

Internal Assessment as Visualized in Important Documents in India

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Abstract

The introduction of internal assessment system has been in vogue since long at school stage and in certain professional courses, IITs, Agricultural Universities and private universities etc. But except for practical component, it has generally been absent in traditional academic universities. In 2009 University Grants Commission urged all the Vice-Chancellors to introduce the component of internal assessment in their universities as a part of examination reforms. As a result, nearly all universities in India have implemented internal assessment system in all the courses at undergraduate and postgraduate stage mostly in partial mode. In this context, it becomes relevant to know how the internal assessment has been visualized in important documents such as Reports of different Commissions, Committees, Policies, Working Groups as well as National Curriculum Frameworks, Important Workshops and Five Year Plans etc. This will help to have a mature understanding of the concept of internal assessment, to provide insight among researchers to study different aspects of internal assessment and work out feasible and effective strategies for the implementation of the concept. The paper concludes that all the documents have strongly advocated the introduction of internal assessment component at all levels of education, though in varying degree. The external examinations have also been considered important. However, some documents recommend the use of component of internal assessment with caution or with a rider in order to discourage institutions and teachers from its misuse.

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The introduction of internal assessment system has been in vogue since long at school stage and in certain professional courses, IITs, Agricultural Universities and private universities etc. But except for practical component, it has generally been absent in traditional academic universities. In 2009 University Grants Commission urged all the Vice-Chancellors to introduce the component of internal assessment in their universities as a part of examination reforms. As a result, nearly all universities in India have implemented internal assessment system in all the courses at undergraduate and postgraduate stage mostly in partial mode. In this context, it becomes relevant to know how the internal assessment has been visualized in important documents such as Reports of different Commissions, Committees, Policies, Working Groups as well as National Curriculum Frameworks, Important Workshops and Five Year Plans etc. This will help to have a mature understanding of the concept of internal assessment, to

provide insight among researchers to study different aspects of internal assessment and work out feasible and effective strategies for the implementation of the concept.

A. The report of the university education commission (1948-49)

(Chapter X: Examinations — I. The Problem)

Reform Essential. We are convinced that if we are to suggest one single reform in university education it should be that of the examinations. We advisedly say reform although we know that, in India as elsewhere in the world, dissatisfaction with examinations has been so keen that eminent educationists and important educational organisations have even advocated the abolition of examinations. We do not share that extreme view and feel that

examinations rightly designed and intelligently used can be a useful factor in the educational process. If examinations are necessary a thorough reform of these is still more necessary. (Chapter X: Examinations, p. 286)

(Chapter X: Examinations — IV. Recommendations — 12. Recommendations for the Correction of Evils now Existing in the Examination System)

2. No credit is, at present, given for class work in courses except sometimes in the case of practical work. It was strongly urged by a host of witnesses including teachers, students and outsiders that such credit should be given. We feel that it will be conducive to efficiency both in teaching and learning. It will make it possible to spread the work uniformly during the academic year and the very common practice of working at high pressure in the last few months immediately preceding the examination, which is notoriously responsible for undermining student health and causing severe nervous strain, will be effectively discouraged.

We recommend, therefore, that one-third of the marks allotted to each subject be reserved for work done during the course of instruction and that this be adopted forthwith in the teaching universities for the B.A. and B.Sc., M.A. and M.Sc. examinations. The affiliating universities should also take immediate steps to evolve a method of more or less uniform marking for this internal award at the affiliated colleges. An effective machinery for the supervision and inspection of affiliated colleges to ensure uniformity of standards should be devised. In post-graduate courses, term papers could be required as a part of this course credit. The progress tests which we have recommended above will be of great use in this connection.

Chapter XIII: Constitution and Control – IV: Classification of Colleges –

33. Conditions for Affiliation

(b) No college should be affiliated unless it is able to undertake the internal assessment of its own students' work during their degree courses, in the way suggested in our chapter on Examinations.

B. Report of the secondary education commission (October 1952-1953)

Chapter – XI: A New Approach to Examination and Evaluation — Suggestions for the Improvement of the Present System

With regard to the prevalent system of internal examinations also, certain changes are necessary. The emphasis on all-important annual examination should be reduced. A few schools have abandoned such examinations. They use the results of periodical tests and of weekly or monthly examinations for purposes of promotion. A few others supplement the annual and periodical examinations by more elaborate records of work done by pupils

throughout the year. We commend these steps which will give the annual examination its proper place. The promotion of a child should depend not only on the results of the annual final examination but also on the results of periodic tests and the progress shown in the school records. The pattern of internal examination should also be changed. The objective type of tests should be widely used to supplement the essay-type tests; other steps suggested with regard to the external examination should also apply in the case of internal examination.

Chapter – XI: A New Approach to Examination and Evaluation — Need for School Records

But neither the external examination nor the internal examination, singly or together, can give a correct and complete picture of a pupil's all-round progress at any particular stage of his education; yet it is important for us to assess this, in order to determine his future course of study, or his future vocation. For this purpose a proper system of school records should be maintained for every pupil indicating the work done by him in the school from day to day, month to month, term to term and year to year. Such a school record will present a clear and continuous statement of the attainments of the child in different intellectual pursuits throughout the successive stages of his education. It will also contain a progressive evaluation of development in other directions of no less importance, such as the growth of his interests, aptitudes, and personality traits, his social adjustments, the practical and social activities in which he takes part. In other words it will give a complete career. We have seen such records being maintained in some schools but their number is few. We recommend that these should be a common feature of all schools all over the country. A few specimens of cumulative record forms will be found in Appendix VII School may devise their own forms on the lines indicated therein.

C. Education and national development: report of the education commission, 1964-66, volume I

Chapter IV: Teacher Education — Improving the Quality of Teacher Education

4.23. Improving Methods of Teaching and Evaluation: Methods of teaching and evaluation in training institutions are extremely important and the attitudes of the student-teacher will be influenced more by the methods used with them, than by what they are formally taught about the methods they should use in schools. Unfortunately there is little realization of this and the methods of teaching and evaluation used in the training institutions continue to be largely traditional.

