Percentile - To be or not to be?

With the State government cancelling the percentile system for tenth standard students, Tanvi Malhotra interacts with few of them and gets their reaction

The Maharashtra Government's percentile system which was introduced for one year has been scrapped. The percentile system was introduced keeping the SSC students in mind as they were completely ignored by the CBSE and ICSE students despite working hard to secure good marks.

But what has happened now is that the High Court has overruled the decision of having percentile. “After implementing the percentile system for one year, now the admissions for first year junior college will be same like before,” says Vinay Dubey, First year student at Nationals College, Khar. “When a new rule is implemented in education system, a thorough survey of its success needs to be done. In this case it was not done and so it failed,” he adds further.

Not just Vinay but many other SSC students feel the same. “Firstly, giving preference to SSC students above CBSE and ICSE is unfair. In spite of following it, many students failed to secure seats and ended up taking admissions in junior colleges,” says Niraj Oza, SNDT college student. The future of these students lies in the hands of our government and they are confused over their decision.

But when percentile system was introduced, many students and parents were happy. “Checking is always strict when it comes to SSC students. So 4% increase in existing score was a kind of relief for my child as she scored 71%,” says Aarti Mehta, whose daughter appeared in SSC in 2008. “A jump from 84 to 88% was very important to me as I could make to NM College in the third list,” says Kaajal Shah.

“Had percentile not been there, than me getting admission even in the fifth list was doubtful,” she adds further.

On one side if the percentile was allowing SSC students to be at par with students from other board, it compelled the colleges to reduce the cut-off's per list. “There was a time when in spite of scoring between 80-85% one had chances of securing a seat for science in Mithibai. But this time the scene had changed,” says Hiren Shah, who scored 83% after adding percentile.

Many students like Hiren failed to get in good colleges in spite of scoring high percentages. Who is to be held responsible for this? The college authorities or the government? “Neither of them can be blamed. The government tried best to make sure each student secures a seat and so did colleges,” says Ashok Shah, father of Kaajal Shah.

However, today with the abolition of percentile will admissions be back to the same? “You can't really say now. It depends on how the exams go and how many clear with flying marks,” says Rucha Verma, who will be appearing for SSC next year. In a way Rucha feels that eradication of percentile is good as “All will be equal status and plus you are getting admission on your merit.”

What will happen in future no one can say, but one thing is for sure that playing around with the future of kids is something which is not expected from our education system!

tanvi.r.malhotra@gmail.com