient means in achieving these goals irrespective of whether the means employed is legitimate or not. The process whereby exaltation of the end generates a de-institutionalization of the means to the end occurs in many societies where the two components of the social structure are not highly integrated.

Closely related to the moral decadence in the society is the greed for money. The monetary rewards accruing to participants of examination malpractice is enormous and unimaginable. If the police can openly accept bribe on the highways, why would those involved in the conduct of examinations not accept monetary incentives to subvert the conduct of examinations? Parents and guardians are ready to give encouragement and pay costs because they desperately want their children and wards to acquire certificates/ degrees. The use of malpractices in examinations in certain areas has indeed become a thriving business for the examination mafia.

## IMPACT OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES

The malady of examination malpractice seems to be aggravated by the large scale and shameful involvement of all those who take part in examination administration. Accusing fingers have been pointed at teachers, school heads, parents, students, examination officials and even security agents as those responsible for examination malpractice in the educational setup.

The incidences of examination malpractice are so widespread that every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating. The impact of malpractices in examination is so wide that, every aspect of our individual or social life is feeling its negative influence. It is directly or indirectly causing wide spread damage to our social, psychological and moral personality structure. The following are few areas which seems to be most affected-

**Defeats the Very Purpose of Examination** -The purpose of examination is to provide reliable feedback about the status of achievement of the candidate, use of malpractices seriously hampers the reliability of the test result. Directly hampering the very purpose of test The use of malpractices this way erodes the faith in the very institution of the examination.

**Discourage Good Candidates from Studying Hard** Good candidates are tempted to believe 'if you cannot beat them, join them' especially as they see other candidates get away with their corrupt behaviors. This behavior may be contagious as more and more candidates tend to join in examination malpractice. They believe that even if they are caught, they will get away with it and the end will justify the means Denies good innocent students' opportunity for admission Many good students have been denied admission in good and reputed institutions by the corrupt ones who through examination malpractice have better scores and grades.

**Delays the Processing of Examination Scores and Grades** Every year, many students are caught for engaging in various examinations malpractices which needs to be investigated before results are released. Though some results are withheld pending the determination of the cases, some are decided before results are released. This extends processing time.

**Dissatisfies Candidates** Candidates who possess certificates they cannot defend are dissatisfied. They have psychological problems arising from the way they acquired their certificates. In some instances, they will not be bold to present the certificates because they can be presented with tasks that will require them to defend the certificates

**Decreases Job Efficiency** This has a serious implication on the gross domestic job management of the country. It also has effect on the general quality and standard. Imagine the havoc of a half backed medical doctor could wreck on human lives. What about teachers who cannot competently handle the subject

they are trained to teach. There is a chain effect of examination malpractices on the educational system and the society as a whole.

**Leads to Irreversible Loss of Credibility.** The examination process has become endangered to the extent that certification has almost lost its credibility. Certificates and degree no longer seem to reflect skill and competence. A country that becomes noted for examination malpractice loses international credibility. The implication is that documents emanating from such country will be treated with suspicion. Consequently, certificates awarded by such country's educational institutions are disbelieved. Such country's educational institutions are as good as dead as far as international cooperation in education is concerned.

**Road to Black Future .**The fight against corruption cannot succeed if examination malpractice continues to be endemic in the educational system. As leaders of tomorrow who have gone through a school system characterized by academic fraud and dishonesty, the youths of the country will sow and nurture this fraudulent behaviour in any organization they find themselves. They will be destined to a life of crime, fraud and corrupt practices.

