

**By Sidharth Mishra**



The millennial Indians born in the third and the fifth year of this century have been the worst sufferers of the pandemic and its related misgovernance. This is true especially with the respect to the students who were to appear for the secondary school (class X) and senior secondary (class XII) examinations this year. They have been at the receiving end of competitive appeasement policy among the freebie distributing political parties, which has left them in a state of maze.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week announced the scrapping of the examination, and assured of delivering a formula at an early date for “assessing” students. So, the Prime Minister’s announcement can safely be said to be a ‘Half-Eureka moment’ of the government, which in the other words could be defined as a decision taken under pressure of political rivals and not arrived at following a judicious evaluation of the situation. The government probably went by the mood of social media, which was against the examination.

The Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) is one of the most reputed institutions of our country with its presence across 28 countries. The examinations could have been deferred or cancelled if the circumstances so entailed but to begin the discussion with the idea of cancellation was most unwarranted. Will such a decision not hamper reputation of the CBSE, a very difficult question to answer. Even if the assessment formula comes at an early date, will that formula would be valid for admission across the globe, or for that matter universally within the country.

External examinations conducted by independent boards gives equal opportunity to students even from the ordinary background to overwhelm their more prosperous competitors. The formula of evaluation evolved for the class X students clearly show that the examinees from the ‘cooler’ schools would be at an advantage.

## Scrapping Exams, Not the Wisest Move

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The assessment pattern for Class 10 students mentions that a student's final score will be standardised based on the school's performance. What would be the formulae to evaluate a school's performance? It's a student's performance which defines a school's standing and not the vice-versa. A plea on these lines challenging the formula has already been made before the Delhi High Court.

Given the incongruities which the formula announced for assessing class X examinees has thrown up, the formula for assessing class XII examinees could be as convoluted. This brings us to the point whether we did not examine a scenario for holding examination?

There are sufficient indicators that the political leaderships governing at the Centre and in the states did not examine the matter threadbare. There was a window for holding early examinations, which was not availed. There are indications that the CBSE had alternative plans in place for conducting the exams, which were not evaluated and the government decided to "go with the mood."

A government which takes 'tough' stand vis-à-vis issues like the farm laws and abrogation of article 370 among others could have done better by not going with the social media moderated dictum. Tough decisions may invite at times immediate ire but in the long run stands a government in good stead.

The annulment of examinations has left several lakh children looking at a vacuum as far as their future progress is concerned. Their plans for stepping onto the next stage of knowledge gathering have temporarily, hopefully, been put on the hold. Examinations are only the first step in the larger scheme of elevation from level one to level two. It's followed by tedious and at times circuitous process of admission at the graduate level in the professional and conventional courses.

Hopefully the government has a policy to address this ailment and not found wanting as in the case of a universal vaccination policy, among many other failures.

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