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GRADING AS EXAMINATION REFORM IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

The main drawback in the present education system is the lack of correlation between teaching and testing. As we all know, evaluation results are good incentives for the students, and they also stimulate learning. The Education Commission (1964-66) suggested reforms in the examination system. University Grants Commission prepared an Examination Reform - "PLAN OF ACTION"' – 1976 with a view to bring reforms in our present examination system. As a result, Examination Reform Units in many universities have been established. This unit also recommended the grade system in secondary education in India. Along with the semester pattern, credit and grade systems have also come up in the education system. This paper is also discussing the grading system in secondary education in details along with its history.

Keywords:- *Examination, Grading, Grade Point, Secondary Education.*

Introduction

Education is the process of bringing desirable changes in the student's behavior. This process includes educational objectives, learning experience, and educational achievement. We have to formulate specific teaching objectives in terms of desirable changes to be brought about in the students. Based on objectives, we have to do plan and provide learning experiences appropriate to the objectives and the contemplated behavioral changes. Then we have to go for evaluation. Yadav (1977) says, "We have to organize activities and provide learning experiences with specific objectives, and concerning each objective, we have to determine the extent to which it is achieved. Thus, determining the extent to which educational objectives have been achieved is an integral part of school activities. This process is called evaluation in education. Sali (1982) says, "Evaluation is the process of determining the extent to which these objectives are being achieved". Educational evaluation is necessary for both the teacher and students. The students can be judged on which extent the Cognitive Affective and Psychomotor domains

have been developed. It warrants adequate emphasis on both the formative and summative evaluation.

History of Examination Reform

The present-day examination system is not much more reliable when we come to know that there are some weaknesses in this system, so that system should be reformed. The examination reform took as significant and some institutions commissions and committees have worked on it. The first voice was raised against the examination system by a principal of Kolkata in 1871. Lord Curzon and the Indian University Commission of 1902, Kolkatta University Commission (1919), and All India Conference (1944) expressed dissatisfaction and suggested some changes. The Radhakrishna commission in 1948 put emphasis upon the examination reforms. As a result in 1952 secondary commission raided some fundamental issues. All India Council for Secondary Education at Bhopal (1956) made certain valuable suggestions in the seminar on Examination Reforms. Dr. Benjamin S. Bloom, Head Examiner of the University of Chicago invited in 1958 in India to advice the commission. His advice was approved by the Central Ministry of Education and State Education departments. The first major step towards implementation of examination reform was the establishment of the Central Evaluations Unit in 1958.

The Education Commission in 1964 appointed a committee to review the examination system. Ministry of Education and Social Welfare set up a working group that prepared the document 'Examination Reform: A Plan of Action'. Meetings of the University Grants Commission held in 1972 gave recommendations on this document. Some workshops were held at some Universities like Delhi, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, etc. in 1975 and 1976. A revised edition of the Plan of Action was published in 1976.

The Association of Indian Universities has also worked on examination reforms and played a critical role in helping to shape perceptions of and solutions to the problems of examination.

The above committees & commission have suggested the following examination reforms:

1. Internal Assessment
2. Continuous evaluation
3. Use of Question Banks
4. Semester System
5. Grading in place of marking

6. National examination
7. Open book Examination

Grading in Secondary Education

Adolescence is a link between childhood and adult age. The secondary level is also a linkage between Primary education & Higher education. Secondary Education has to play a vital role in any program of education for the community. It provides teachers for both elementary and adult education, it also prepares students for the university and other institutions of higher learning. Those who complete their education at this stage must acquire knowledge and competences and also develop qualities of leadership and character. Secondary education is a very important stage of education. Teachers have to take adequate care in providing learning experiences.

Secondary education has mainly a marking system in Examination. But this system is not appropriate. There is a problem of determining the correct marks for each student. The marking procedure itself exhibits many faults. In this connection, UGC brought about 'Examination Reforms: A plan of Action' (1973). It highlighted some major defects of the examination system. It has presented some weaknesses in assigning marks to any answer script.

(1) The examiners asked to award numerical scores while assessing the answer scripts. The marks can range from a 101-point scale. It is a very long range, so there will be errors in measurement. If an Examiner gives 56 marks to one candidate and 55 to another, thus it proves that the first one is superior to the other and the other candidate feels tense and frustration.

(2) There is uncertainty about measuring the candidate's performance. The marks may be a measure of the candidate's ability knowledge memory or intelligence power of expression or combination of one or more of these characteristics. No on really knows what the examiner has really measured. Therefore the marks assigned may vary from one examiner to another and it lacks objectivity.

(3) It is assumed that there is a true mark for each script. But such a true mark can only be assigned by an ideal examiner who does not exist. The actual examiner makes only an estimate of the true mark. Thus, this estimate is therefore a row mark and is subject to considerable error.

