

# Reintroducing class X exams right step

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The education sector and particularly schools have been one of the most resistant to change, which is not to say that they lack in adoption of innovative methods and technology in delivering education. However, what has not changed much over the years is the teacher-led system of learning and periodic examinations to promote a student to a higher class or to retain them at the same class.

The Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) took a historic decision to scrap the class X board exams in 2011 and introduced the continuous comprehensive evaluation (CCE) system of year-round testing and grading of students.

Taking the board exams was also made an optional choice. This was done with a view to reduce the stress faced by young students. The decision stems from the fact that there had been a spate of suicides by young students who were clearly unhappy about their performance in the said exams and were unable to bear the stress arising out of it.

Any such move that can unload the burden and ease the pressure a young student faces is a welcome step as school students, owing to their young age, are sometimes unable to cope with the intense pressure placed onto their shoulders.

An effective mechanism, therefore, was necessary to relieve the young students of the enormous stress. The so-called no detention policy under the Right to Education Act and the optional class X boards exam are part of an initiative undertaken to relieve the burden of stress from the students.

But however noble and well-meaning the decision to remove boards might be, it has emerged over time that removal of the exam has had detrimental effect on the young students, whose well-being is the very reason behind the move.

The class X boards had served the dual purpose of a qualifying examination to decide a suitable stream of education and also a good benchmark to assess the young student's level of learning and knowledge. And as such, a good performance in the board's exam has been a prime motivator for the young students which also helped them to focus on their studies.

Moreover, the exam also has a great role in ensuring disci-

pline amongst the students and is a standardised yardstick for evaluating students in schools across the country.

The discontinuation of the class X boards has made the movement to a higher class after class X a mere perfunctory process. Since 2011, when the exams were discontinued, it was found that a certain level of lackadaisical attitude had crept into the minds of the students. Such an attitude had a detrimental effect on the students when they were faced with exams a couple of years later at the class XII level.

## Competitive spirit

The discontinuation of class X boards may also be attributed to the declining competitive spirit amongst the students. This at a time when the young students need to be at their competitive best so that they can excel in their chosen field later in life.

The recent decision by to reintroduce class X board exams from the 2017-2018 sessions in all the CBSE affiliated schools is a step in the right direction. While there will certainly be many arguments and valid ones at that, favouring discontinuation of the examination and any other form of classification of student's up to a certain age, like in the case of developed countries such as Finland.

It must be remembered that the ground realities in the two countries are vastly different and so is the outcome expected out of their respective education systems. Our country's current educational system calls for a systematic assessment and examinations to gauge the educational standards.

So unless and until we develop a replacement system that caters to both sides of the argument, periodic and systematic assessments continues to serve our educational goals and requirements adequately.

The Centre has taken several initiatives in its effort to raise the academic standards. It had rightfully described 'education, skills and job creation' as one of the 'nine pillars' that will transform the country.

The decision to re-introduce board examinations at the class X level in CBSE schools will help reignite the spirit of competitiveness and usher in much needed rigor while helping the students mentally gear up for bigger challenges ahead like the class XII boards and beyond.

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