

MINDSET OF PUPIL TEACHERS TOWARDS GRADING SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation is an integral part of educational system. It helps in realizing the aims of education. Reforms in evaluation system were realized since many years and many committees have recommended for the same. As a result, grading system was introduced at the board exams from the year 2011. Any change or reform in educational sector demands the acceptance of teachers, the main stakeholders of the educational system. The attitude of teachers towards that particular change plays a very significant role in its implementation and success. There are four major roles of the grading process evaluation, communication, motivation and organization. The teachers must have a clear understanding of the roles of grading system and have positive attitude towards its implementation. Therefore, the present study was carried out to find out the mindset of pupil teachers of Kurukshetra University and HNB Garhwal University towards the grading system.

KEYWORDS: Assessment, Attitude, Examination Reform, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

The educational system plays the most crucial role in an individual's development as well as towards the social recreation. Education is universally accepted as a powerful instrument for social control and social change. The success of these two vital functions is determined by a number of factors such as curriculum, text book, material aids, teachers, evaluation etc. The strength and success of an educational system depends on the examination system. Examination, a pivotal role player in the system of assessment is an indispensable part of the educational process as some form of assessment is quite necessary to determine the effectiveness of the dissemination of knowledge by teachers and its assimilation by the students (Kumar, 2003).

Evaluation is the systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualization, design, implementation and utility of programmes (Rossi, 1993). The evaluation process helps in acquainting the learners as well as teachers with the outcomes of their efforts and this in turn may prove a good incentive for keeping them on the teaching-learning track, if the evaluation process is eliminated from educational system then perhaps the aim of education may get lost. This assessment may lead to refinement of human society and may motivate, train and develop human potentiality.

The review of the examination system by National policy on Education (1986), Plan of Action (1992), National Curriculum Framework (2005) and National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Educators (2009) emphasized on introduction of internal assessment, grading in place of marking and for continuous and comprehensive evaluation process. The need for meaningfully assessing children's growth in schools features in the recently enacted Right to Education Act (RTE) (Ministry of Human Resource Development or MHRD 2009) as well. It states that a "comprehensive and continuous evaluation of the child's understanding to knowledge and his or her ability to apply the same" is essential. The challenge for effective assessment is to manage the grading process.

Grading is the process by which a teacher assesses students' learning through classroom tests and assignments, it is the context in which good teachers establish that process and the dialogue that surrounds grades and defines their meaning to various addressees. Grading serves many roles. It evaluates the quality of a student's work and involves communication with the students and others. It also motivates the students, how to study, what they focus on and their involvement in the course. It is organized to mark transitions, bring closure and focus effort for both students and teachers (Bobby & Nelson, 2000). This is the reason, grading is so important for the assessment process, principally in the minds of teachers. It is not the actual grade that is useful for assessment but the grading processes play the significant role in assessment. Grading is a socially constructed and context-dependent process and no grade or grading system is immutably right by some eternal standard (Fishbein, 1967). It should be internalized by the teachers and used as a tool for learning. Students attach a meaning to grades that affects learning. Therefore, teachers must be clear with the students about these meanings. Communication and collaboration with students is essential therefore, the teachers should emphasize on Students' involvement. They should explain the criteria and standards for students' work and seek their active engagement in the learning process (Ghosh, 2006). The Classroom Assessment Research model proposed by Cross (1990) and others is any systematic inquiry designed and conducted for the purpose of increasing insight and understanding of the relationships between teaching and learning. This model can help the teacher use the grading process as a systematic collection, analysis and use of data about student learning to assess and improve the course.

In essence, grading is an exercise in professional judgment on the part of teachers. It involves the collection and evaluation of the evidence on students' achievement or performance over a specified period of time. Through this process, various types of descriptive information and measures of students' performance are converted into grade or marks.

If faculty construct grading systems that are conducive to learning they can create and generate information that can be useful for assessment of learning outcomes. The challenge then is to create and select assignments and exams that will both teach and test the learning the teacher cares about (Government of India, 2000). This motivates students to learn what they need to know to do well. Once the teacher establishes the learning outcomes about which she most cares, then the challenge is to establish the criteria and standards for grading, calculate course grades, communicate with students about their grades and the grading process, make grading time-efficient, use the grading process to improve teaching and ultimately provide a means for valuable assessment of student learning outcomes for the class, department, institution and external audiences (Government of India, 2000).

