

Date: 24 Aug 2024

The annual accusation of board exam mark inflation

(The Hindu, 24-08-24)

What evidence suggests mark inflation in Indian school board examinations?

- High pass percentages (85% for class 10 and 82% for class 12 in 2023)
- High percentage of students scoring above 60% (61% in class 10 and 56% in class 12)
- Mark compression, where marks cluster at higher levels
- Wide variations in percentages of high-scoring students across different state boards

What are the consequences of mark inflation and compression?

- Undermines the credibility of the education system
- Hampers students' prospects in higher education and job markets
- Leads to increased demand for entrance examinations for higher education
- Creates disparities in perceived academic performance across states

Why is it challenging to prove mark inflation definitively?

- Lack of comparable standardized tests across all boards
- National-level entrance exams (NEET, JEE, CUET) are not suitable benchmarks
- National Achievement Survey (NAS) by NCERT has limitations in connecting scores to curriculum design and school efficiency
- Absence of transparent examination processes in many boards

What measures are suggested to address mark inflation and improve credibility?

- Standardize and automate question paper setting with clear guidelines
- Publish student guidebooks on learning outcomes and marking systems
- Codify and make transparent the entire examination process
- Implement partial automation in answer script evaluation
- Provide free access to answer scripts and affordable revaluation options
- Publish minutes of board of examiners' meetings
- Introduce two formats for mark sheets: actual marks and standardized scores
- Implement a transparent process for awarding marks for difficult/irrelevant/wrong questions
- Establish a good audit system to ensure accountability

Can you answer the following question?

Discuss the challenges posed by mark inflation and compression in Indian school board examinations and propose additional steps that could be taken to ensure fair assessment of students across different boards.

The road to 2047 for Indian agriculture

(The Hindu, 24-08-24)

What are the main challenges facing Indian agriculture as it aims for developed nation status by 2047?

- Increasing per capita Gross National Income (GNI) significantly
- Climate change and land degradation
- Market access issues
- Imbalance between agriculture's workforce (46%) and GDP contribution (18%)
- Meeting food demands of a growing population (projected 1.59 billion by 2040)
- Slow growth of agricultural GDP compared to overall GDP

What key initiatives has the government implemented to address these challenges?

- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for water-use efficiency
- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) for crop insurance
- Electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM) for better market access
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) for direct financial support
- Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme for optimizing soil nutrient use
- Agriculture Infrastructure Fund for post-harvest management infrastructure
- SVAMITVA initiative for transparent property ownership in rural areas

What are the projected demands and growth targets for Indian agriculture by 2047?

- Total demand for food grains: 402-437 million tonnes by 2047-48
- Production expected to exceed demand by 10%-13% under Business-As-Usual scenario
- Anticipated food demand growth of approximately 2.85% annually
- Varying growth in demand across commodities (e.g., 5.42% for meat, 0.34% for rice)

What strategies are being proposed to achieve sustainable agricultural growth?

- Adopting precision farming, genetically modified crops, and advanced irrigation techniques
- Rationalizing food and fertilizer subsidies
- Redirecting savings towards agricultural research, development, and innovation
- Investing in agricultural infrastructure and policy support
- Launching the Agriculture Accelerator Fund to foster innovation
- Increasing targeted agricultural credit (₹20 lakh crore allocated in Budget 2024-25)
- Promoting sustainable practices and leveraging technological innovations

Can you answer the following question?

Evaluate the current state of Indian agriculture and the government's initiatives to address its challenges. Suggest additional measures that could be implemented to ensure food security and improve farmer incomes in the face of climate change and population growth.