

Examination results and knowledge among school children

It is not necessary that if somebody has knowledge, then he would also get good grades in the exams. The ability to apply the knowledge and skills learned within the confines of a classroom gives rise to a bigger question: how well-equipped our current examination system is for delivering it? Exams are supposed to test the intelligence of the students and work as a sieve for filtering out the intelligent minds by allotting marks.[\[1\]](#)

School exams in many countries, especially in LMICs, assess the regurgitation of facts. The questions are asked in such a manner that there is little thinking involved in answering the questions. Teachers assess the answers to verifying the facts, not how one arrives in answering the question. Questioning anything in schools is considered to be rude and disrespectful and students are expected to follow as they are told. Questioning the system of education is a taboo. Survival is dependent on the exam results, so get the best result by hook or crook. Parents, teachers and politicians, all are fixed on exam results and no one wants to rock the boat. Any one getting 90-95% marks in a subject must be considered having perfect knowledge of the subject, but so many students reach that target that anyone getting less than 90% has little chance of getting admission into college. The system portrays that perfect knowledge is being imparted in schools and colleges. Those who talk about it are helpless in changing the course of the wave.

Education is meant to impart knowledge in the minds of students, but it has become a business. Today's education produced students who are literate and numerate, but not knowledgeable. Advertisements like, "Shock your dad by getting good marks", test papers, coaching for passing exams, summary text books, how to pass an exam, advertising pass rates of a coaching academy. Everyone is propping the system which is inherently wrong. The result is we have graduates and post graduates who are unable to think for themselves in performing their duties intelligently. Right or wrong they follow the system. Often one notes that there are good answers to, what the problem is and why it is there, but little towards how to solve the problem, hence the problem remains there for ever. This is the fundamental flaw in impeding development and escalating frustration among affected populations.

At very early age children are put through immense stress to learn and achieve better and better results. Even in Kindergartens, the pre-school educational approach based on playing, singing, practical activities such as drawing, and social interaction as part of the transition from home to school, is geared to learning and memorising facts and applications of tests and marks.

Rather than encouraging a child for doing well in school, parents compare them to their friends who might have got a few more marks. In India (34%), Japan (34%) and Korea (47%) adolescent spend more than one third of their time in schoolwork compared to their counterparts in USA and Europe (20-30%), resulting in negative emotions. They frequently feel unhappy, irritable, stressed, worried, and bored. Their negative states are more pronounced for homework than for classwork.[\[2\]](#)

Finland's education system is praised as among the best in the world. Delayed start to education, only one mandatory test at age 16, low amount of homework to pupils and high regard in which teachers are held are some of the fundamental differences. One of the important aspect of schooling is the provision of social and health care for students from within schools themselves, especially capacity to help children with mental health disorders. The burden of mental health in children and adolescent is increasing in the world and Finland has shown to be so close to perfection.[\[3\]](#)

To learn from Finnish experience, incorporation of health care and education in schools in LMICs is urgent. First of all health of the Under-5s must be improved to deliver healthy children to schools for continued optimum growth and development. In many LMICs one third of Under-5s are undernourished, leading to stunting and sub-optimal mental development. Moreover, undernourished children are prone to illness and complications leading to death, hence unacceptably high infant and childhood mortality rates.

There is urgent need to make education more child-friendly. Learning in classrooms can be more enjoyable for students if it is interactive, with greater involvement and participation of the students. Life skills programmes make learning more relevant and interesting for students, as well as equipping them better with valuable life skills such as critical thinking, decision making, stress management, problem solving, and personal development. [4] School education needs to strike a balance between learning and positive emotional experiences for better future for the student and for the country.

See also related old items under Home:

Consequences of stunting. May 4, 2019;

Early childhood stress. August 4, 2019;

School Health Education. Under My Public Health > School Health Education.

References:

[1] Education is about knowledge. <https://www.toppr.com/bytes/education-knowledge-exam-results/>

[2] Verma S, Sharma D and Larson RW. School stress in India International Journal of Behavioral Development 2002, 26 (6), 500–508

[3] [Cassandra Coburn](#). Mental health in Finnish schools: so close to perfection. Lancet Child & Adolescent Health. 30 August 2019.

[4] Varma, P.K. (1998). The great Indian middle class. New Delhi: Penguin.