(4) The numerical marking system is based on the assumption that marking is an absolute scale. This assumption is wrong. If one candidate has obtained 65 marks

means he/she has not got less than or more than 65 marks. But it is an achievement and it cannot be measured very precisely.

(5) Marking has a lack of reliability. It is related to the absolute nature of marking. If an examiner gives 12 marks in a 20 marks question, it means it cannot be 11 or 13 marks.

(6) Two examiners assess one answer script and assign marks. As a result, the first has given 55 marks and the second has given 65. The person remains the same and the answer remains the same, but it happens. Harper (1976) conducted an investigation in 1967 entitled 'Ninety marking ten'. 90 examiners have assessed 10 answer-scripts, but he has not found reliability.

(7) Marking gives more scope for some grace marks. If there is a rule to give a maximum of '+2' (plus 2) marks one candidate who has got 37 marks, will fail to reach the passing mark of 40.

(8) Marking is a type of tradition to assign marks in a particular subject. In some subjects a candidate can get 0 or 100 marks and in some subject maximum 70-80 marks.

(9) The practice of combining the marks in different subjects is not based on recognized statistical produce. The present practice of combining them to get an absolute total is incorrect. If we combine the marks in Chemistry and mathematics the marks in Chemistry vary from 30 to 60 while marks in mathematics vary from 5 to 95. The results will be that Mathematics receive approximately three times the weight of Chemistry. In effect, we shall be evaluating the performance of the student on his mathematics rather than his Chemistry.

(10) Then there are some weaknesses and inaccuracies in our present marking system as a range in grading. If a candidate has done hard work, he can get an A^+ or outstanding in History or language subjects also. An examiner can assess an answer script with simplicity. He/she has to see the quality and quantity of the answer of the candidate and assign grade to it. Then it is very simple to measure (Revthishankar-1990).

Comparison

When we compare both systems, the making system has very much flexibility but grading does not. When go from reliability it is found that grading has also less reliability. Kumar & Revathishankar (1990) have done investigation. A single answer of a single

question was given to 30 examiners and asked them to assess with 7 points scale. Out 11 gave A, 13 gave B and 7 gave C. Thus reliability does not remain even in the grading system. The marking system is familiar to teachers and students. The examiners can give grades also rend only layman cannot carry out the grading system.

Even having such type of weaknesses grading is better than a marking system. If one wants to remove the weakness can take the help of a marking system. NCERT (1987) recommended that the practice of marking answer books on a 101 – point scale be continued and that the marks obtained by candidates should be used as the bases for awarding grades. The marks should be converted into grades, after mark- sheets have been received from the examiners, by the Awarding committee.

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System of Grading with Point Scale:-

UGC (1973) has suggested a 5-point scale in 'A plan of Action' shown in the table below

Classification	Grade
Outstanding	1
Very Good	2
Good	3
Fair	4
Poor	5

We can provide supplementary letter grades as A, B, C, D & E to the grades.

NCERT (1987) has suggested scaling and Grading shown in the table below:

Grade	Adjectival Perception/Expression	Grade value

A	Outstanding	8
B	Excellent	7
C	Very Good	6
D	Good	5
E	Average	4
F	Fair	3
G	Marginal	2
H	Poor	1
I	Very poor	0

A Grading System for Secondary Education:

When one goes for grading he has to be sure that this method is simple and casemate. He has to take help with marking and provide grades. He can use the 10-point Scale for the grading system shown in the table below.

Range of marks	**Grade**	**Credit**	**Grade Range**
95 –100	A_1	10	9.5 – above
89 – 95	A_2	9	8.5 – 9.49
81 –88	B_1	8	7.5 – 8.49
71 – 80	B_2	7	6.5 – 7.49
61 – 70	C_1	6	5.5 – 6.49
51 – 60	C_2	5	4.5 – 5.49
41 – 50	D_1	4	3.5 – 4.49
31 – 40	D_2	3	2.5 - 3.49
16 – 30	E_1	2	1.5 – 2.49
1 – 15	E_2	1	Up to – 1.49

This kind of system should be adopted. If the examiner adopts this grading system for assessing answer scripts he can give marks to the answers and finally give grades. Thus direct conversion will be possible and no other scientific error can come. There is flexibility that the examiner should certainly assess whether he/she can go for marking or can go for grading. As a result both the examiner gets a Grade.

In a Question paper, there are different types of questions & we have to provide a grade for each answer. When the examiner assesses the essay type of answer he has to see the correctness, comprehensiveness, clarity, coherence, etc., and provide a grade on marks on the basis of these. He has to provide a grade within the full range of the scale from A_1 to E_2 in any subject. Then he has to see the grade value for each answer & make it combine and divide by a number of questions.

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