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# Improving System Of S.S.C. Examination

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A radical change has taken place in our examination system at the S.S.C. level. Objective achievement test has been introduced side by side with the traditional essay type starting from the S.S.C. examinations 1992. This test was introduced with a view to eliminating the scope of whimsical or irresponsible marking (at least in 50% marks), to minimise unfair means in the examination hall and, above all, to induce the students to read the whole course of study. The last two objectives did not materialise in that the objective questions were all set from the 'Question Bank' supplied by the Secondary Examinations Reform Task Force. It is open to question if these two objectives could have been realised even if the questions were not set from the above mentioned 'Question Bank'. My view is that unfair means in the examination hall is easier in the Objective System (Recognition type) than in the essay type, specially in the 'mofassal' centres.

In my opinion objective questions of multiple choice recognition type are harmful at the academic state. This system is suitable in admission test or recruiting test for some jobs, where copying is rather difficult, and where the questions are not to be studied later. The fundamental defeat of this system is that the question setter has to labour on making three wrong answers, and the student has to study them. In English grammar and structures, the wrong are often given in wrong English. Thus the student is forced to study wrong construction, which might have left some impression on his brain or memory.

Objective questions are a suitable instrument for measuring factual knowledge only. So this system may be pretty suitable for subjects like history, geography, economics,

civics, general science, religious studies etc. but not at all suitable for linguistic subjects like English and Bengali where spelling, expression power, command over the language count supreme.

The results of the S.S.C. Examinations 1992 should serve as an eye-opener to all. A student (so many like him) getting 03 marks in the subjective part scored 48 marks in the objective part. Some people might say that this unreasonable difference is not due to any intrinsic defeat of the objective test, but this happened because all the objective questions were set from the 'Question Bank'. I should say the anomalous results are also, to some extent, attributable to examination hall corruption. So I believe the current system has failed and will fail as a test for measuring students' merit and acquired knowledge. It has failed to win the confidence of the intellectuals.

The combination of objective and subjective type questions actually provides an example of arithmetical average. We know in very many cases arithmetical average lands us in a world of unreality. And in the recently published S.S.C. results the same has occurred. Some students of inferior calibre has been placed in a superior division. That means, a bad student may pass for a good student under the new system. Sudden deviation of major dimension from the traditional and time honoured system may lead us to somewhere. We do not know. Adventurism often proves dangerous.

The raising of division marks as some people suggest would not be an ideal solution. Any system providing enough scope for copying and even guessing cannot be an answer to the

present crisis. But our long practised essay type system also suffers from some defects. I therefore suggest the following measures which I believe would provide a nearly ideal solution:

(1) Objective questions should be of recall type. Example: Question—Who is the founder of the Mogul Empire in India? Answer—Jahiruddin Muhammed Babar. They should carry only 30% marks.

(2) Thirty objective questions should be set to carry thirty marks. Time allowed may be 30 or 45 minutes.

(3) Objective questions should be done in a separate question paper with proper space for answering the questions therein.

(4) Once written, the answers can not be changed. After the expiry of the allotted time, the question sheet/answer sheet should be taken away.

(5) Three sets of question paper may be preferred.

(6) Mathematics also may be brought under objective system to the extent of 30% marks. Problems given in the objective part need to be solved mentally. Descriptive solution would make the answer invalid. Practice of mental solution would be found immensely useful in higher studies. Problems given might be of this type:

(i) What amount is  $12\frac{1}{2}\%$  of Taka 1200? (ii) If  $a+b=5$ ,  $a-b=1$ , what will be the value of  $a^2+b^2$ ? (iii) If the sum of the two angles of a triangle is equal to the third angle, what type of triangle is it?

(7) Most questions of subjective part should be of short essay type.

(8) In English and Bengali second papers there should be any objective part. All the questions should be of essay type and of the same pattern as

they were in the previous years.

(9) English and Bengali first papers also should contain no objective parts. The questions should be of three types: some questions to bear 02 marks, some others 05 marks and the rest 10 marks for each question. English first paper, however, should reserve 30 marks for 30 structural questions.

(10) Minimum pass marks in each subject should be 36%.

(11) Minimum marks for first, second and third divisions should be 60%, 50%, and 40% respectively.

(12) Examinees passing in all subjects but getting less than 40% marks on the average should be placed in the pass division.

(13) Examinees passing in all subjects (6) and getting minimum 70% and 80% marks in the aggregate should be placed in the First Division (Higher) and First Division (Distinction), respectively. By this, the upper grade First Divisioners would feel encouraged.

(14) The present system of giving Letters of Distinction in the individual subject and 'Star' marks on the total may be done away with. For these things are not mentioned in the Board's certificate.

If the above-mentioned suggestions are accepted and acted on, I believe, the undernoted benefits will be obtained:

(i) Examination Hall corruption would be at a minimum.

(ii) Students would be compelled to read the whole syllabus.

(iii) Whimsical or irresponsible marking would be minimised.

(iv) Getting marks by guessing would not more be possible, and obtaining marks by cramming in the subjective part would be difficult or even impossible.

(v) Proper evaluation of merit and knowledge would be possible.