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Uniformity across all boards: Regulator for exam assessment

The proposed regulator, PARAKH, will also be tasked with holding periodic learning outcome tests like the National Achievement Survey (NAS) and State Achievement Surveys.

Written by [Sourav Roy Barman](#)

New Delhi | Updated: August 31, 2022 6:56:03 am

NewsGuard





The benchmark assessment framework will seek to put an end to the emphasis on rote learning, as envisaged by the National Education Policy 2020. (Representational)

THE UNION government plans to draw up a “benchmark framework” to assess students at the secondary and higher secondary level to bring about “uniformity” across state and central boards which currently follow different standards of evaluation, leading to wide disparities in scores.

Over the last few months, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has held a series of meetings with the representatives of state boards and State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) to arrive at a common understanding to implement the plan, as part of which a new assessment regulator is being set up.

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The proposed regulator, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), which will act as a constituent unit of the NCERT, will also be tasked with holding periodic learning outcome tests like the National Achievement Survey (NAS) and State Achievement Surveys.

The benchmark assessment framework will seek to put an end to the emphasis on rote learning, as envisaged by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. **PARAKH**, the proposed implementing agency, is also part of the NEP proposal.

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It is learnt that during the discussions, most states endorsed the NEP proposal to hold board exams twice a year, including one for helping students improve their scores. States are also on board regarding a proposal to offer two types of papers on mathematics — a standard exam, and another to test higher level competency.

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“It will help reduce the fear of maths among students and encourage learning. We also used the meetings as a sounding board on the NEP proposals to have two sets of question papers for most subjects – one with MCQs (multiple choice questions), and the other descriptive. The response was encouraging,” said a Ministry of Education official.

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Earlier this month, the Centre invited bids to establish PARAKH, which it said, will be “setting norms, standards and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognised school boards of India, encouraging and helping school boards to shift their assessment patterns towards meeting the skill requirements of the 21st century”.

The ministry official said PARAKH will help tackle the problem of students of some state boards being at a disadvantage during college admissions as compared to their peers in CBSE schools. It will develop and implement “technical standards for the design, conduct, analysis and reporting” of tests at all levels of school education.

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The Expression of Interest (EOI) floated by the Centre also spells out that PARAKH will undertake the sample-based NAS, guide the State Achievement Surveys and monitor achievement of learning outcomes in the country. If the plans are on track, the NAS in 2024 will be conducted by PARAKH.

“Its (PARAKH) team will consist of leading assessment experts with a deep understanding of the education system in India and internationally. PARAKH will eventually become the national single-window source for all assessment related information and expertise, with a mandate to support learning assessment in all forms, both nationally and where applicable, internationally,” states the EOI.

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First published on: 31-08-2022 at 05:03:29 am



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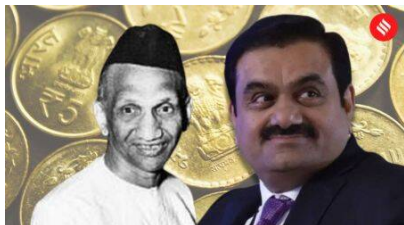
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