

State will restructure SSC board



Would students be free from stress and anxiety before exams with all the changes? *Laki Hazarika* finds out

Maharashtra State Education Board announced 90% junior colleges seats to be reserved for Secondary School Certificate (SSC) in the month of June. Students and government were adamant about this reservation that has been announced against the rule of percentile system introduced last year by Bombay High Court. This left students of other boards like Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in a state of panic.

Another change that has been announced is that students will now be 'Allowed to Keep Terms' (ATKT) at the SSC and HSC level. According to this concept, students of classes 10 and 12th will be allowed to reappear the papers that they have failed in, instead of losing an entire year. In other words

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they will be 'Allowed to Keep Terms' while they move to a higher class. The re-examinations will be held in the month of October and March.

“It is a good move for SSC students instead of losing an entire year because of one or two subjects. They can now proceed to next term. It is a good step taken by the State” says Anisha Patil, an 10th standard student of Adarsh English High School.

However not all the responses are favourable. Reshma Sinha, from A.H Wadia High School says “these rules are worthless. Students should be judged on their merit. A student who fails in two subjects and gets 60 percentile could stand an unfair chance to pip his counterpart who has passed in all subjects but has only managed 50 percentile. Is it fair?”

Urvash Mehta another irate student says “Reservation for OBC and SC has been there since 1950, and now this 90:10 quota reservation has been introduced for SSC students. Government should rather work for social causes like giving privilege handicapped and poor children and build a better syllabus for SSC students’.

Will it stop suicides? Students face immense stress and anxiety before such life altering examinations. At times this stress is compounded due to parents forcing them to study against their will, thus leading them to fail in a couple of subjects. Today psychiatrists and counsellors routinely treat youngsters for

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several problems like lack of concentration, depression, dislike for study etc . According to National Crime Records Bureau statistics in 2006 there were around 5,857 students who committed suicide because of exam related stress. In 2008 this number has increased to 6000.

The question arises, will the state's education formula help decrease students' stress or suicide cases? Prominent psychiatrist Dr Harish Shetty says “Government ATKT formula is good, it is changing the education system. The stress that students face will go down to some extent but the syllabus for students also needs to be revised. There are several types of stress that students already face, to add to this, discrimination among students should not build, thanks to implementation of this formula.”

Dr. Yusuf Matcheswalla a well known psychiatrist from Masina Hospital at Byculla said, “There will be two outcomes to be seen, one students from SSC board will be confident enough with their studies as they can go ahead for the next term. On the other side, students from other boards will work harder compared to SSC students. In terms of stress and anxiety will never stop haunting students, either from this board or that.”

Providing quotas for addressing every social imbalance is easier than providing

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-Dr Yusuf Matcheswalla, psychiatrist

affirmative action to raise the marginalized sections of our society. Besides, providing quotas helps the politicians to fill up their vote banks. Reservation is nothing not more than a calling disaster in the name of religious ethos.

The hidden reason behind this formula is that students could not get admitted to reputed colleges because CBSE/ICSE students score more than the former. But according to most students instead of promoting these formulas, State Board needs to revise their syllabus rather than putting these quotas as most prominent schools dump and take up liberal ICSE and CBSE board. Syllabus need to be made student friendly.

However, the Bombay High Court has declared the Maharashtra government's decision to reserve 90% of seats in Class XI admissions for SSC Board pass-outs as illegal by considering the petitions filed by parents of ICSE and CBSE students.

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