

Curing Defects in the SSC Examination

by Ziaul Hossain Khan Majlis

THE SSC examination is considered the most important public examination in Bangladesh. If examinations are tools, designed for various purposes and to perform various operations, none of them can be perfect but some can be more precise than others, and even a good instrument can be mishandled. Yes, the tools used in the SSC examinations are being mishandled as our proclivity is to imitate others without studying the feasibility.

The achievement of the students can be measured chiefly in three ways. They are: (1) subjective judgement, (2) objective evidence, and (3) a combination of subjective judgement and objective evidence. Essay-type questions are the tools for subjective judgement whereas objective-type questions are the instruments for objective evidence. Now the question is, why they are used.

Essay-type Questions

Essay-type questions have got some merits as well as demerits. The merits are: (1) there remains the scope for creativity, (2) it increases language ability, (3) it enhances the ability to organize something and (4) it gives the opportunity to express something as a whole (emphasis on the whole). They have also got some demerits which are: (1) subjectivity, (2) low content validity, (3) it takes a long time to scrutinize a script, (4) the cost of examination is very high, and (5) they are not reliable. A test is reliable if it measures consistently over a long period of time and a test is valid if it measures what it intends to measure. The most coveted test is one that is valid as well as reliable. The achievement of the students made by the essay-type questions is, in most cases, a chance business. The students prepare some of the important questions' answers and appear

at the examinations. In this way the average as well as the below average students pass in the examinations without going into the depth of the subject matter. Their orientation on the subject matter is usually sketchy like that of a tangent in geometry. What is expected of a student on passing the SSC examination? Apart from the certificate, is there any true difference between a student of Class X and a student who has passed the SSC examination? That is why, it is revealed that due to mishandling, the device has almost become a deceptive one.

Objective-type Questions

The demerits of the essay-type questions are the merits of the objective-type questions and vice versa. The objective-type questions include: (1)

randomly from the whole syllabus which represents an instrument with high content as well as predictive validity. As a renovation in our education system, we have introduced a combination of both the tools. Aren't the objective-type instrument mishandled? So, by mishandling the instruments we have introduced a defective system of examination in the name of renovation. It seems to be for the sake of 'change'. Since curriculum is a changing phenomenon, the educationists might have been tempted to make a change in order to get rid of monotony! But we should keep in mind that change maybe good or bad. It is only the wise men who study the feasibility of bringing about a change. So, it is apparent the renovation will jeopardise our education system. In order to

and they will give their judgement on a different sheet, that is, they will not write anything on the script. The two scores can be compared statistically and if they differ significantly, a third examiner can be employed for the final judgement. In this way, the carelessness of a scrutinizer can be traced out and there must have the provision of punishment for this sort of failure or negligence. (It can be argued that the fate of a student can by no means depend on a careless or an incompetent scrutinizer).

4. In order to make objective-type questions reliable and valid, all the four categories like multiple-choice, matching, true-

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multiple-choice questions, (2) matching, (3) true-false, and (4) filling the gap. In order to make the instrument reliable and valid, all the four categories need to be used to the extent it is required. In Bangladesh only the multiple-choice questions represent the objective-type tests. Moreover, the students know the items with the help of the so-called question bank. What sort of reliability and validity do these question have? Is it an attempt to make the education easier?

A Combination of both the Tools

Since each tool has got some merits as well as demerits, a combination of both the instruments is in vogue in the developed world. The creative potentiality is nourished along with the content validity. The objective-type items give the opportunity to ask questions

ward off this negative trend, the following recommendations can be considered.

1. In order to make the essay-type questions unbiased, a point-scale can be used. For example, a question assigning 10 numerical value can have the following point-scale: Scope of content → 2, organizing the content → 3, grammatical aspect → 3, and relevance to the question asked → 2.
2. A script must be scrutinized question-wise, that is, each time a scrutinizer will be scrutinizing a particular-questions of all the scripts. In this way, variations in judging scripts due to various factors like mood, situation of the environment etc, can be reduced to a large extent.
3. A script must be scrutinized by two scrutinizers

false, and filling the gap should be used to the extent it is required.

5. The multiple-choice question are of six categories. They are: (1) knowledge, (2) comprehension, (3) application, (4) analysis, (5) synthesis, and (6) evaluation. The questions representing analysis, synthesis and evaluation are categorized as higher than application through which the intellectual potentiality of a student is measured. A public examination must have to be standardized and in doing so there must be a good combination of all the six categories of the multiple-choice questions.
6. The stem of the multiple-choice item must be made clear, specific and short in order to avoid unnecessary confusion.

7. There must have checks and balances against answering multiple-choice questions through guessing. And in so doing a series of questions can be set. In order to justify full marks, a student must have to answer all the questions in a series correctly. In this way, it can be traced out whether or not a student comprehend the first (major) question in the series.
8. In order to make the multiple-choice item reliable and valid, all the choices need to be correct. So, a student is required to trace out the best possible choice. Since it is not possible to ask questions of higher than application with the three other types of objective items, the multiple-choice item must outnumber the other items.
9. True-false questions should cover the minimum portion of the objective-type items since it is the least reliable of all the objective items.
10. The filling in the gap item can be made reliable with some false or unnecessary gaps. It is more reliable than the true-false type items.
11. Matching item can be made reliable with the choices outnumbering the questions, that is, there must be more than one choice for each question. It is more reliable than the true-false and filling the blank items.
12. The following combination can be made for a question paper: essay-type — 35 per cent, short and guided essay — 15 per cent, multiple-choice — 25 per cent, matching — 10 per cent, filling the blank — 8 per cent and true-false — 7 per cent.