4.24. The examination system also needs considerable reform: At present, the system of external examinations adopted for training institutions is very similar to that used in the schools and suffers from all the well-known defects. Unless this examination is reformed and the teachers are initiated into the new techniques of evaluation

as a part of their training programme, the reform of examinations, in schools will not be successful. A systematic effort has to be made, therefore, on a high priority basis, to improve the nature of the examinations in training institutions. Internal assessment, which evaluates all the work of a student under training, should also be introduced and emphasized as a regular feature. This has already been done on a small scale. Although it has raised the problem of uniformity of assessment of different institutions affiliated to the same university, it has also had a salutary effect on the training programme as a whole and encouraged work directly related to the responsibilities of a teacher. Early steps should, therefore, be taken to expand the use of internal assessment and to give it a more significant place in the final evaluation. In addition, teacher educators should maintain cumulative records of student-teachers in consultation with them. In this way, trainees will learn by doing how the cumulative records of their own pupils should be maintained.

D. Education and national development: report of the education commission, 1964-66, volume II

Chapter IX: Teaching Methods, Guidance and Evaluation — The New Programme of Evaluation

9.65 The evils of the examination system in India are well known to everybody. The baneful effects of the system on education in general and secondary education in particular have been discussed in the reports of several committees and commissions. The Secondary Education Commission, after reviewing these defects at the secondary education stage recommended a new approach to school evaluation and made a number of concrete proposals for the improvement of the external examination and the methods of internal assessment. As a result of these proposals, a movement was started for examination reform, which gathered momentum with the establishment of the Central Examination Unit of trained evaluation officers by the Government of India in 1958. The outstanding feature of the new reform movement is the emphasis laid on the modern concept of evaluation which has found increasing acceptance in educational circles in India in recent years.

9.66 The New Concept of Evaluation. It is now agreed that evaluation is a continuous process, forms an integral part of the total system of education and is intimately related to educational objectives. It exercises a great influence on the pupil's study habits and the teacher's methods of instruction and thus helps not only to measure educational evidence about the student's development in desirable directions. These techniques should, therefore, be valid, reliable, objective and practicable. As the common method (and often the only method) of evaluation used at present in India is the written examination, a natural corollary of the acceptance of the new approach will be to improve the written examination in such a way that it becomes a valid and reliable measure of educational achievement. There are, however, several important

aspects of the student's growth that cannot be measured by written examinations, and other methods such as observation techniques, oral tests and practical examinations, have to be devised for collecting evidence for the purpose. These methods need to be improved and made reliable instruments for assessing the student's performance and educational development.

9.71 Evaluation at the Higher Primary Stage. At present evaluation in these classes is carried out largely by means of written examinations. We believe that due importance should be given here also to oral tests, which should form a part of the internal assessment. The teacher should be helped in such assessment with a rich supply of evaluation materials prepared by the State Evaluation Organizations, including standardized achievement tests. Diagnostic testing is necessary here and indeed throughout the school stage. In most cases, such testing will be through simple teacher-made diagnostic tests. Cumulative record cards play a vital role in indicating the growth and development of the pupil at each stage, academic and emotional problems, and his difficulties of adjustment, if any, and the directions in which remedial action is to be taken to solve his problems or difficulties. We are of the opinion that Cumulative record cards intended for the primary classes should be very simple, so that primary teachers can use them with just a little training. In the first instance, the cards should be introduced from class IV onwards in about 10 per cent of selected schools as an experimental measure; but once the majority of teachers are trained in evaluating certain important aspects of the child's personality and the proper maintenance of the records, the use of the cards may be gradually extended to all the higher primary and, as a next step, even to lower primary schools.

9.75 The whole purpose of the proposal is to reform the existing examination by making it less formal, reducing its burden on the pupils' minds, and increasing its validity as a measure of educational attainment. The school at the primary stage plays the determining role in the total assessment of such attainment. The certificate regarding the completion of the course should be given by the school and not by the external agency, and this certificate should be accompanied by a statement showing the results of the common final examination, if any, together with the results of the internal assessment made by the school of the pupils' performance throughout the year, as shown in his cumulative records.

9.81 On the completion of the course, at the end of the lower or higher secondary stage, the student should receive a certificate from the school also giving the record of his internal assessment as contained in his cumulative record card.

9.84 Methods of Internal Assessment. We shall now pass on to the question of internal assessment to which a reference was made earlier in this section. This internal assessment or evaluation conducted by individual schools is of great significance and should be given increasing importance. It should be

comprehensive, evaluating all those aspects of the student's growth that are measured by the external examination and also those personality traits, interests and attitudes which cannot be assessed by it. Internal assessment should be built into the total educational programme of the school and should be used for improvement rather than for certifying the level of achievement of the student. It must be pointed out that all items of internal assessment need not follow qualified scoring procedures. Some of them may be assessed in descriptive terms. The results should be kept separately and not be combined artificially with other results to form aggregate scores.

9.85 The written examinations conducted in schools should be improved on the same lines as the external examination. The use of standardized achievement tests, wherever available, is strongly recommended. There is need for developing other types of evaluation tools for improving internal assessment such as interest inventories, aptitude tests and rating scales. They should be prepared by specialists and made available to schools, and the teachers should be trained to use them through a network of in-service programmes. Teachers should also be trained to make simple tests of their own on the models supplied and use them for the assessment of the performance of their Pupils.

