

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF QUESTION PAPERS IN DIFFERENT
SCHOOL SUBJECTS AT CLASS IX LEVEL**

Dr. Rajvinder Kaur*

Abstract :

Examinations play an important role in the Indian system of education. They are so important that they direct the entire teaching-learning process in schools. Examination use mainly one tool to evaluate the achievement of students and that is the 'question paper'. So if public examinations have to stay till a viable mechanism of evaluation comes into effect, question papers used by the Central Board of Secondary Education in their public examinations need to be continuously examined and improved, especially for the purpose of improving the quality of education at the school stage. The objective of the study is to find out whether the questions papers are valid and reliable and what are their strengths and weaknesses.

* Assistant professor, University College of Education, KUK

Introduction :

Performance's assessment is an essential part of the teaching learning process. The National policy on Education – 1986 and its programme of Action – 1992 recommended an improvement in the programme of assessment to make it powerful tool to check quality of the teaching-learning process in schools. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) has also emphasised on the quality of questions used for evaluation of performance. It highlights that as examinations and tests assess student's ability to recall and remember bookish knowledge. All tries to reconstruct the curriculum towards learning will be wasted. First, tests should be designed to find out what children's have learnt in subjects and check their ability of using that knowledge in problems of real life. In short, application of that knowledge in their real life problems or situations. Further, test must be able to find if the learner has learnt where to find information how to use that new information and to analyse and evaluate the same. The types of questions that are set for evaluation should be beyond what is printed in the book. Higher order thinking and challenging questions could be used in question paper.

It is known that examinations are important in our system of education. They influence the teaching-learning process in schools.

Teachers teach only what is being tested and similarly, students adjust their studies according to the examination. In fact, class IX examination plays a significant role in teaching-learning process in schools.

If the effects of these examination is so much, why not exploit it for the betterment of education? If examination are improved, the teaching-learning methodology in schools will improve automatically.

Class IX examinations, are basically written examination in India and they use only one instrument to evaluate student's performance and that is question paper. If the questions paper are improved, the education will. So, the question papers used by Educational institutes in their public examinations need to be continuously examined and improved. The analysis of the existing question papers is the small step towards improving the quality of testing.

Keeping in mind the importance of analysis of question papers and the marking scheme. I took a small research project to analysis class IX question paper of all subjects of C.B.S.E board of university senior secondary model school.

Objectives :

- (i) Are the question papers in every subject valid in terms of :
 - (a) coverage of course content.
 - (b) coverage of instructional objectives.

- (ii) Do the question papers have appropriate difficulty level to complete the needs of different kind of students.
- (iii) Whether the questions papers have appropriate questions in terms of form, language and scope. So, study tried to find out whether questions papers fulfill the criterion of balanced papers and what are their weaknesses and strengths.

Methodology :

For this study, question papers of English, Hindi, Social Science, Science and Mathematics of class IX of the session 2016-2017 along with their syllabi and textbooks were procured from C.B.S.E board. This has been taken from university senior secondary model school, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

Tools :

The basis of analysis was actual question papers of school. They were used to find out :

- i) Mental processes involved.
- ii) Content area tested.
- iii) Type of questions.
- iv) Marks allotted.
- v) Difficulty level estimated.
- vi) Time allotted.

On the basis of above information we made many tables giving weightage to contents, instructional objectives, type of questions and level of difficulty estimated. At last general suggestions are also included in it.

Table – 1**Weightage given to content or sections as per analysis**

Subjects	Content or sections	Section or content wise marks
Hindi	Prose	40
	Poetry	20
	Writing skill and Grammar	20
	Value based questions	10
		90 total
English	Section – A	(20)
	Reading	10
	Value and questions	10
	Section – B	(25)
	Grammar	10
	Writing	15
	Section – C	(25)
	Prose	16
	Poetry	9
	70 total	
Maths	Quadrilaterals	10
	Area of parallelogram and triangle	7
	Circle	9
	Construction	12
	Surface area and volumes	12
Maths	Statistics	16
	Probability	4
	Value and questions	10
		90 Total
Science	Atom and Molecules	7
	Structure of atom	9
	Diversity	9
	Gravitation	11
	Work and Energy	10
	Sound	8
	Why do we fall ill	11
	Practical based questions	15
	Value based questions	10
	90 Total	
Social Science	History	18
	Civics	24
	Environmental Studies (Geography)	29
	Economics	9
	Value and questions	10
		90 total

It was observed from table -1 that question papers of all subjects followed the weightage given to contents/ units in the syllabus.

