

## The Causes of Malpractices in Examinations at School and Board Examinations Stage as Perceived by Senior Secondary School Teachers

<sup>1</sup> Satish Chand Bhadwal, <sup>2</sup> Surender Kumar,

<sup>1</sup> Professor (Rtd.), House No. 53, Nagarkot Adarsh Colony, Village and Post Office: Thakurdwara, Tehsil: Palampur, District: Kangra, Himachal Pradesh -- 176102

<sup>2</sup> Research Scholar, Rameshwari Teacher Training Institute, Sarabai, Bhuntar, Kullu, Himachal Pradesh—175125  
Email - srndrkumar107@gmail.com

**Abstract:** *The study is the result of an attempt to study the causes of malpractices in examinations at school stage as perceived by senior secondary school students, teachers and community members. However, the present paper includes the perception of school teachers only. The problem of malpractices in examinations is a very serious issue and is prevalent at all the stages of education and can be witnessed everywhere – in rural and urban areas, in towns and metropolitan cities, in government and private schools, in poor and affluent students and among less and more intelligent students. Still the issue has not attracted many researchers in India. In the present case, the causes of malpractices have been studied under four categories viz., student related causes, teacher related causes, examination/education system related causes and miscellaneous causes. The results of the study may help the stakeholders to have a deep insight into the wide spread and serious problem and devise strategies to deal with the same.*

**Key Words:** *Malpractices in Examinations, school, defective examination system, Himachal Pradesh.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Examination malpractice has been defined as an act of wrong doing carried out by a candidate or groups of candidates or any other person with the intention to cheat and gain unfair advantage in an examination. It may involve students, teachers (lecturers), parents, school heads, invigilators, supervisors, attendants and any other examination officer. The instances of examination malpractices vary and they can be in the form of impersonation, leakage of questions, tampering with results, computer frauds of diverse forms, fraudulent practices by invigilators, officials and security personnel charged with supervising examinations, body writing or tattoos in which students especially female ones keep some materials in hidden parts of their bodies, submission of new answer scripts and change of examination score or grade etc.

The problem of cheating in examinations is highlighted in newspapers also especially during examination days. For example The Tribune (2015a) writes:

Cheating in the ongoing State Board matriculation exams in Bihar has literally scaled new heights. As shocking visuals of large-scale copying by students emerged where parents and helpers were seen scaling three to four-storey exam centres to pass on chits to their wards, 515 students have been caught and expelled in two days. The secretary of Bihar School Education Board, Mr. Srinivas Tiwari told that a total of 515 students have been expelled after being caught using unfair means in the matriculation exams in the past two days and 272 students were rusticated for cheating on the opening day of the exams. The board's special examination cell also said that seven parents have been arrested for supplying chits to their wards. The Education Minister of Bihar Mr. P.K. Shahi admitted that cheating in exams was prevalent particularly in the rural areas. It is not the responsibility of the state alone to hold cheating free examination. This cannot be achieved without the help from society particularly from the parents of the examinees. He also said that it is not only happening in Bihar, "Any examination of this scale in any part of the country has similar complaints".

Similarly, The Tribune (2015b) notes that the Haryana School Education Board (HSEB) has cancelled the English core elective exam for class 12<sup>th</sup> since the question paper was leaked. More than 2.9 Lac students appeared in the exam in the state.

There are various causes for using malpractices in examinations. For example, a comprehensive submission by Anyiin (1998) identified the fundamental causes of examination malpractice to include:

- Lack of necessary facilities for teaching/learning.
- Non-coverage of prescribed syllabuses due to their extensiveness and the general nonchalant attitude of teachers towards teaching.
- Industrial actions by teachers.
- Mass promotion of students in internal examinations.
- The general misconception of good performance by some principals and the society as a means of enhancing the status of societal rating of the principals and their schools.
- Faulty or lack of proper administration of examinations.
- Imposition of school subjects on candidates by parents.
- Poverty and greed on the part of the teachers who constitute the bulk of invigilators and examiners.
- Constant increase in examination fees, among others.

Since no worthwhile study seems to have been undertaken in India with respect to malpractices in examinations, the investigators undertook the present piece of research.

## 2. Objective of the Study:

The following objective was formulated for the present study:

To identify the causes of malpractices in examinations at school and board examinations stage as perceived by senior secondary school teachers in terms of the following categories:

- a. Student Related Causes
- b. Teacher Related Causes
- c. Examination/Education System Related Causes
- d. Miscellaneous Causes

## 3. Method:

The objectives laid down for the study at hand conform to all the characteristics of descriptive method. Hence, descriptive method of research was used in the present study.