9.86 We are aware that the experience of introducing internal assessment has not been very happy so far and that there has been persistent over-assessment by the weaker schools. This has led some critics to suggest that the system should be abandoned altogether. We cannot agree with this view. Internal assessment has to continue and its importance will have to be increasingly emphasized. To overcome the shortcomings discovered, we make the following recommendations:

1. The results of the internal assessment and external examination should not be combined because the purposes and techniques of the two evaluations are different and because the results of the internal assessment of the different institutions are not strictly comparable. The results of the external and internal assessment should, therefore, be shown separately in the certificate(s) given at the end of the course.
2. It should be an important point in the inspections of schools to review the internal assessment made and to examine the correlation between the internal and external assessments. Persistence in over-assessment should be regarded as a weakness in the school programmes. It should be taken due note of while classifying the schools and should also be related to grants-in-aid so that institutions which tend to over-assess their students persistently would stand to lose in status and finance. The grant-in-aid rules should also authorize the Education Department to withdraw recognition for persistent irresponsible assessment.

E Education and national development: report of the education commission, 1964-66, volume iii

Chapter XI: Higher Education: Objectives And Improvement — Improvement of Teaching and Evaluation

11.52 Examination Reform. In the present system, when the future of the students is totally decided by one external examination at the end of the year, they pay minimum attention to the teachers, do little independent study throughout most of the academic year and cram desperately for the final examination. The crippling effect of external examinations on the quality of work in higher education is so great that examination reform has become crucial to all progress and has to go hand in hand with improvements in teaching. The UGC rightly emphasized the significance of the problem and said: 'We are convinced that if we are to suggest any single reform in university education, it should be that of examinations.' One of the earliest efforts of the UGC was concerned with the study of the problem and the report of its expert committee on examination reform is a useful document. But it has not been implemented to any appreciable extent so far. This is one of those areas in education about which one can say that the problem is known, its significance is realized, the broad lines of the solution — at least to begin with are known; but for some reason or other, an effort to implement it on any worthwhile scale or in a meaningful manner has not yet been made. What is needed is vigorous and sustained action.

11.53 We make below a few recommendations that might make a welcome breakthrough in the situation. One line of attack would be to abolish set syllabuses and the external examinations based on them altogether and to replace them by a system of internal and continuous evaluation by the teachers themselves. This is already being done in some institutions like the IITs or the agricultural universities and it could be increasingly extended to others as soon as the necessary facilities and conditions can be provided. We hope that, at no distant date, it will be adopted by all teaching universities and that the major universities would give a lead in this matter.

11.54 We realize, however, that external examinations will remain with us for a long time, especially in universities which have large number of affiliated colleges of very unequal standards. The main strategy here would be to attack the problem on two fronts: introduction of more frequent, periodical assessment so that the undue emphasis on the final examination as the sole determinant of success is reduced; and reform of evaluation techniques. With regard to the first, a good deal can be gained if the performance of the student is assessed throughout the session in a suitable manner and if periodical tests are held in the middle and at the end of each term. A system of internal assessment should be introduced as a supplement to the external examination, based on such periodical evaluations. The results of these internal assessments should not be mechanically added to the external marks but kept

separate and both should be shown side by side in the final certificate. Passes should be required separately in both and the divisions gained in them should be declared separately. Every year, a careful review should be made of the correlation between internal and external assessment separately for each institution. This should be taken as a point for classification of colleges and also related to grant-in-aid so that institutions which tend to over-assess their students persistently would stand to lose in status and finance. The regulations may also authorize the university to withdraw affiliation for persistent irresponsible assessment.

F. National policy on education: 1968

(10) Examinations: A major goal of examination reforms should be to improve the reliability and validity of examinations and to make evaluation a continuous process aimed at helping the student to improve his level of achievement rather than at 'certifying' the quality of his performance at a given moment of time.

G National policy on education: 1986 (with modifications undertaken in 1992)

Part VIII: Reorienting the Content and Process of Education — The Evaluation Process and Examination Reform

8.23 Assessment of performance is an integral part of any process of learning and teaching. As part of sound educational strategy, examinations should be employed to bring about qualitative improvements in education.

8.24 The objective will be to re-cast the examination system so as to ensure a method of assessment that is a valid and reliable measure of student development and a powerful instrument for improving teaching and learning; in functional terms, this would mean:

- i) The elimination of excessive element of chance and subjectivity;
- ii) The de-emphasis of memorisation;
- iii) Continuous and comprehensive evaluation that incorporates both scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of education, spread over the total span of instructional time;
- iv) Effective use of the evaluation process by teachers, students and parents;
- v) Improvement in the conduct of examination;
- vi) The introduction of concomitant changes in instructional materials and methodology;
- vii) Instruction of the semester system from the secondary stage in a phased manner; and
- viii) The use of grades in place of marks.

8.25 [The above goals are relevant both for external examinations

and evaluations within educational institutions. Evaluation at the institutional level will be streamlined and the predominance of external examinations reduced. A National Examination Reform Framework would be prepared to serve as a set of guidelines to the examining bodies, which would have the freedom to innovate and adapt the framework to suit the specific situations.]

H. National policy on education 1986: programme of action 1992

Evaluation Process and Examination Reforms

1. Reforms in examinations have been a subject of serious discussion for long. Some changes have been introduced in the system at the initiative of the NCERT in school examinations and the UGC in university examinations. On the whole, however, the impact of these reforms has not been too significant.

The Policy and Strategies for Implementation

3. In order to attain the objective of integrating the process of evaluation with teaching and learning, 'several long-term reforms will be necessary. For this purpose, the following programmes would be considered:

(a) At the School Level

(iii) Schemes of evaluation consisting of examinations to test those aspects of learning which can be assessed through formal examinations, and the procedure for assessing those aspects which cannot be tested through such an examination, will be developed. Abilities and proficiencies which can and should be assessed through institutional evaluation will be identified and procedures evolved for such evaluation;

(vii) Along with external examinations, continuous institutional evaluation of scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of education will be introduced.

(b) At the University Level

(i) The possibility of developing alternate system of evaluation in place of external examinations for affiliated colleges will be explored.

(c) General

(x) Separate certificates will be awarded showing the results of institutional evaluation and external examinations;

(xi) The certificate of institutional evaluation may cover academic achievements as well as non-scholastic aspects.

(xiv) Facilities will be provided in schools and colleges for maintenance of students' records to facilitate continuous institutional evaluation.