Table – 2

Weightage given to Instructional objectives as per analysis

Subjects	Instructional Objectives				Total
	Knowledge	Understanding	Application	Skill	
Hindi					
Actual weightage after analysis	30	30	10	20	90
English					
Actual weightage after analysis	25	20	15	10	70
Maths					
Actual weightage after analysis	29	25	21	15	90
Science					
Actual weightage after analysis	36	30	20	4	90
Social Science					
Actual weightage after analysis	28	30	24	11	90

From table 2nd, we observed that weightage given to instructional objectives in English, Mathematics & Science, Hindi and social science question papers are balanced. In every question paper a little weightage was given to value based questions i.e. expression (Application).

Board of school education used many types of questions in their questions papers. These were essay type questions, short answer type questions, very short answer type questions and objective type questions. The following table - 3 show the weightage of type of questions.

Table – 3
Weightage given to forms of questions

Subjects	Form of questions			
	Long answer or essay type questions	short answer questions	very short answer questions	objective type questions
Hindi				
Marks allotted as per analysis	35	12	8	35
English				
Marks allotted as per analysis	25	17	11	17
Maths				
Marks allotted as per analysis	40	36	4	-
Science				
Marks allotted as per analysis	30	36	12	12
Social Science				
Marks allotted as per analysis	40	39	8	3

TABLE- 4**Difficulty Level of Questions**

Subjects	Difficult (A)	Average (B)	Easy (C)
Hindi			
Marks allotted as per analysis	24	46	30
English			
Marks allotted as per analysis	10	45	15
Mathematics			
Marks allotted as per analysis	21	39	20
Science			
Marks allotted as per analysis	24	41	25
Social Science			
Marks allotted as per analysis	30	40	20

From table 3, we observed that only 8 marks are allotted to VSA in Hindi and No marks is given to objective type questions in Mathematics and in social science objective and short answer type questions are given less weightage in comparison to long and short answer type questions.

And from table 4. It is clear that difficulty level in question papers of social science is more. In remaining papers difficulty level, average level and easy level are balanced.

Major Findings :

Questions papers of C.B.S.E board of university senior secondary model school were analysed in terms of content weightage, difficulty levels, weightage of instructional objectives and weightage provided to type of questions. The major findings are given as according to subject.

Hindi :

- The Hindi questions paper covered prose, poetry grammar and writing skill.
- The question paper also covered the value based questions.
- Question paper also contains the questions which were related to author's life and their works.
- Marks assigned to prose can be decreased and marks assigned to grammar and essay writing skills can be increased.
- Knowledge portion can be increased also.

English :

- The question paper covered almost areas i.e. reading writing, grammar, prose, poetry.
- Value based questions are there.
- A portion of translation can be added.
- In text section, It was observed that paper was inclined towards memorization.

- The reading comprehension questions do not check any comprehension skill.
- Paper requires little change to develop the communication skills of students.

Maths :

- The question paper of Maths covered the area like quadrilateral, area of parallelogram and triangle, construction, menstruation, geometry, statistics and probability.
- Language of question paper was appropriate.
- Value based questions were added.

Science :

- The question paper covered the content of physics, chemistry and biology.
- Value based questions and Practical portion was also included.
- In question paper no question was about to draw neat and clean diagram.
- Most of questions were taken from text book exercise.

Social Science :

- The questions paper in social science covered the contents of History, civics, environmental studies, economics and value based.
- In it more emphase was on long and short answer type questions.

- All questions are traditional and there is no or little chance of testing higher order thinking of children.
- Most of the questions were taken from text book exercise.

General suggestions :

While analysing the question papers of different subjects for class IX, many interesting aspects were observed. As some of the questions papers in different subjects were dissimilar in approaches, so it was difficult to compare them. Question paper were different in types of options too. The analysis showed that there was a number of scope for improving the question papers. Following are the some suggestions regarding this :

- The quality of question depends on the quality of questions. In all the questions papers, almost questions were knowledge based. So, efforts for questions related to testing mental skills should be included. Questions such as problem solving, critical thinking, imaginative thinking, interpretative, creative thinking reasoning etc should be included more in number.
- Internal options should be comparable in all aspects.
- In a question paper, all types of question in MCQs, VSA, SA and LA should be included. Their number should be written in design. It will help a paper setter to cover the entire course content for reliable testing.

- The language of questions should not be defective. It should be appropriate and according to age of child. It should clearly specify the task. The use of appropriate directional words is necessary.
- General instructions are also important and are the first thing an examiner reads. So, detailed general instructions should be provided in question papers.
- There is no hard and fast rule for listing or grouping of questions. The criteria to be followed while listing are from easy to difficult questions.
- The board should carry out a post-examination analysis of the questions papers for further improvement by showing it to subject experts, paper-setter and evaluators.
- Finally, evaluation is a technical area. Paper setters and evaluators should be regularly trained in this task. They should be trained according to recent trends and developments.

These are some of the suggestions, that emerged out after the analysis. Since, at present, examination is the only and important way to certify and classify a large number of students, improvement at every stage in the examination process is important. Improvement in question papers itself enhances the credibility and reliability of the boards and solves many problems.

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