### 3.1 Sample

The State of Himachal Pradesh has twelve districts. Out of these, the following five districts were selected randomly viz., Solan, Kullu, Shimla, Lahaul & Spiti and Kangra. In the second stage, ten Senior Secondary Schools each from four districts viz., Solan, Kullu, Shimla and Kangra were chosen randomly. Owing to low enrolment, twelve schools were taken from the district of Lahaul & Spiti. It is worth mentioning that whole of Lahaul & Spiti district falls in tribal belt where the population density is just two per square kilometre. In the third stage, from each of the 52 selected schools, the willing teachers were included in the sample. The total sample comprised of 200 school teachers.

### 3.2 Tool Used

The instrument used to collect data from students for this study was a scale titled “Examination Malpractices Scale” having four parts, viz., a. Student-Related Causes, b. Teacher-Related Causes, c. Examination/Education-Related Causes and d. Miscellaneous Causes.

### 3.3 Operational Definitions of Specific Terms

A few specific terms have been used in the text a number of times. The operational meanings of these terms have been given below.

- Malpractices in Examination:** Malpractice in examination is a deliberate wrong doing contrary to official examination rules designed to place a candidate at an unfair advantage or disadvantage.
- Causes:** Causes refer to factors or reasons which compel, allure or drive a student to indulge in malpractices in examinations.
- Perceived:** The word ‘perceived’ mainly used in ‘objectives’ refers to ‘observed’, ‘noticed’ ‘recognized’ or ‘made out’.

**d. Teachers:**

Teachers refer to teachers teaching in Government Senior Secondary Schools situated in Himachal Pradesh.

**4. Delimitations of the Study:**

The study was delimited to five districts of Himachal Pradesh to be selected randomly.

**5. Results:**

**a. Student-Related Causes**

The responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for fifteen items for student-related causes with respect to malpractices in examinations are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for 15 items for student-related causes with respect to malpractices in examinations along with  $\chi^2$  values**

FACTORS RELATED TO STUDENT							
5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3= Uncertain; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree							
Item No.	Items	5	4	3	2	1	$\chi^2$
1	Some students indulge in examination malpractices as they are prone to high stress, anxiety, tension and lack of confidence in testing situations.	32	85	32	37	14	70.95**
2	Some students indulge in examination malpractices in order to make themselves eligible for employment.	28	101	48	17	6	140.35**
3	Some students indulge in examination malpractices in order to make themselves eligible for admission in a good school/college/professional course.	29	105	29	26	11	137.06**
4	Some students fall for examination malpractices due to laxity in invigilation during examination.	54	97	23	16	10	130.25**
5	Some students are motivated to indulge in examination malpractices under peer influence.	25	78	41	43	13	60.02**
6	Some students indulge in examination malpractices due to general copying atmosphere that prevails during examination.	41	89	21	34	15	85.06**
7	Some students indulge in examination malpractices due to inadequate preparation for examinations.	65	96	29	8	2	158.75**
8	Some students indulge in examination malpractices due to poor academic ability (low intelligence, inadequate entry behaviour etc.)	33	90	48	20	9	99.35**
9	Some students indulge in examination malpractices as they are not genuinely interested in studies but somehow wish to pass examination.	65	107	16	7	5	200.01**
10	Low attendance (Chronic Absenteeism) compels some students to indulge in examination malpractices.	51	76	50	16	7	79.55**
11	Bad habits like drug abuse, sexual promiscuity and truancy compel some students to indulge in examination malpractices.	64	98	22	6	10	158.00**
12	Some students indulge in examination malpractices as a particular course of study is not of their interest.	34	93	47	21	5	112.00**
13	Some students indulge in examination malpractices due to pressure from parents to score good marks.	35	83	52	23	7	84.09**
14	Fear of failure in examination leads to examination malpractices.	75	91	24	4	6	163.35**

15	High percentage of marks scored by some students lures mediocre students in to examination malpractices.	31	52	39	50	28	11.75
----	--	----	----	----	----	----	-------

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

**Interpretation**

It is revealed from Table 1 that  $\chi^2$  value is significant at 0.01 level of confidence for fourteen items studying student-related causes with respect to malpractices in examinations except item number 15 which is not significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This indicates that the responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree differ significantly for fourteen items. The scrutiny of Table 1 indicates that the school teachers have responded more favourably to strongly agree and agree options for all the fourteen items. However, in order to get a clearer picture, the responses for ‘strongly agree & agree’ and ‘disagree & strongly disagree’ are added and the following scenario emerges.