I. Curriculum framework for quality teacher education (1998)

Chapter 2: Pre-Service Teacher Education

2.5 Teacher Education for Early Childhood Stage — *Transacting Curriculum*

Evaluation: It is expedient to employ the formative evaluation for obtaining continuous feedback, motivating students and guiding their efforts. There is an increasing felt need to replace external examinations by internal continuous and comprehensive examination system. External system of evaluation, until such times it is replaced, may be perceived as a corrective, moderating and balancing factor. It, therefore, needs to be carefully planned and testing tools made valid and reliable. In different situations evaluation of theoretical component may be based on essay questions, short answer type questions, objective type questions, objective-based questions, oral examinations, participation in discussion groups etc.

Evaluation of practice teaching can be done internally, externally or through judicious combination of both. Gradual transition to continuous and comprehensive internal evaluation of practice teaching and assigning grades instead of marks would be a professionally sound step. Evaluation of practical work would also be done internally.

J. Updating curricula in education: a framework — recommendation of ugc curriculum development committee on education (march, 2001).

B.A. (Pass) with Education as an elective subject

20% weightage is to be given to internal assessment

B.Ed. Course: First Professional Course in Education — Internal Assessment

The following scheme of internal assessment is suggested:

Each theory paper will consist of two internal assignments of which one may be short (theory-oriented) and the other more detailed and application-oriented. These would take care of theoretical aspects of the papers as well as the application of the knowledge in real work situation.

Trainee-teachers may develop the following records:

1. Scholars achievement record
2. School study record
3. Case study record
4. Audio-visual record
5. SUPW / Work Experience (co-curricular activities)
6. Three experiments on educational psychology (as under Paper II)

Master of Education (M.Ed.): Full Time

Note: Out of the total marks 25% are to be internally evaluated.

K. Higher education in india: issues, concerns and new directions (december 2003)

2.3. Evaluation and Assessment Systems

2.3.1. Recommendations

2. Continuous Internal Assessment should be given the attention it merits in the students' academic programmes at the Universities.

L. Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) committee on autonomy of higher education institutions (June 2005)

Chapter 5: Academic Autonomy — 5.3 Major Inferences Based on Discussions

C. Examination and Evaluation

- A method of continuous assessment of students' performance is extremely essential. This may require application of both multiple criteria of assessment as also multiple sources of assessment.
- Credit-based system of evaluation must be adopted to mitigate any scope of disadvantage to a student. However, the degrees and mark sheets must be accompanied with the transcription so that the student does not face any difficulty while applying for higher studies or jobs.
- There is a dire need to bring about reforms in the examination system. It should be designed to evaluate learner's analytical capability and problem solving skills. It should not be used to merely check the learning by rote capability.
- Special measures may be undertaken for the purposes of reducing the element of subjectivity in evaluation of students' performance. It requires detailed guidelines from the point of view of ensuring both transparency and objectivity.
- There is a growing concern that autonomous colleges have great discrepancy between the internal and external assessments. This is a retrograde proposition and leads to a loss of confidence in the institution. It also creates handicaps to students of autonomous institutions when it comes to selection process for PG admissions since the internal marks are often not taken into account or recognized. In the first place, such a thing should not happen at all, but if it does happen it should be overcome by calibrating both the assessments.
- There is a fear of victimization of students by the faculty under their authority to exercise autonomy and internal

evaluation. Steps must be taken to dispel this fear by introducing greater transparency in the system of evaluation and confidence among the students in the same.

Chapter 8: Recommendations — Academic Matters

10. Institutions of higher education should have the autonomy to adopt continuous and comprehensive system of students' evaluation with the sole objective of facilitating the acquisition of learning outcomes to the level of mastery, discouraging students getting into selective short cuts and optional readings. Though the universities' autonomy should aim at switching over to complete internal evaluation of students over a period of time, there could be a mix of internal and external evaluation during the transition period, depending on the circumstances prevailing in each university.

M. Report of the CABE committee on universalisation of secondary education {set-up by the ministry of human resource development, government of India} (2005).

Chapter 2: Secondary Education: Nature and Scope

Student Assessment and Evaluation

Secondary education is the turning point for a large majority of students. Not only the certificate one earns after schooling but also the actual learning during schooling is the lifelong resource. Along with building dynamism in curricular framework as well as instructional processes, evaluation must undergo major changes. Conventionally, education system, particularly school education is guided and controlled by concern for results in examination irrespective of the quality of learning — whether fragile or sustainable. The competition, though artificial, for securing percentage of marks in the final examination creates unusual stress in the students leading often to mental break down and suicides. This must change. Change in the mechanics of examination will be too simplistic a solution, amounting to treating the symptoms, not the disease itself. Examination-stress is directly related to facing the challenge of examination with 'fragile' learning due to memorizing huge stock of information. In order to manage the stress factor in examination it will be necessary to ensure sustainable learning which is the function of instructional processes. Yet, it will be necessary to reconstruct and redesign examination system with attributes like flexibility where a student can achieve mastery learning in a flexible time frame and accumulate credits; eliminating power tests (fixed duration), adopt continuous and comprehensive evaluation. The practice of mark sheets indicating marks in certain subjects must be replaced by a portfolio that would accommodate a student's performance in a variety of domains like life skills, academic/non-academic and vocational subjects, personal qualities, etc. The portfolio should be comprehensive, revealing of the total being of the student.

N. National Curriculum Framework, 2005

Chapter 5: Systemic Reforms

5.3 Examination Reforms

The report, *Learning without Burden* notes that public examinations at the end of Class X and XII should be reviewed with a view to replacing the prevailing text-based and quiz-type questioning, which induces an inordinate level of anxiety and stress and promotes rote learning. While urban middle-class children are stressed from the need to perform extremely well, rural children are not sure about whether their preparation is adequate even to succeed. The high failure rates, especially among the rural, economically weaker and socially deprived children, forces one to critically review the whole system of evaluation and examination. For if the system was fair and working adequately, there is no reason why children should not progress and learn.