## Generally used Malpractices in Examination

The malpractices are commonly committed in examination at the pre-conduct, conduct and evaluation stages. Range from leakage of question papers to copying, changing answer books, impersonation, misconduct in examination centre, approaching invigilators/examiners, making false entries in award list/ examination registers and issuing fake certificate/degrees etc. Such acts may be broadly categories-

- Allotment of choice examination centers.
- Appointment of choice invigilating staff.
- Leaking information about question papers, identification of invigilating staff and paper setters/examiners.
- Bribing/influencing/terrorizing examination staff, invigilators and paper setters/examiners. Approaching invigilating staff Provide bribe and gifts.
- Possessing cheating material (written/printed/electronic device etc) or copying from such material.
- Giving/receiving assistance to copy in examination centre.
- Changing/replacing roll numbers and answer books.
- Disclosing candidates' identity in answer books.
- Misconduct, carrying offensive weapons, refusing/resisting the lawful orders of supervisory staff, creating disturbance, instigating other candidates, threatening or assaulting the invigilating staff, impeding the progress of examination, in or outside the examination.
- Smuggling answer books in or outside the examination centre.
- Addition to answer books after examination.
- Manipulating marks through fictitious entries in award list/examination register.
- Sale of examination centre to organized gangs where cheating/unfair means are arranged.
- Helping the candidates to use unfair means in any form and by any one in or outside the examination centre.
- Helping the candidates in viva voce, practical examination.
- Attempting or abetting the commission of any of the afore-said acts.
- Any other act considered dishonest, unfair, corrupt etc
- Communicating in Codes- there are dozens of codes students have devised: hand position, foot position or foot tapping, test position, noises like clicking of pens, clothing positions, etc.
- Altering Records through-Hacking into the computer, changing the grade book, stealing the grade book, stealing the exams before grades are entered.

- Leaving Class- Leaving the test room and getting help (most often, under the pretence of a bathroom break).
- Misrepresentation/impersonation convincing someone else to take the test.

Examination malpractice in India has attained a frightening proportion, it is sophisticated and institutionalized. Efforts by government administration and stakeholders in the educational sector to curtail the ugly trend have not yielded any fruit. It is saddening to note that examination bodies, government functionaries, school authorities, invigilators, parents and students all participate in the iniquitous exam malpractice

### **Here are few situations who indirectly encourages malpractice in examinations-**

- Examining body like boards/university etc Supervisory staff is unfairly selected on the basis of nepotism.
- Examination centers are without rules .There is no check who should be allowed and who should not be allowed.
- Poor paper setting: paper setters are mostly untrained and unaware of modern approaches to assessment. The exam papers are hardly representative of the entire curriculum.
- Scoring of papers: Examiners hardly receive any instructions for scoring the papers, they prefer to check the papers at home and that most markers mark one paper in only 5 to 10 minutes.
- Material publications there are model papers and, guess paper guides available in the market with readymade answers.
- Negligence of invigilators Teachers/supervisors are non-vigilant during supervision. They allow mobile, peon, chowkidar, watchman to provide cheating to students.
- High stakes of examination Students freely commit unfair means by the force of pistol, knife, oral and physical threats.
- Student's personal factors Supported by parent's High parental expectations inadequate preparation and desire to pass at all cost.
- Poor preparation promotes poor performance. Affected by the previous experiences/ Friends provide them encouragement.
- Supported by society Lack of school resources No observational strategies, Overcrowded examination centers Not enough space Poor seating arrangement
- Defunct security Laxity in prosecuting offenders Lack of serious penalty for past offenders. Police also provide help and unable to ensure security Law enforcing agencies not dealt with impersonation act etc set the culprit free after taking bribe.
- Teacher's role Lack of devotion to their profession Unawareness towards teaching learning objectives Not providing moral training to students · Gross inadequacy of qualified teachers in our schools.

### **THE REMEDIAL SUGGESTIONS**

Establishing cause-effect relationship is the only way to solve any problem in a systematic manner. In order to avoid "blind search" one must analyze the entire structure. The process of examination can be analyzed in terms of cause responsible for examination malpractices, then and then only the remedial management is possible. Like any other systematic effort the process of examination too should be analyzed in the similar manner.

To fight effectively this war against exam malpractice, all the agents of socialization must participate actively in stemming the ugly scenario. The actualization of the goals of education will continue to be a mirage if the scourge of examination malpractice is not eradicated from the system. The country will end up producing graduates who lack the knowledge, skill and competence to exploit the resources of the nation.