**Table 2: Added frequencies for ‘strongly agree & agree’ and ‘disagree & strongly disagree’ based upon Table 1**

Item No.	Strongly Agree+Agree	Uncertain	Disagree+Strongly Disagree
1	117	32	51
2	129	48	23
3	134	29	37
4	151	23	26
5	103	41	56
6	130	21	49
7	161	29	10
8	123	48	29
9	172	16	12
10	127	50	23
11	162	22	16
12	127	47	26
13	118	52	30
14	166	24	10

Table 2 shows that the number of responses added for ‘strongly agree & agree’ is larger for all the fourteen items in comparison to responses added for ‘disagree & strongly disagree’. This indicates that senior secondary school teachers view all the fourteen student-related causes as important with respect to malpractices in examinations. However, the following five student-related causes have been viewed as most important by senior secondary school teachers.

Item No.	Most Important Student-Related Causes Perceived by Teachers
9	Some students indulge in examination malpractices as they are not genuinely interested in studies but somehow wish to pass examination.
14	Fear of failure in examination leads to examination malpractices.
11	Bad habits like drug abuse, sexual promiscuity and truancy compel some students to indulge in examination malpractices.
7	Some students indulge in examination malpractices due to inadequate preparation for examinations.
4	Some students fall in examination malpractices due to laxity in invigilation during examination.

**b. Teachers-Related Causes**

The responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for nine items for teacher-related causes with respect to malpractices in examinations are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for nine items for teacher-related causes with respect to malpractices in examinations along with  $\chi^2$  values**

FACTORS RELATED TO TEACHER							
5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3= Uncertain; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree							
Item No.	Items	5	4	3	2	1	$\chi^2$
1	Inadequate training and incompetence of some teachers compels students to indulge in examination malpractices.	13	62	44	52	29	37.35**
2	Inability of some teachers to complete their syllabus due to different reasons compels students to adopt examination malpractices.	12	59	69	42	18	61.85**
3	Teachers themselves encourage malpractices in examinations due to pressure from department and society to show good results as well as for their own reputation.	31	72	39	39	19	38.07**
4	Teachers themselves encourage malpractices due to heavy workload in school.	17	50	39	56	38	22.25**
5	Teachers encourage malpractices in examinations in order to attract students for private tuition.	11	47	52	44	46	27.15**
6	Appointment of local teachers as invigilators inhibits them to be strict due to acquaintances.	13	63	49	48	27	29.03**
7	When local teachers are appointed as invigilators they tend to or are forced to please influential persons.	23	55	41	51	30	18.04**
8	Due to low salary, especially in private schools, teachers become prone to favours or bribery in return for help in examinations.	18	47	35	58	42	22.15**
9.	Discrimination of /against students by teachers in the classroom leads them to indulge in examination malpractices.	11	45	26	61	57	44.08**

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

**Interpretation**

It is revealed from Table 3 that  $\chi^2$  value is significant at 0.01 level of confidence for all the nine items studying teacher-related causes with respect to malpractices in examinations. This indicates that the responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree differ significantly for all the nine items. The scrutiny of Table 3 indicates that the teachers have responded more favourably to strongly agree & agree options for item numbers 2, 3 & 6 and have responded more favourably to strongly disagree & disagree options for item numbers 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, & 9. However, in order to get a clearer picture, the responses for ‘strongly agree & agree’ and ‘disagree & strongly disagree’ are added and the following scenario emerges.

**Table 4: Added frequencies for ‘strongly agree & agree’ and ‘disagree & strongly disagree’ based upon Table 3**

Item No.	Strongly Agree+Agree	Uncertain	Disagree+Strongly Disagree
1	75	44	81
2	71	69	60
3	103	39	58
4	67	39	94
5	58	52	90
6	76	49	75
7	78	41	81
8	65	35	100
9	56	26	118

Table 4 shows that the number of responses added for ‘strongly agree & agree’ is larger for three items in comparison to responses added for ‘disagree & strongly disagree’. Further, the number of responses added for ‘strongly disagree & disagree’ is larger for six items in comparison to responses added for ‘strongly agree & agree’. This indicates that senior secondary school teachers view the following three teacher-related causes as most important with respect to malpractices in examinations.

Item No.	Most Important Teacher-Related Causes Perceived by Teachers
3	Teachers themselves encourage malpractices in examinations due to pressure from department and society to show good results as well as for their own reputation.
6	Appointment of local teachers as invigilators inhibits them to be strict due to acquaintances.
2	Inability of some teachers to complete their syllabus due to different reasons compels students to adopt examination malpractices.