5.3.1 Paper Setting, Examining and Reporting

In order to improve the validity of current examinations, the entire process of paper setting needs to be overhauled. The focus should shift to framing good questions rather than mere paper setting. Such questions need not be generated by experts only. Through wide canvassing, good questions can be pooled all year round, from teachers, college professors in that discipline, educators from other states, and even students. These questions, after careful vetting by experts, could be categorised according to level of difficulty, topic/area, concept/competency being evaluated and time estimated to solve. These could be maintained along with a record of their usage and testing record to be drawn upon at the time of generating question papers.

Compelling teachers to examine without offering adequate remuneration makes it difficult to motivate them to ensure better quality and consistency in evaluation. Considering that most boards are in good financial health, funding issues should not come in the way of improving the quality of evaluation. With computerisation, it is much easier to protect the identity of both examinee and examiner. It is also easier to randomise examination scripts given to any particular examiner, thus checking malpractices and reducing inter-examiner variability. Malpractices such as cheating with help from outside the examination hall can be reduced if candidates are not permitted to leave the exam centre in the first half time, and also are not permitted to carry question papers out with them while the examination is still going on. The question paper can be made available after the examination is over. Computerisation makes it possible to present a wider range of performance parameters on the mark-sheet — absolute marks/grades, percentile rank among all candidates taking the examination for that subject, and percentile rank among peers (e.g. schools in the same rural or urban block). It would also be possible to analyse the quality and consistency of various examiners. The last

parameter, in particular, we believe to be a crucial test of merit. Making this information public will allow institutions of higher learning to take a more complex and relativist view of the notion of merit. Such analysis will promote transparency. Requests for re-checking have declined dramatically in places where students have access to their answer papers in either scanned or xeroxed form, on request, for a nominal fee.

In the medium term, we need to be able to increasingly shift towards school-based assessment, and devise ways in which to make such internal assessment more credible. Each school should evolve a flexible and implementable scheme of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), primarily for diagnosis, remediation and enhancing of learning. The scheme should take into account the social environment and the facilities available in the school.

Sensitive teachers usually pick up the unique strengths and weakness of students. There should be ways of utilising such insights. At the same time, to prevent abuse by schools (as is currently the case in practical examinations), they could be graded on a relative, not an absolute, scale and must be moderated and scaled against the marks obtained in the external examination. More research is required on development, teacher training and relevant institutional arrangements.

O. Position paper: national focus group on Examination Reforms (2006)

2.4.1 We propose the following solutions:

1. There should be more varied modes of assessment, including oral testing and group work evaluation. This is extensively discussed in the section on CCE and Teacher Empowerment. Suffice it to say, here, that as sensitive teachers usually pick these unique strengths and weaknesses of students, one should utilize their insight in assessment and empower them and the system of internal assessment. At the same time, to prevent its abuse by schools (as is currently the case in practical exams), internal assessment must be graded on a relative, not an absolute, scale and must be moderated against the marks obtained in the external exam. External moderation of internal assessment through mandatory random sampling is strangely absent at present. The consequences are predictable: abuse of the system by schools is rampant, the end-users have little faith in it, and boards, aware of this, usually report internally assessed marks separately, thus allowing them to be ignored.

2.8. School-based Assessment

While the primary mandate of this Focus Group was to suggest reforms for exams (as opposed to all assessment), we would like to make a brief plea for the importance of school-based assessment, and hope we can strengthen it in the medium term.

1. **Continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE):** The group felt strongly that a school-based continuous and comprehensive evaluation system be established in order to (i) reduce stress on children, (ii) make evaluation comprehensive and regular, (iii) provide space for the teacher for creative teaching, (iv) provide a tool for diagnosis and for producing learners with greater skills. The CCE scheme should be simple, flexible, and implementable in any type of school from the elite one to a school located in rural or tribal areas. Keeping in view the broad principles of the scheme, each school should evolve a simple suitable scheme involving its teachers, and owned by the teachers.
2. **Issue of CCE certificate:** To make CCE effective, some weight to school-based assessment (SBA) should be given in the school-leaving certificate issued by State Education Boards. The certificate of the student's performance in the school, in all areas, should be issued along with the board certificate by the board. The performance should be shown in terms of grades in each area appropriate to the stage of schooling. The two types of assessments, i.e., internal and external, should, ideally, be shown separately in the certificate issued by the board. To begin with, 20% weight age may be given to CCE for class X.
3. **Keeping internal assessment honest:** The question of how to keep schools honest in internal grading is a burning one. Without guarantees of such honesty, end-users of board mark sheets have little interest in it. In general, we recommend a method of internal grading with external moderation (through random but mandatory sampling) by the board. In other words, designated samples of internally assessed work must be sent to the board in each subject. In cases where the board is satisfied with the quality, they should get its mark of approval. Otherwise, the remark accompanying the CCE mark on the mark sheet will read: 'Declared by school with no board authentication.' In cases where quality standards are met but the marks awarded are too high reference should be made to the school average for CCE — which would automatically deflate the attainment in the eyes of the end-user in cases of overgenerous marking.
4. **Practical Examinations:** The shabby assessment of science practicals by schools, in most boards, with a majority of candidates getting full or near-full marks (often without even the experiment having taken place) is a good illustration of what happens when boards abdicate their responsibility to monitor and moderate samples of school-based evaluation. The checks suggested in the preceding paragraph need to be implemented without delay. If they cannot, the farce of school-assessed practicals must end and the science marks be given entirely on the basis of theory exams (which would have to then include a section on planning experiments). It

would be unfortunate if it has to come to this as good experimentation and experimental skills are at the heart of the scientific enterprise. Unless laboratory assessment is made less farcical, the quality of the country's scientific manpower is under serious threat; the number of students interested in scientific pursuits is already stagnating in several states.

