



## Concerns Over Existing Examination System

**For Prelims:** [New Education Policy 2020](#), [National Testing Agency \(NTA\)](#)

**For Mains:** Challenges in the current examination system, Issues Arising Out of Design & Implementation of Policies

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, the **examination system** plays a pivotal role in shaping learning outcomes and determining the credibility of academic certifications.

- However, **recurrent scandals, inconsistent standards**, and a pervasive focus on rote memorization have raised concerns about the **effectiveness of the existing examination system in India**.

### What are the Concerns Regarding the Existing Examination System in India?

- **Credibility and Educational Standards:**
  - Scandals during examination seasons **impact the credibility of examination boards**.
  - Lack of credibility affects educational standards as teaching aligns with examination patterns, often promoting rote learning.
- **Short-Term Memorization:**
  - Midterms, semester exams, and unit tests provide a lighter schedule but encourage **short-term memorization**.
  - Students often study for marks, forgetting the learned content soon after exams.
  - Education should focus on **long-term learning**, internalizing knowledge rather than short-term memorization.
    - The system needs to be practical, testing students' abilities effectively.
- **Assessment Quality:**
  - The validity and comparability of the summative examination across **institutions are meaningless today**. There are complaints that examination boards **test only memory, leading to students being coached to memorize** answers rather than develop higher-order thinking.
    - Additionally, question papers often have grave flaws such as language errors, irrelevant questions, and errors in conceptualization.
  - The examination system is **prone to cheating and malpractices**, such as **copying, leaking, impersonation**, etc.
    - This undermines the credibility and quality of the assessment and the education system.
- **Decentralised System:**
  - India has numerous higher education examination systems with **diversified modes of assessment**, including 1,100 universities, 50,000 affiliated colleges, and 700 autonomous

colleges.

- The total student enrolment exceeds 40.15 million, showcasing the vastness of the higher education sector.
- Additionally, there are 60 school boards for secondary and higher secondary education, certifying over 15 million students annually.
- Secrecy and standardization are considered hallmarks of good examination boards, but **secrecy without proper checks leads to scandals.**
- **Uniformity in examinations**, while seeking consistency, can **hinder experimentation in assessment and curriculum.**
  - This poses a notable risk to the credibility of education. Balancing **standardization with room for innovation** is essential for a dynamic and effective education system.
- **Impact on Employability:**
  - Employers rely on their **assessments rather than institutional certifications** for evaluating candidates.
    - The emphasis on higher order learning is crucial for employability, yet institutional examinations often fall short.
    - This in turn has created a **coaching market** for competitive examinations and skilling.

## What Steps Can Be Taken to Address the Challenges in the Examination System?

- **Ensuring Learning Outcomes:**
  - Specify **minimum standards of learning outcomes** to provide a clear benchmark.
  - Encourage academics across disciplines to contribute to curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment systems.
- **Subject and Skill-Specific Assessments:**
  - Incorporate subject-specific and skill-specific assessment processes to ensure a comprehensive evaluation.
    - Expect university degrees and school board **certificates to truly reflect the learning achievements of students.**
    - Advocate for comprehensive and challenging assessments that distinguish students based on their academic attainments.
  - Emphasize continuous assessment throughout the course, with teacher involvement and student participation.
  - Make summative assessment and evaluation transparent by implementing checks and balances.
- **Leverage Technology for Credibility:**
  - Utilize technology in assessments to enhance credibility, standardizing question papers and evaluations.
  - Explore **market-available software solutions** for both centralized and distributed assessment systems.
- **External Audit of Assessment Systems:**
  - Conduct regular external audits of assessment systems in universities and school boards.
  - Establish benchmark principles and standards for **audit reports, ensuring reliability and consistency.**
  - Grade examination boards based on transparency, reliability, and consistency, reflecting these aspects in audit reports.
- **Transparency Measures for Students:**
  - Implement measures for transparency, allowing students to access the evaluation process and address grievances.

## Initiatives Related to Education

- [Right To Education Act of 2009.](#)
- [New Education Policy 2020.](#)
- [Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan \(SSA\).](#)

- [Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan.](#)
- [Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan \(RUSA\).](#)
- [National Testing Agency \(NTA\)](#)
- [National Curriculum Framework.](#)

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. Which of the following provisions of the Constitution does India have a bearing on Education? (2012)**

1. Directive Principles of State Policy
2. Rural and Urban Local Bodies
3. Fifth Schedule
4. Sixth Schedule
5. Seventh Schedule

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

- (a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 3, 4 and 5 only  
(c) 1, 2 and 5 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

**Ans- (d)**

### Mains

**Q1.** How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate on your answer. (2020)