The Central Board of Secondary Education has introduced the scheme of continuous and comprehensive evaluation in its schools in a phased manner. In the year 2000, the Board implemented the concept of an independent certificate of school-based evaluation to be awarded by the school to all students who passed class X CBSE examination. This certificate was awarded in addition to the Board's regular certificate and marks statement related to external examination. It carried a footnote that a certificate of Continuous and Comprehensive Education (CCE) is also being issued by the school and should also be studied for judging the total personality of the student. Besides scholastic areas, co-scholastic areas were included in CCE for assessment over a continuous period of two years i.e. classes IX and X. A recommended format with detailed guidelines was prepared and disseminated to schools for adoption by the CBSE. In 2004, CCE was implemented in primary classes at I-V (Vide Circulars No. 5/18/25/04). Besides doing away with the concept of pass/ fail system up to class V, the assessment focused on the positive aspects of the child's development during this stage. Accordingly Achievement Records for the primary classes (for classes I & II and classes III to V) were also

developed and recommended to schools with the objective of facilitating holistic learning. As a follow up, the board decided to extend CCE to classes VI to VIII in 2006 (Circular No. 2/06)

The Certificate of School Based Assessment on Continuous Comprehensive Assessment will be available from the CBSE and the end of Class X. This will be filled up in the school and sent to the concerned RO in CBSE for countersignature. The government of India on Monday (31 Aug. 2009) announced to introduce grading system in all central board of secondary education (CBSE) schools and make class 10th Board exams optional from the academic year (2010-11). With board exams being made optional from the academic year 2010-11, a new system of evaluation continuous & comprehensive evaluation (CSE) based on grade has been approved. It comprises formative and summative assessment of the student to be done over two terms first & second during the year long academic calendar.

Now, with effect from October 2009, CCE has been implemented in its strengthened form in class IX in all CBSE affiliated schools. In the session 2010-11, this has been implemented in both classes IX and X. Students of class 9th & 10th are being evaluated on a 9-point grading system. Each grade, given on the basis of both formative & summative assessments, corresponds to a range of marks as indicated below:

A1	95 & Above
A2	90 to 94
A3	85 to 89
B1	80 to 84
B2	70 to 79
C1	60 to 69
C2	50 to 59
C3	33 to 49
D	Less than 33.

Motivation is the key to learning and grades have the ability to provide this motivation to an extent. The teaching profession requires certain dominant behaviours which show teacher's intellect, desire to excel, extended professionalism and teaching as a life concern. Informal feedback and discussion about grades is good for students. Attitude is someone's opinion or feeling about something, especially as shown by their behaviour (MacMillon, 2002). This attitude is the sum total of man's inclination and feelings, prejudice or biases, preconceived notion, ideas, fears, threats and conviction about a particular topic. It is the mindset of the person towards any event or system. An attitude may be defined as a predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given attitude or object (Oskamp and Schultz, 2005). Attitude is a mental disposition in relation to a way of thinking or being (Lopper, 2006). There are some components of attitudes which are evaluative statements, favourable or unfavourable related to person, objects or events.

Attitudes towards grades, more than the grades themselves, negatively affect student's motivation to learn (NCF, 2005). As far as the importance of attitude is concerned, it is well said, "One's attitude determines one's destiny" and so have the Psychologists and Educationists through their experiences have realized the importance of attitude of those who are the vital parts of the education system i.e. teachers, students, administrators etc. In fact, researches have shown that the success and the failure of any system, business, firm or institution depends upon the attitudes of those who were involved in the system and teachers are the major part of the whole educational endeavour. So, an attempt was made to study the mindset of pupil teachers towards the grading system at school level. The objectives of the study were to compare the attitudes of male and female pupil teachers, having arts and science stream and pupil teachers studying at Kurukshetra and

HNB Garhwal University. 200 pupil teachers were taken as a sample, 100 from KUK and 100 from HNBGU. But due to some reasons, data from 176 pupil teachers were taken into consideration.

For the study, a self made questionnaire entitled Grading System Attitude Scale was used. The questionnaire was based on five points likert scale and consisted of 35 statements related to grading system. These were positive and negative statements. The score ranged from 35 to 175. The researcher also conducted four focus group discussions, two in each state to know the views of pupil teachers.

Table 1: Attitude of Male and Female Pupil Teachers

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	SE	T-Value
Male	66	96.32	24.10	3.89	2.833
Female	110	108.17	19.34		

Table 1 presents the attitude of male and female pupil teachers. The study was conducted on 176 pupil teachers out of which 66 were male and 110 were female. The mean and SD for male and female pupil teachers were found to be 96.32, 108.17 and 24.10, 19.43 respectively. The t-value was obtained 2.833 which are found significant at 0.1 levels. The result shows that male and female pupil teachers differ in their attitude towards grading system and female pupil teachers have more positive attitude (figure 1) than male pupil teachers towards the grading system in high school.