P. Curriculum Framework For Teacher Education- Draft Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2006)

Chapter V: Evaluating the Developing Teacher: Issues, Concerns and Alternative Framework

5.1 Introduction

It is envisioned that the proposed content and pedagogic approach of Initial Teacher Education would enable the student-teacher to engage deeply with children and their socio-cultural context, the school curriculum and textbooks, the process of learning and knowledge, their own psychological and professional skill development, the understanding of institutional arrangements and policy perspective and a school-based approach to pedagogy and curriculum. This engagement with a vast repertoire of conceptual and practical knowledge is expected to create several opportunities for trainees to reflect on issues and concerns, self and others and in the process enhance their understanding, develop conceptual clarity and new insights, hone their skills and grow as persons and teachers willing to take responsibility of their own and children's learning. The challenge before this new envisioning is to formulate an appropriate set of guidelines that will enable an objective assessment of the entire gamut of developing dimensions in each of the trainee-teachers. Accordingly, a major revamping of the evaluation system currently followed in teacher education programmes would be necessary. The present system of evaluating the teacher-trainee is steeped in the rituals that govern most of the theoretical and practical components of teacher education programmes. Most of these rituals emanate from the behaviouristic approaches that view learning as tangible outcomes which are assumed to be linearly and simplistically related to pre-determined objectives. Moreover, the assessment measures tend to be excessively quantitative and often at the cost of understanding and estimating the qualitative development of a trainee-teacher. For instance, assessing the teaching performance of a trainee in terms of marks could serve the limited purpose of examination but fails to make an analytical statement about the trainee's developing capacities as a teacher. It is worth asking the question: What does it mean if a trainee obtains seventy percent in practice teaching, or if two trainees obtain the same percentage? What does this tell us about the capacity of the teacher to communicate with children, to enable them to make conceptual advances in their understanding of specific subjects and to help them develop into harmonious human beings?

5.2 The Ritual of Evaluation: Pattern and Underlying Assumptions

A typical evaluation pattern followed by the bulk of teacher education programmes centres around student assignments for theory as well as practical courses. More often than not students are inundated with assignments to the tune of about 3 per course. Given 4 compulsory theory courses and 1 optional (in a typical BEd Programme), each student is expected to submit close to 15 assignments in a period of one academic year. This period is further reduced to a maximum of 7 working months, given the calendar schedules and the number of official days off. In addition, student-teachers in many programmes are expected to submit 3 assignments towards general tutorials (including a book review), a report on community work (involving 10 hours of field-based work), a report on peer evaluation and one on a single aspect of the school they visit regularly for practice teaching. To this is the added burden of formulating 40 lesson plans, 20 in each of the two school subjects opted by them during practice-teaching.

The burden of submitting assignments and lesson plans within a given time frame ensures that students remain incredibly busy through the entire B.Ed. programme and all written submissions are reduced to rituals. The underlying assumption is that hard labour and practice will create 'trained' teachers. In fact the hallmark of current teacher training programmes is to keep trainees busy to such an extent that they are left with little time to think or reflect on and about what they are doing. For instance, lesson planning is taught during teacher training merely as a formal routine which, along with constant demands of submitting assignments socialises the young trainee into the profession without disturbing its underlying assumptions about knowledge and curriculum. Left unaware of these assumptions and the consequences of the practices based on them, the student-teacher plays an active role in maintaining status-quo. An unrealistic busy schedule ensures that teacher-trainees 'learn well' the art of 'reproducing' information 'given' in textbooks.

Where individual teacher educators prompt trainees to go beyond the textbook and to engage with curriculum and pedagogy in reflective ways, stark contradictions inherent in the 'ritualized' nature of their training and unequal power equations between the teacher and the taught creates disillusionment and inertia. Such a regimen also ensures that teacher-trainees internalize this pattern in a manner that socializes them into behaving in mechanical and controlling ways when they become full teachers.

Most teacher-trainees are found spending hours on decorating assignment and lesson plan file covers with minimal time spent either on reference and library work or reflecting on what they write about. Assignments and lesson plans are usually treated as chores to fulfil ritualized formalities for internal assessment towards obtaining paper certification. The content of students' written

submissions is routinely processed out of given texts and more recently, from materials available on the net. Written submissions have ceased to serve the purpose of adequate and timely feedback towards more rigorous training and reflection. The consistent pattern of 'inflated' internal assessment marks across a wide range of teacher education institutes and the wide disparity between internal assessment and annual examination performance of students bear testimony to the extent and nature of degradation of the current practice of evaluation.

The problem of evaluation measures used in current teacher education programmes is not merely one of over quantification but also one of lack of comprehensiveness in coverage. Apart from conceptual and pedagogical aspects, a pre-service teacher education programme needs to develop and further enhance certain attitudes, dispositions, habits and discerning capacities in a developing teacher. A teacher's attitude towards children, their needs and problems, dispositions of tolerance, ability to listen with empathy, habits of punctuality, a seeking mind, habits of reading and independent learning, a self-questioning and critical mind are particularly important in making a reflective practitioner. The present evaluation protocol has no space for evaluating qualitative dimensions such as these.

Moreover, the intake of a new set of students each academic year tends to create a false sense of innovation and new zest. The design and practice of teacher education tends to either ghettoize faculty members into teaching the same courses year after year or makes them excessively possessive of the courses they teach. The near absence of reflection either in the manner in which teachers are trained or in the manner in which teacher educators function, given the ritualized nature and busy schedule of training programmes, leads to a routine continuation of the 'rituals' of teacher training and a false sense of having achieved professional standards in teaching.

5.3 Questioning Current Practices of Assessment

While a vast amount of international research literature questions the authenticity of behaviouristic and other positivist approaches to assessment adopted in schools, there exists, in comparison, precious little reflection on evaluation procedures adopted for assessing the developing teacher in teacher education programmes. International scholars across the globe for instance, have contested that the pure objectivity of assessment outcomes is an illusion. In their view classroom assessment techniques are essentially social processes that are vulnerable to bias and distortion. It is therefore more appropriate to embed assessment in the social reality of the classroom and allow the process to be meaningful to the learner.

