

# CBSE paper leak aftermath: Have stakeholders learnt any lessons?

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The Central Board of Secondary Education's decision to conduct re-examination for Class-XII economics paper after question papers were leaked only adds to the confusion and anger of students.

While there may be differing opinions and arguments that emerge out of this bedlam, one thing that is certain is that the students have been put through immense disquiet and that the credibility of the board has gone for a toss.

The need of the hour now is to take necessary steps to not only mitigate the negative impact the incident has on the students and to rebuild the board's reputation and sanctify and most importantly to set in place an effective system that will prevent any recurrence of paper leaks in the future.

One major concern arising out of the whole incident is that, a majority of the students who have invested their heart and soul into preparing for the examination are put in a disadvantageous position.

That some students have had access to the question paper



• Mitigate the risks FILE/NT

before the examination effectively put paid to the efforts and hard work of sincere students.

In a highly competitive examination environment, where a single mark difference can cost you dearly in ranking as well as college admissions, the students are already under a tremendous amount of pressure to perform well. Incidents such as this leakage only contribute to mounting stress on the young students.

Another sore and contentious point is that re-examination is announced only for a single subject while there are claims of leakage for several other subjects as well.

This only adds to the outrage and students are left feeling helpless and skeptical of the entire examination process including

the validity of the results which will have to be eventually announced.

Also apart from the boards, class XII students today are also concurrently preparing for various entrance examination for admission to engineering, medical and management institutions.

News of a re-examination will throw a spanner in the works. As it stands today, gaining admission into a college/subject/stream of choice is one herculean task.

A student's life especially in the board examination giving levels is already highly stressful and unwarranted incidences such as the present will have a deep and long lasting effect on the students.

A general distrust of systems and boards, uncertainty and questioning of their capacity (are they ranked lower because of the leak etc) and may be even depression on the unfair treatment meted out to them.

While doing away with the examination may not be possible at this stage due to the lack of alternative.

Safeguards and mechanisms can surely be built into the system that will effectively mitigate

the recurrence of such gaffes in the future.

Previously implemented systems such as setting multiple sets of question papers and the recently tested encrypted mail delivery system for question papers are worth a re-look. The shattered image and lost trust on the functioning and efficacy of the board can only be redeemed by demonstrating a positive enthusiasm in looking for and implementing a robust fail-safe system in conducting the examination.

While the initial shock and anger following the leak will likely dissipate over a period of time, the impact of the question paper leak will linger for a long time for those personally affected by it.

And with questions being raised over its credibility the CBSE must undertake a serious exercise to re-build its credibility and do whatever it takes to win the trust of the students and parents again. And in the whole process, the interest of students - who are the main stakeholders, must always be accorded priority above all.

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