

National Curriculum Framework and the gaps in the system

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National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage

The Draft National Framework 2023 (NCF 2023) openly acknowledges that the school assessments process deliberates rather than nurtures the abilities of students.

The 10th and 12th board exams are especially capable of stressing students. The high stakes exams give a feeling to students and their parents that life is determined by the 10th and 12th grades. Although the NCF 2023 aims to answer what potential and merit does these tests have in evaluating students' talents, its effectiveness must be determined after its implementation.

Views on the NCF 2023

- **Self Critical assessment of board exams**– board exams have failed in their primary task of assessing the various abilities of students. Instead they have ended up measuring students' 'ability to mug up content'.
- **Impact on parental relationship**–The parents believe that it is their responsibility to 'prepare their child' in the case of rote learning that even leads to physical abuse, affecting the parent-child relationship, sometimes with long-term bad effects.

Suggestion of the NCF 2023

- The suggestion though acceptable but require more precision in their implementation. The main suggestion is that board exams should become a means of measuring the achievement of the outcomes stated in the curriculum. Board exams are written tests, not all ability can be measured with a written test, in this case, evaluations through

internal assessments are very important.

- Allegations on schools awarding generous internal marks so that pass percentage remain high spoil the true spirit of internal evaluation with tough competition among schools to ensure high pass percentage.
- There is a need for equitable distribution of internal marks. Mechanisms like external examination boards to revalidate the internal marks awarded by teachers to students are essential for fair evaluation.
- The draft NCF 2023 suggests that an important responsibility of the examination boards is to develop and implement assessment tools that aid in accurately measuring the skills and abilities required to complete the curriculum. This includes a variety of skills and competencies that cannot be measured with a single customary written test, that necessitates evaluation tools which can assess the students' varied skills through both written and other means.
- But unfortunately the various state boards and the CBSE don't have such research wings to develop such tools.
- Examination offices today are bureaucratic offices, for board exams to become an accurate and fair measure of students' skills and abilities, the assessments have to be derived on the basis of a systematic process, every year.
- Another important suggestion is that having two board examinations for 10th and 12th grade can help prevent stressed students from pinning all their hopes on one exam but this is also questionable. If students are allowed to write both exams, children will be under pressure to take both to improve their scores and thus creating a system of double stress.
- Another suggestion of the NCF 2023 is the provision of on demand board examination. This shall be applicable to secondary school students. Parents and teachers craving for better performance of their wards would advise the delay of thinking the exams are on demand. The completion of syllabus will be the criteria for on demand boards that can delay the examination and increase stress.

Conclusion

- Despite all alluring suggestions by the NCF 2023, the scaling down of test anxiety seems to be a chimera.
- NCF may consider splitting the board exams into smaller connected units and distributing them over the entire period of secondary schooling i.e 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, this shall facilitate spontaneous assessments of students in their schools.
- In such systems children are evaluated by well-trained teachers using scientific tools in natural school settings. Reducing the weightage for year end written examinations, spontaneous assessments rely heavily on the fair and just evaluation by teachers.
- Teachers as fair evaluators are the cornerstones of the spontaneous assessments systems. The scores derived through such procedure should be validated by an external team of experts who make multiple visits to the school during the academic year, such changes shall help change the perception that excellence in board exams can only happen through writing and a herculean preparation.