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ABSTRACT

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". Education is the foundational pillar for the development of human capital. Simultaneously working as a tool for national development by making the country socio-economically powerful and independent. According to the global Literacy rate India stand among the lower-middle tier between 120 to 140 out of 180 countries however according the National Literacy rate according to the recent government and labour survey around shows around 81.1 % for individuals aged 7 and above are pursuing literacy which has improved according to the last census report of 2011. Though the people are getting opportunities to get education however the major challenges that are faced by the citizens of the country related to education are the substandard academic quality, physical infrastructural problems and most importantly the regulatory deficits and systematic problems. Due to, the weaker administrative structure, institutional regulation and systemic vulnerabilities result in witnessing major paper leak of affecting the integrity of high stakes national-level examinations managed by the government. Through this paper we will critically examine how institutional weaknesses, systemic failures, regulatory gaps and insecure and corrupts logistical chains making the examination lifecycle highly insecure culminate in the frequent widespread paper leak resulting million student and emotionally, physically and financially distress and diminishing confidence and trust in the government and on the education system. This paper also focuses on the existing legislation ''Public Examinations Prevention of Unfair Means Act'' and argues that it fails to protect students because they only focused on punitive measures rather than focusing on preventative solutions and regulatory mandates. To bridge this gap and regain the public trust, institutional reputation, this paper proposes a comprehensive legislative framework consisting of a systematic administrative regulatory, technology-driven infrastructure after deeply analyzing the recommendation given by different committees and approaches that being followed by the other nations which resulted in zero paper leak rate and a secure examination system for their students. This framework will help in establishing systemic deterrence, a roadmap for the state to secure its educational ecosystem and safeguard the future of its youth

population.

KEYWORDS

Education, Public Examination, Exam Malpractice, Regulatory Mandates, Secure System, Military Grade Security.

INTRODUCTION

India is historically noted as one of the earliest nations that formalized a deep love for learning and structural education, one of the old universities which the Nalanda was founded in India when the idea of university was not even developed by other nations at that time. In terms of education India is historically rich in culture and knowledge which was also given importance in the modern India after independence by adding Right to education under Article: 21A of Indian constitution as the fundamental right of every citizen which is non-negotiable and enforceable in the court of law. Examination is one of the main objectives to validate the learning and to enforce meritocracy.

The system of public examination can be traced back during the British era on the recommendation of The Macaulay Committee (1854) though it was only conducted in London and only the Britisher was given the opportunity to seat and able to be a part of public service but following decades of political pressure from the Indian National Congress, the British finally held the first simultaneous exam in Allahabad, India, in 1922.

Later on, the recommendation of Lee Commission's Public Service Commission was established in 1926 to look after fair appointments. This became the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) under the Government of India Act 1935. Post independence with the adoption of the Constitution the FPSC became the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) under Articles 315–323 of the Indian constitution. The examination system and the scope of education after independence was not only limited to public service, it underwent massive evolution examinations such as National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), Common University Entrance Test (CUET), Judicial Examination, Educational board examination etc. To regulate and conduct all this examination different central and state regulatory body i.e National Medical Commission (NMC) & National Testing Agency (NTA), State High Courts & State Public Service Commissions, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) & SPSCs etc was established and along with that, for maintaining a coherence and conducting a fair exam different legislation also introduced i.e National Medical Commission Act, 2019, Public Examinations Act (Prevent of Unfair Means), 2024 (Amended 2026) etc.

The failure in conducting a fair exam and corruption in the regulatory examination bodies are the main concerns that came into light in the present times for the past few years students faced a major paper leak problem in the National examination. NEET is one such examination around 2.8 to 2.4 lakh students appears for this exam and due to paper leak they are being affected mentally, disturbance in the growth of their future as well as financially. It proves the failure and corruption in the regulatory bodies and in the legislation. The fundamental legislation that governs this paper leak and corruption regarding public examination is Public Examinations Act (Prevent of Unfair Means), 2024, After a nationwide student protest after NEET-UG-2026 paper leak parliament came up with an amendment in the existing legislation which added high financial penalties up to ₹10 corer and extended imprisonment up to 10 years . This Amendment also established immediate Fast-tracked courts and harsher criminal penalties for exam syndicates.

But the main question that arises regarding these amendments is whether a harsher punishment will be capable of stopping this corruption? Whether the fast-track court is the ultimate administrative and regulatory reforms that will stop such paper leaks?

LITERATURE REVIEW

For years, the primary response to examination malpractice was passing stricter criminal laws; however, the administrative and systemic gap in the existing legislative framework has been recognized and criticized by different independent policy analyses. Various public administration reviews, government appointed committees on such committees *Dr. K. Radhakrishnan Committee of 2024*, Constituted by the Ministry of Education, constitute of 7 expert member panel headed by former ISRO Chief Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, they submitted a comprehensive 184-page report featuring 101 systemic recommendations according to this committee report judicial punishment alone cannot solve this critical issues, they also said rather than waiting for the offender to cause damage we have to focus on the specific "vulnerability nodes" which is affecting over all lifecycle of the examination. This committee recommended a "DIGI-EXAM" Ecosystem where it suggested restricting manual and human intervention completely, all the exam process from making paper to delivery, and result processing are completely encrypted and digital.