Examination malpractice, which started in India as a minor misdemeanor has not only assumed a frightening dimension, it seems to have become a permanent feature of India education system. Efforts by governments, examining bodies, institutions, individuals and concerned groups towards eradicating it have not yielded meaningful results. Rather, the situation has become worse in recent times. The new trend

involves an organized system of the supervisors, invigilators, teachers, and in some cases heads of schools. There is therefore the need for a team effort to stem this social malaise that has become inimical to educational development in the country. Since previous approaches aimed at curbing this hydra-headed problem seem to have yield no dividends, we suggest few strategies for curbing this menace:

## QUICK AND EFFECTIVE ACTION

There is an old saying that ‘justice delayed is justice denied’. Government and its agencies should henceforth stop handling cases of examination malpractice with kid gloves. The law should not recognize sacred cows. Anyone caught cheating should be made to face the music of irrespective of status or connections.

No leniency will be shown to the students caught with cheating. The students can be detained for a year. This decision was taken by Bench of Delhi High Court. Previously the students were spared after a plea but that did not stop students from cheating. A strict and severe punishment is believed to lessen the amount of cheaters inside the examination hall. If students are caught within the examination hall with a chit that contains materials related to the exam, he will be accused of malpractice. It is not important whether he uses the chit for cheating or not

## CONSTRUCTION OF A VALID AND RELIABLE TEST

First step in constructing an effective achievement test is to identify what you want students to learn from a unit of instruction. Consider the relative importance of the objectives and include more questions about the most important learning objectives. If, however, the test focuses on a few objectives to the exclusion of others, students will not have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of other aspects of the material and you may not be able to make an accurate assessment of each student’s knowledge. The learning objectives that to be emphasized will determine not only what material to include on the test, but also the specific form the test will take. For example, if it is important that students be able to do long division problems rapidly, consider giving a speeded test. The types of questions to be used will also depend on the learning objectives. If it is important for students to understand how historical events affected one another, then short answer or essay questions might be appropriate. If it is important that students remember dates, then multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank questions might be appropriate.

## WRITING GOOD TEST ITEMS

Once you have defined the important learning objectives and have, in the light of these objectives, determined which types of items and what form of test to use, you are ready to begin the second step in constructing an effective achievement test. This step is writing the test items. While the different types of questions—multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank or short answer, true-false, matching, and essay—are constructed differently, the following principles apply to constructing questions and tests in general.

- Use simple and clear language in the questions. If the language is difficult, students who understand the material but who do not have strong language skills may find it difficult to demonstrate their knowledge. If the language is ambiguous, even a student with strong language skills may answer incorrectly if his or her interpretation of the question differs from the instructor’s intended meaning.
- Make the instructions for each type of question simple and brief.
- Write items that require specific understanding or ability developed in that course, not just general intelligence or test-wise.
- Do not write questions in the negative. If you must use negatives, highlight them, as they may mislead students into answering incorrectly.
- Do not suggest the answer to one question in the body of another question. This makes the test less useful, as the test-wise student will have an advantage over the student who has an equal grasp of the material, but who has less skill at taking tests.

## EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEST

In a latest directive issued by the government it has been stated that the students appearing for the Tamil Nadu state board examinations will not be allowed to wear belts, shoes and even socks inside the examination hall. The directorate has issued an advisory for examination hall superintendents to instruct students to keep shoes, socks and belts outside the examination hall. Moreover, the students will not be permitted to wear hi-tech wristwatches and mobile phones and scraps of paper inside the hall. Justifying the decision taken by the Directorate, one of the officials stated that students commonly hide answers inside their shoes or socks. Some even hide scraps of paper inside their belts, which is difficult to spot. In order to save time of the hall superintendents and the invigilators such a step will prove effective. Give magisterial powers (including right to arrest) to examination board officials. Conduct frequent and unannounced visits to examination canters. Answer-sheets are collected in a systematic manner. The collected answer-sheets be properly packed, sealed, and stored Do not allow writing names on answer scripts. Write fictitious roll numbers that will be substituted later with the real candidate's number. Adequate sitting arrangement should be provide during exams to discourage cheating.