On the other hand, most of the senior secondary school teachers reject altogether the following six teacher-related causes as factors for malpractices in examinations.

Item No.	Least Important Teacher-Related Causes Perceived by Teachers
1	Inadequate training and incompetence of some teachers compels students to indulge in examination malpractices.
4	Teachers themselves encourage malpractices due to heavy workload in school.
5	Teachers encourage malpractices in examinations in order to attract students for private tuition.
7	When local teachers are appointed as invigilators they tend to or are forced to please influential persons.
8	Due to low salary, especially in private schools, teachers become prone to favours or bribery in return for help in examinations.
9	Discrimination of /against students by teachers in the classroom leads them to indulge in examination malpractices.

### c. Examination/Education System-Related Causes

The responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for eight items for examination/education system related causes with respect to malpractices in examinations are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for eight items for examination/education system related causes with respect to malpractices in examinations along with  $\chi^2$  values**

FACTORS RELATED TO EXAMINATION/EDUCATION SYSTEM							
5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3= Uncertain; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree							
Item No.	Item	5	4	3	2	1	$\chi^2$
1	The defective examination system prepares background for examination malpractices.	19	87	37	42	15	82.02**
2	The answers of the questions asked in the examination are directly available in help books which persuade the students to adopt malpractices.	23	84	35	36	22	64.75**
3	The present day education fails to provide job security, hence meaninglessness of the system encourages copying in examination.	20	58	52	54	16	41.00**
4	Over emphasis on certificates over skills and competence gives rise to examination malpractices.	45	89	32	16	18	88.75**

5	Lack of sufficient number of teachers compels students to indulge in examination malpractices.	27	87	31	41	14	78.04**
6	Inadequate teaching-learning facilities such as classrooms, libraries and laboratories compel students to indulge in examination malpractices.	28	57	60	44	11	42.25**
7	Students do not get proper attention due to over-crowded classes. As a result they are compelled to indulge in examination malpractices.	35	67	28	55	15	43.07**
8.	Lenient policy of the Board of School Education against the students caught while cheating encourages other students to indulge in examination malpractices.	47	67	31	38	17	34.08**

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

### Interpretation

It is revealed from Table 5 that  $\chi^2$  value is significant at 0.01 level of confidence for all the eight items studying examination/education system-related causes with respect to malpractices in examinations. This indicates that the responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree differ significantly for all the eight items. The scrutiny of Table 5 indicates that the teachers have responded more favourably to strongly agree & agree options for all the eight items. However, in order to get a clearer picture, the responses for ‘strongly agree & agree’ and ‘disagree & strongly disagree’ are added and the following scenario emerges.

**Table 6: Added frequencies for ‘strongly agree & agree’ and ‘disagree & strongly disagree’ based upon Table 5**

Item No.	Strongly Agree+Agree	Uncertain	Disagree+Strongly Disagree
1	106	37	57
2	107	55	58
3	78	52	70
4	134	32	34
5	114	31	55
6	85	60	55
7	102	28	70
8	114	31	55

Table 6 shows that the number of responses added for ‘strongly agree & agree’ is larger for all the items in comparison to responses added for ‘disagree & strongly disagree’. This indicates that senior secondary school teachers view all the examination/education system-related causes as important with respect to malpractices in examinations. However, the following five examination/education system-related causes have been viewed as most important by senior secondary school teachers.

Item No.	Most Important Examination/Education System-Related Causes Perceived by Teachers
4	Over emphasis on certificates over skills and competence gives rise to examination malpractices.
5	Lack of sufficient number of teachers compels students to indulge in examination malpractices.
8	Lenient policy of the Board of School Education against the students caught while cheating encourages other students to indulge in examination malpractices.
2	The answers of the questions asked in the examination are directly available in help books which persuade the students to adopt malpractices.
1	The defective examination system prepares background for examination malpractices.