Adult learners have a vast amount of life experiences and knowledge and are inclined to be pragmatic and goal-directed.

Assessment of their learning will therefore need to be oriented to their own evaluation of themselves. Teacher educators will need to avoid disciplining and giving directions or loosely structure assessment activities. Hence, teacher education programmes will need to give student-teachers greater control over the what, how, why, when and where of their learning.

Fresh perspectives on learning, based on constructivist, philosophical, and cross-cultural research perspectives, suggest that meaningful learning occurs when learners have a knowledge base that can be used with fluency to make sense of the world, solve problems, and make decisions. This redefinition of learning requires a collaborative classroom which is notable for its change in the roles of students (in this case, student-teacher) and teachers (in this case, teacher-educator). The collaborative classroom is characterized by shared knowledge among teachers and students, shared authority among teachers and students, teachers as mediators, and heterogeneous groups of students.

In the light of the above, the following would emerge as implications for teacher education: teaching instruction needs to be problem oriented and not discipline or theory oriented; approaches such as case studies, simulations, role-play and action research would be more appropriate for the professional development of teachers; emphasis of instruction should not be memorization of content but accomplishment of tasks, insights and competence; open-ended activities and questions could help bring out the vast experiences of the prospective teachers, as also their 'personal theories' about knowledge, learning and learners for scrutiny and analysis.

Q. Report of Working Group on Elementary Education and Literacy for the 11th five year plan (2006).

SECTION-II — Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Girls Education — Universalisation of Elementary Education — VI. Other Major Programme Components of SSA –

2. Community Involvement, Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Management of Schools

Quality in Education

Involvement of parents, in particular, and community, in general, in quality of education is an important aspect of civil society involvement. Demystified and simple educational outcomes need to be quantified at the beginning of each academic year. These need to be shared with the community so that it knows what to expect from the school. The annual school academic plan should clearly focus on achievable quality parameters. Quantified targets are possible only with scientific assessment and evaluation of each student. Regular internal assessments and periodical external assessments should be done and these results should guide the preparation of the school plans by the community.

R. National knowledge commission: report to the Nation (2006) — Recommendations — Higher Education

II. Excellence

5. Reform existing universities. The endeavour to transform higher education must reform existing institutions. Some essential steps are:

- Universities should be required to revise or restructure curricula at least once in three years.
- Annual examinations, which test memory rather than understanding, should be supplemented with continuous internal assessment which could begin with a weight of 25 per cent in the total to be raised to 50 per cent over a stipulated period.
- NKC proposes a transition to a course credit system where degrees are granted on the basis of completing a requisite number of credits from different courses, which provides students with choices.

Recommendations — Note on Higher Education — Universities

Assessment

The nature of annual examinations at universities in India often stifles the teaching-learning process because they reward selective and uncritical learning. There is an acute need to reform this examination system so that it tests understanding rather than memory. Analytical abilities and creative thinking should be at a premium. Learning by rote should be at a discount. Such reform would become more feasible with decentralized examination and smaller universities. But assessment cannot and should not be based on examinations alone. There is a clear need for continuous internal assessment which empowers teachers and students alike, just as it breathes life back into the teaching-learning process. Such internal assessment would also foster the analytical and creative abilities of students which are often a casualty in university administered annual examinations. To begin with, internal assessment could have a weight of 25 per cent in the total but this should be raised to 50 per cent over time.

S. National conference on development of higher education for Expansion, Inclusion and Excellence — relevant issues and recommendations of regional conferences of the vice chancellors (october 2007)

Chapter 3: Quality and Excellence — Recommendations of Regional Conferences

It may not be true that the quality of higher education has declined over time. But it is also true that there are substantial variations in quality across institutions of higher education. There are a number

of factors, which are responsible for the variations in quality. These include:

Faculty and Human resources – adequacy and sufficiency of qualified faculty is the most important prerequisites for quality teaching – learning process and improved academic performance of the institutions. Some indications in this regards are as follows:

(Only the relevant portions have been taken)

- A number of reforms which is considered as a must like application oriented teaching, introduction of semester system, introduction of continuous internal assessment, credit based choices and inter-disciplinary courses, have not been implemented across all institutions because of the paucity of faculty members;
- Shortage of faculty members has been a major deterrent in implementing such academic reforms as introduction of semester system, credit based courses, continuous internal assessment etc;

Chapter 4: Academic and Administrative Reforms — Proposal and Strategies — Examination Reforms — Examination and Evaluation System

Introduction of continuous internal assessment and phasing out external examination system and gradually move to a decentralised examination and evaluation system, introduction of semester system and phasing out the annual examination system, introduction of tutorial and seminar-based lecture to promote more involved learning, focus on learning, understanding, analytical ability, creativity and application oriented learning as opposed to rote learning, credit for work experience and earning while learning by taking up on-campus/ off-campus job.

Chapter 4: Academic and Administrative Reforms — Proposal and Strategies — Other Reforms — Recommendations of Regional Conferences — Examination Reforms

Introduce semester system based on continuous internal assessment.

T. National Knowledge Commission: Report to the Nation, 2006-2009.

Note on More Talented Students in Maths and Science — Recommendation 6: Radical changes are required in the evaluation system to encourage scientific thinking and promote better understanding of basic science concepts

6.1 Alternative Evaluation Methodologies

The system should move from examination based evaluation to more open assessment mechanisms. Memory, comprehension and creativity should be given equal importance in evaluations. More weightage should be given to round the year hands-on activities

and laboratory work. Continuous assessment at school level will reduce dependence on year end examinations. If we could develop a system where a holistic record of student performance from school to college is maintained, then this can be used as an alternative or additional input to entrance examinations for entry into various institutes after higher secondary level.

At the college level, introduction of semester system will reduce the anxiety related to year end examinations. Internal assessment should be increased and given more weight. Internal assessment should focus on experimental projects which will create demand for laboratories. This in-turn will lead to demand for better laboratory facilities and consequently improved infrastructure in all colleges. Other measures which will encourage students to go beyond rote learning are open ended examinations which test comprehension rather than memory and open book examinations focusing on problem solving and critical thinking. Group testing and field-work based testing should be used extensively.