## ADOPTION OF OBJECTIVE EVALUATION PROCEDURE

This aspect is related with the final out-put it has direct impact on malpractice in examination, naturally greater care and emphasis is required for making this aspect more reliable. The use of score key will definitely increase the reliability of a test. The test constructor should provide the procedure or scoring the answer script. Directions must be given whether the scoring will be made by a scoring key (when the answer is recorded on the test paper) or by scoring stencil (when the answer is recorded on separate sheet) and how marks will be awarded to the test items. In case of essay type items, it should be indicated whether to score with point method or with the rating method. In the point method each answer is compared with setup ideal answer in the scoring key. Then a given number of points are assigned. In the rating method the answer s are rated on the bases of degrees of quality and determine the credit assigned to each answer. When the students do not have sufficient time to answer or are not ready to take the test at particular time. They guess the correct answer. In that case to eliminate the effect of guessing some measures must be employed.

### **Work Shop for Invigilators for making them Aware about the use of Technology in Cheating-**

The emergence of technological devices has spawned new and more sophisticated approaches to dishonest conduct during examinations. A lot of academic information is stored in handsets for direct use in examination halls or for onward transfer via SMS to other students anywhere in the country Students with personal digital assistants or cell phones can beam or call data silently from across a classroom, or with a cell phone from anywhere off the school environment. Few of the generally used devices are Watch: "data bank" watches can hold notes for cheatings. Pager: Setting electronic pagers to store messages students can conveniently call up when the teacher's not looking. Palm Pilots and other personal digital assistants (and some calculators, too) allow information to be beamed across a distance via infrared. A student can use a laser pointer (many look like pens) to "write" the answers or as part of a code. Calculator: programmable calculators can hold text, formulas, even pictures. Micro-recorder: used when the same test is delivered in multiple sections; questions are whispered into microphone for later transcription.

## EMPOWERMENT OF TEACHERS

Teacher empowerment should not be limited to professional development alone; it should cover his reward system and job environment. A special welfare scheme should be introduced for teachers at all levels. In fact, teachers should have a robust salary structure. In addition to this, his job environment should be enlarged and enriched to make his job interesting and worthwhile. These put together will enhance the teacher's image and commitment to his job.

## LESS EMPHASIS ON CERTIFICATES/DEGREES AND PAPER QUALIFICATION

Our present education system is largely certificate/ degree oriented. Instead of knowledge, skills and competence too much value and emphasis are placed on certificates/degrees. The market place value and reward for the level and face value quality of certificates promote tendencies for and acts of cheating in the process of certification. Many school leavers and dropouts have certificates without knowledge and skills. Most of the social maladies like manufacture and sale of fake drugs by pharmacists, collapse of buildings, massive fraud in banks and miscarriage of justice are consequences of over emphasis and value on certificates. And if this trend is allowed to continue, the country will end up with doctors who cannot differentiate between vein and artery, lawyers who cannot differentiate between an accused person and the complainant and teachers who may not be able to spell the names of their schools correctly. It is high time the nation took certificates no more as passports to jobs or higher education; more emphasis should be placed on the competence and skill acquisition. The implication of this is that assessment of students should no longer be based on one Almighty examination.

## IMPROVED FUNDING OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The education sector is grossly underfunded. The inadequate funding of the public school system is the cause of other problems that have undermined quality in the sector. Funding efforts of education is low, and its budgetary priority for the education sector is even lower, Studies have shown that space facilities and equipment are in short supply at all levels of education.

## CAMPAIGNS TO DEVELOP AWARENESS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

Conduct a public awareness campaign to highlight the importance of integrity of the examination system. To be able to curb examination malpractices, there should be continuous grassroots campaigns and seminars organized by all related with the education sector on the dangers associated with examination malpractices. This will help to sensitize and conscientize the people. These campaigns will help the change in people attitudes; external misbehaviors will also be positively affected. In addition, these seminars and campaigns will help restore the lost cherished moral values of honesty, hard work, dedication and uprightness that hitherto characterized the Indian society. National and international examination board and organization should share information on new threats to examination security and procedures for counteracting malpractice.

**Due to the educational systems of various peoples of the World Examination malpractice is a social evil that can damage society to the extent of possibly leading to a failed state.**

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