### d. Miscellaneous Causes

The responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for ten items for miscellaneous causes with respect to malpractices in examinations are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for ten items for miscellaneous causes with respect to malpractices in examinations along with  $\chi^2$  values**

MISCELLANEOUS FACTORS							
5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3= Uncertain; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree							
Item No.	Items	5	4	3	2	1	$\chi^2$
1	Societal expectations for educational qualification puts pressure on students to indulge in examination malpractices	24	93	39	32	12	97.87**
2	Lack of appropriate punishment measures for external perpetrators of examination malpractices leads to increase in examination malpractices.	42	100	37	19	2	137.45**
3.	Connivance of schools especially private ones to give good results to attract parents and students leads to examination malpractices.	65	67	39	13	16	66.05**
4.	Students are already aware that the school/teachers /parents will assist them in malpractices.	10	55	47	60	28	42.95**
5.	Examination centres located in remote areas provide an opportunity for malpractices due to poor supervision by authorities.	58	97	12	22	11	138.05**
6.	Parents especially of wards from private schools, threaten proprietors of withdrawal if their children do not bring excellent results.	50	68	50	15	17	53.45**
7.	Parental undue expectations from their wards to get high scores compel the students to indulge in malpractices in examinations (the expectations arise primarily due to social prestige/further admission).	41	79	48	27	5	74.05**
8.	Lack of proper monitoring/supervision of their wards by parents prompts the students to indulge in examination malpractices.	27	94	50	24	5	116.65**
9.	Poor moral upbringing of some youth by parents leads them to indulge in examination malpractices.	35	88	39	26	12	82.75**
10	Interference of local leaders like Pradhan or political persons forces the school principal/teachers to support/ignore malpractices in examinations.	29	52	56	48	15	30.25**

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

### Interpretation

It is revealed from Table 7 that  $\chi^2$  value is significant at 0.01 level of confidence for all the ten items studying miscellaneous causes with respect to malpractices in examinations. This indicates that the responses of senior secondary school teachers in terms of frequencies for strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree differ significantly for all the ten items. The scrutiny of Table 7 indicates that the school teachers have responded more favourably to strongly agree & agree options for item numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10 and have responded more favourably to ‘strongly disagree & disagree’ options for item number 4. However, in order to get a clearer picture, the responses for ‘strongly agree & agree’ and ‘disagree & strongly disagree’ are added and the following scenario emerges.

**Table 8: Added frequencies for ‘strongly agree & agree’ and ‘disagree & strongly disagree’ based upon Table 7**

Item No.	Strongly Agree+Agree	Uncertain	Disagree+Strongly Disagree
1	117	39	44
2	142	37	21

3	132	39	29
4	65	47	88
5	155	12	33
6	118	50	32
7	120	48	32
8	121	50	29
9	123	39	38
10	81	56	63

Table 8 shows that number of responses added for ‘strongly agree & agree’ is larger for nine items in comparison to responses added for ‘disagree & strongly disagree’. Further, the number of responses added for ‘strongly disagree & disagree’ is larger for one item in comparison to responses added for ‘strongly agree & agree’. This indicates that senior secondary school teachers view the nine miscellaneous causes as important. However, they view the following five causes as most important with respect to malpractices in examinations.

Item No.	Most Important Miscellaneous Causes Perceived by Teachers
5	Examination centres located in remote areas provide an opportunity for malpractices due to poor supervision by authorities.
2	Lack of appropriate punishment measures for external perpetrators of examination malpractices leads to increase in examination malpractices.
3	Connivance of schools especially private ones to give good results to attract parents and students leads to examination malpractices.
9	Poor moral upbringing of some youth by parents leads them to indulge in examination malpractices.
8	Lack of proper monitoring/supervision of their wards by parents prompts the students to indulge in examination malpractices

On the other hand, most of the senior secondary school teachers reject altogether the following one miscellaneous cause as an important factor for malpractices in examinations.

Item No.	Least Important Miscellaneous Causes Perceived by Teachers
4	Students are already aware that the school/teachers /parents will assist them in malpractices.

The results of the study reveal different causes under four categories which lead to malpractices in school examinations as perceived by senior secondary school teachers. It is hoped that these results will help all the stakeholders viz., parents, teachers, headmasters, principals, administrators and policy planners to have a deep insight into the problem and further devise methods and policies to minimise the problem of malpractices in examinations

**References:**

- Anyiin, T.J. (1998). Examination Malpractice in Benue State Schools: The Way Forward. *Seminar paper by the Cultism Committee, Makurdi, 1998.* In Udoh, Nsisong A. (2011). Remote Causes and Counseling Implications of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria. *Inquiries Journal* , Vol. 3, No. 10. Retrieved on July 20, 2020 from:
- <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/authors/558/nsisong-a-udoh>
- The Tribune (201a). Parents Scale School Wall to Pass Chits to Wards. The Tribune, Chandigarh Edition, Vol. 135, No. 77, p. 8, March 20, 2015.
- The Tribune (2015b). Class XII Question Paper Leaked, Exam Cancelled. The Tribune, Chandigarh Edition, Vol. 135, No. 63, p. 6, March 5, 2015.