U. Action plan for academic & administrative reforms (2009)

Earlier on, the Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC), had addressed a detailed letter (D.O. No. F.1-2/2008-XI Plan dated January 31, 2008) to the heads of central, state and deemed universities and institutions of higher learning in the country, drawing their attention to the pressing need for academic and administrative reforms. As this initiative evoked a highly encouraging response, the UGC had set up a Committee on Academic and Administrative Reforms, with Professor A. Gnanam as convenor, and comprising several eminent educationists from a diverse range of disciplines. The Committee has since submitted a comprehensive and path-breaking report. Based on this document, an action plan has been developed — for the consideration of educational authorities, and for the phase-wise introduction of substantive academic and administrative reforms in the institutions of higher education in the country.

5. Examination Reforms

(a) Continuous Internal Evaluation:

Aiming to assess values, skills and knowledge imbibed by students, internal assessment is to be done by the concerned faculty-member, Department, School or the Centre. It would comprise following steps:

- All the certificate, diploma, undergraduate, postgraduate, M. Phil. and Ph. D. courses offered by a university, college or institute are to have specified components for internal evaluation (e.g. essay, tutorials, term-paper, seminar, laboratory work, workshop practice, etc.).
- Components for internal evaluation are to have a time-frame for completion (by students), and concurrent and continuous evaluation (by faculty-members).

- The evaluation outcome may be expressed either by pre-determined marks or by grades.
- The evaluation reports submitted by all the faculty-members are to be reviewed, from time to time, by the Department, School or Centre Committee, in order to ensure transparency, fair-play and accountability.
- Following the review by the Department, School or Centre Committee, the outcome of internal evaluation is to be announced and displayed on the Notice Board and / or web-site as per the timeframe or academic calendar.

(b) End-of-semester Evaluation

This is to be carried out at the end of each semester, and will aim to assess skills and knowledge acquired by students through classroom, field-work, laboratory-work and workshop practice. The evaluation can be in the form of written examination, laboratory work or workshop assignment. Evaluation process should be verifiable and transparent. Towards this end, the following steps may be adopted:

- All the students pursuing certificate, diploma, undergraduate, postgraduate, and research courses have to undergo external evaluation at the end of each semester as per syllabi or credit schedule (for Ph. D. evaluation, see Annexure 1).
- With regard to practicals and workshop assignment, the internal faculty may associate themselves with the external examiners in the examination process.
- In the case of written examination, whatever the format (objective type, essay-type, etc.), test papers could be moderated by committees proficient in the subject.
- Answer-books or –sheets are to be ‘encoded’ (before being passed on to examiner/ evaluator, and decoded (before tabulation).

(c) Integration of Continuous and End-of-Semester Evaluation:

The following points need to be considered for effecting the integration of continuous and end-of-semester evaluation:

- The integration procedure should be applicable to all the students pursuing certificate, diploma, undergraduate, postgraduate, M. Phil. and Ph. D. courses.
- University committees on the recommendations of Department committees and concerned Faculty would discuss and decide on the relational weightage of continuous and end-of-semester evaluations. This weightage could be flexible and could vary from institution

to institution.

- Relational weightage assigned to internal evaluation may range from 25 to 40 percent.
- Following the integration of internal and external evaluations, the results may be expressed either in marks, grades or both, as per the policy of the university.
- It will be useful if universities try to go beyond 'marks' and 'divisions' and, in keeping with the global trend, give Cumulative Grade Point Score (CGPS) which would place students into overlapping broad bands.
- The CGPS may be based on a 5-point or 10-point scale and it could vary from institution to institution.
- As soon as the integration of internal and external evaluations has been completed, the results should be announced, in keeping with the academic calendar, to facilitate students' academic or occupational pursuits.

V. Inclusive and Qualitative Expansion of Higher Education 12th Five-Year Plan, 2012-17 (Compilation Based on the Deliberations of the Working Group for Higher Education in the 12th Five-Year Plan, 2012-17) (November 2011)

Chapter 3: 11th FYP Initiatives and Achievements

3.3.3 Some Quality Interventions

(d) *Curriculum Reform*: The UGC has also taken steps to come up with model curricula to guide universities in ensuring periodic revision of their syllabi and courses, undertaking academic reforms such as introduction of semester system, grading system, choice-based credit-system, keeping curriculum updated, transparent admission procedures, inter-university student mobility, reform of examination system with switch over to continuous internal evaluation and improving the quality of external examination component, credit transfer, and credit accumulation. This has been welcomed by the universities, and many of them have initiated changes in such aspects of academic reform.

4.3 Issues and Challenges in Relation to Quality and Excellence

(d) *Curricular Reforms*: Besides reforms in the regulatory system and structures, the 11th FYP also underscored the need for thorough reforms in admission, curricula and assessment. Accordingly, it was emphasised that admission in higher education should be based on single common entrance examination with due regard to past academic track records of the applicants. The Examination Reforms provided for introduction of Semester System, Continuous and Comprehensive Internal Assessment, Choice Based Credit System and mobility of students through effective mechanism of credit transfer across institutions of higher education. It was mandated that the curricula be revised at least

once every 3 years and the syllabi be made relevant in tune with job market dynamics as also in tune with advances in research and development. Institutions were also expected to evolve appropriate pedagogical processes for effective transaction of instructional materials. During the 11th FYP, the national debate was pitched on academic reforms. There were various institutions which saw merit in them and introduced these reforms. However, there were also institutions which faced resistance. A climate for favourable response for academic reforms needs to be carried forward.

Conclusion

All the documents cited above have strongly advocated the introduction of internal assessment component at all levels of education, though in varying degree. The external examinations have also been considered important. However, some documents recommend the use of component of internal assessment with caution or with a rider in order desist institutions and teachers from its misuse.

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