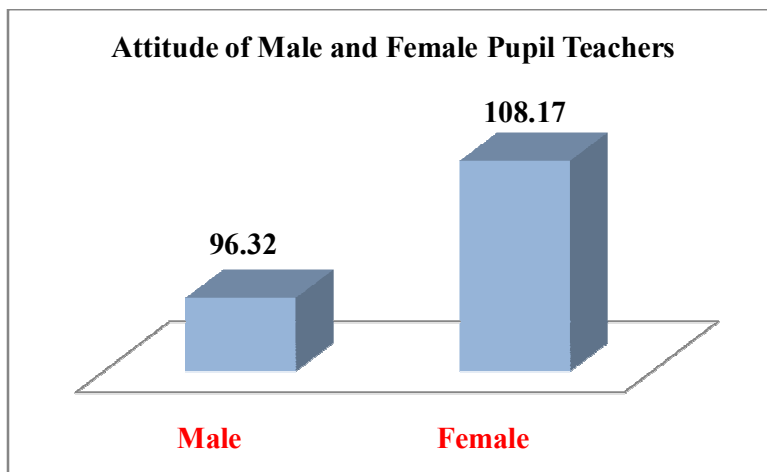


Figure 1

Table 2: Attitude of Pupil Teachers Having Science and Arts Stream

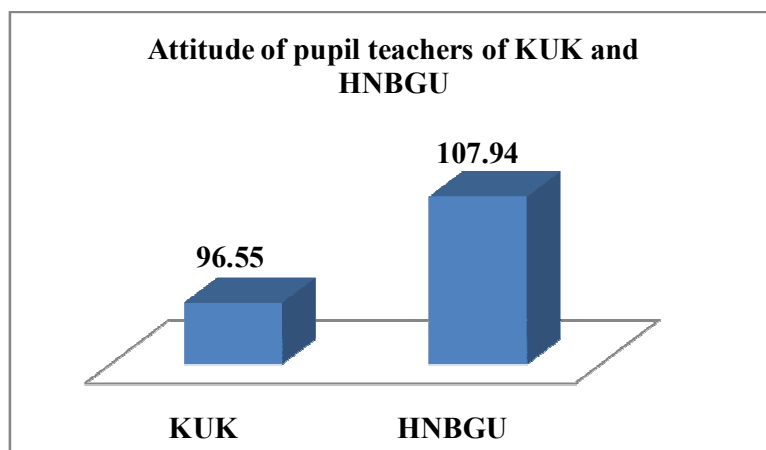
Variable	Number	Mean	S.D.	SED	T-Value
Science Stream	98	104.41	16.58	3.63	1.68
Arts Stream	78	100.08	19.24		

Table 2 depicts the attitude of pupil teachers having arts and science streams. Out of total 176 pupil teachers studied, 98 were from science stream and 78 were from arts stream. The mean of science and arts pupil teachers were found to be 104.41 and 100.08 where as SD was calculated as 16.58 and 19.24 in the same order. The t-value was obtained as 1.68. It is interpreted that there is no significant difference between the attitude of pupil teachers having science and arts streams.

Table 3: Attitude of Pupil Teachers of KUK and HNBGU

Variable	Number	Mean	S.D.	SED	T-Value
KUK	85	96.55	17.28	3.124	2.76
HNBGU	91	107.94	20.82		

Table 3 presents the attitude of pupil teachers studying in KUK and HNBGU. Total of 176 pupil teachers, 85 were from KUK and 91 from HNBGU. The mean and SD for KUK and HNBGU pupil teachers were found to be 96.55, 107.94 and 17.28, 20.82 respectively. The t-value was obtained 2.76 which is found significant at 0.1 level. The result depicts that the attitude of pupil teachers of KUK and HNBGU differ towards the grading system. The pupil teachers of HNBGU have more positive attitude (figure 2) than that of KUK towards the grading system in high school.

**Figure 2**

The positive mindset of teachers is fundamental to effective teaching and meaningful learning. Patel (1978) and Roshach (1980) reported that male students as well as teachers had a favourable attitude towards continuous internal assessment compared to their female counterparts. Whereas, in the present study, it is found that female pupil teachers have more positive attitude towards grading system than the male pupil teachers. The result is in accordance with Pillai (1979). It is also found that there is no significant difference between the attitudes of pupil teachers from science and arts streams however, the pupil teachers of HNBGU have more positive attitude towards grading system than that of KUK.

During the focus group discussion, it was observed that pupil teachers were very curious to know and discuss about the evaluation system especially about the continuous and comprehensive evaluation process. They accepted that most of them are not aware about this grading system and they don't know how these grades are decided. They wanted to know, how grading is better than marks. Few of them opined that giving marks is easier and better for bright students. In a traditional orientated Indian society there is always a tendency on the part of both teachers and students to be attached psychologically to the old traditional examination system. It is natural that any attempt at reforms for the purpose of changing the status-quo means resistance from the established order. Change in mindset of teachers and pupil teachers are required for an effective implementation of grading system in schools. However, all the pupil teachers emphasized on the necessity of providing training in the area they reflected that it is very important for teachers to know about the existing evaluation system and develop necessary skills related to the system during the training programme. They further pointed out that in addition to teachers, parents should be informed about CCE and the grading system for better results.

CONCLUSIONS

The essence of educational system depends upon its evaluation system. Success of any program or policy/procedure lies upon acceptance of the same by its stakeholders. For effective implementation of grading system, it is essential that the teachers should whole heartedly agree to the evaluation procedure and develop the necessary skills. Their attitude towards the new course of action should be positive so that they can acknowledge the system. Their mindset should be changed for the activities needed for grading system. From the present study, it can be concluded that the attitude of pupil teachers towards grading system has found to be favourable. The majority of the students have moderate positive attitude. They were of opinion that this system helps, both teachers and students in enhancing the achievement of the students. They responded that knowledge of grade and grading process is very important for teachers and they should be trained for this during the training period so that they can have 100% positive attitude towards the process of grading. Majority of them reported that practical training should be imparted to enhance the competencies of pupil teachers for assessing the learning.

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