**Most students pass, few actually learn**

Policymakers may think up a hundred reasons for creating and running the education System, but for the common man it all boils down to one question: Pappu paas hua kya? This has arisen because, shorn of its frills, the present education system is primarily a mechanism by which each individual is given a flag or a marker by which he or she tells society — "I have passed the 10th or 12th or BA, so I can do this or that job."

Most people feel that it is unfair to judge 12 years of schooling on the basis of a three-hour examination. But that is the way it works, currently. So, how do Indian students perform in examinations at various levels?

At the primary stage, most students sail through exams — the pass-out percentage is over 95% for class 4 and 5 for the whole country. At the middle school stage, the overall pass percentage drops slightly to 88%.

Students face their first public exam, conducted by 35 state boards, in class 10. The pass-out percentage plunges to 64%. Pass percentage is as low as 42% in MP and 50% in Rajasthan, while it is 86% in Delhi and 77% in Tamil Nadu.

Class 12 is the most important exam, as the student's future — whether academic or occupational — is largely determined at this stage. Overall, 69% students clear this exam. Again, some boards like Delhi, Jharkhand and UP show very good results. In general, the performance of students in this exam is much better as a lot is riding on it.

There are no other indicators by which the outcome of school or college education can be measured in any student.

Pratham, a non-governmental organization, carries out a survey of learning levels among primary students. In its 2007 report, it was found that among children in class 3-5, only 66% could actually read in their own mother tongue, about 60% had learned basic mathematical skills like subtraction and a mere 17% could read class 1 level English.

*(Courtesy: Special Reports, Times of India)*