The second important finding of this committee is National testing agencies are "dangerously dependent" on outsourced contractors, the committee suggested replacing the contractual staff with a permanent, professional core member of NTA to enforce strict accountability. The core suggestion given by this committee was to build standardized

permanent government examination centers using existing infrastructure like Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas which are secure places without any outer influence. The final and most important suggestion by this committee was Election-Style Security Coordination to treat exam security with the same gravity as national democratic elections.

According to a critique published by ***PRS Legislative Research*** according to the research, the core issue for this high stake national examination paper leak is "economics of paper leaks." criticizing the recent 2026 amendment of the *''Public Examinations Prevention of Unfair Means Act''* which added high financial penalties up to ₹10 corer and extended imprisonment up to 10 years, the researchers argue that the existing law fails to stop the problem as the organized crime group earns massive multi-crore profit margins therefore the threat of jail time or fines suggested by the law does not act as an effective deterrent and they continue to exploit the vulnerability in the system continued their malpractice which results in continuous exam cancelation compromised children future.

After National Testing Agency faced widespread student protests and backlash over paper leaks, malpractices, and cyber security vulnerabilities in high-stakes entrance exams like NEET-UG the government formed a constituted a high-powered task force headed by tech-entrepreneur and Aadhaar architect Nandan Nilekani, alongside technical leaders like former ISRO chief S. Somanath and IIT-Madras director V. Kamakoti. The task force term as *The Nilekani Task Force 2026* also explicitly mentioned mere increase and proving strict punishment will not solve this malpractice rather the main objective should be to make a systematic change in the examination system by developing a Leak-Proof Digital Architecture. They suggested integrating Aadhaar-based biometric candidate authentication, AI-based real-time surveillance, and a highly secure Computer-Based Testing (CBT) ecosystem that will make the public examination system secure, transparent, technology-driven, and free from paper leaks and examination malpractices.

The literature suggests a new road map for anti-paper leak policy together with the rigorous administrative guide lines of the Radhakrishnan Committee with the advanced digital frameworks of the Nilekani Task Force, offers a legislative framework which will secure national examinations and protect the future nation's youth and help regain public trust towards the NTA and the government after this widespread student protest.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

If we look deeper into the Public Examinations Act (Prevent of Unfair Means), 2024 and 2026 Amendments. Existing legal frameworks governing public testing primarily emphasize penalizing offenses post-occurrence, functioning as punitive statutes rather than comprehensive regulatory or administrative systems. This punitive orientation triggered widespread nationwide student demonstrations regarding question paper compromises, wherein candidates prioritized structural overhauls to examination administration to prevent future breaches over secondary criminal remedies. Citizens demand governmental assurances guaranteeing future assessment security. Protecting these vital interests necessitates legislation addressing the complete operational lifecycle of test security safeguarding content creation, printing, physical distribution, and center administration rather than relying solely on post-facto criminal sanctions.

Despite recommendation given by Dr. *K. Radhakrishnan Committee of 2024, The Nilekani Task Force 2026* There have been no changes in the legislative reforms demanded by the people.2026 amendment focused purely on the strict punishment rather bring systematic and regulative reforms for conducting a secure exam. There are countries like China, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea that follow a strict punishment system. At the same time they have a strict regulatory and administrative system. The rate of paper leak during exams is very less than India. China among all the countries having the strictest and most successful system when its come to safety in conducting exam china being the tech gain conduct its exam in pen paper come which help from high risk cyber attack with isolated paper preparation cycle with the help of special and professional team and treat exam as high level national secret mission while deploying paper with help of military grade security.

India should incorporate a frame work like china and recommendation given by committee and task which is secure, effective and accessible for every citizen treating as national importance rather than treating it as a mere examination. Youth are the future of the nation providing a secure future is one of the basic rights every youth deserve and duty of the elected government to work for their citizen good well.

FINDING AND SUGESTIONS

After a comprehensive research and analysis this research paper suggests this below-mentioned legislative reform bill which focuses on teach driven systemic reform, administrative reform which will help in building a strict accountability and secure examination with military

grade security which is demanded by the people for their secure future keeping in mind also approaches followed by other nations.

THE LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Section 1: Short Title

This legislative framework shall be referred to as the Public Examination Administrative regulation and student welfare Act 2026.

Section 2: Independent examination assessment board

2.1 To prevent the administrative corruption a separate independent assessment body shall be formed for each public examination which will include academicians, research scholars and government officials along with military officials. They will be appointed by the head of the state (president) every year. They will be responsible from drafting to the deployment of examination papers.

2.2 No third party, any private company will be not given any responsibility regarding these public examinations it will totally conduct under the supervision of the assessment board and govt of India.

Section 3: Isolated paper preparation arrangement

To eliminate the insider threat the preparation of stage must be enforced in a total Physical and digital restriction.

3.1 The staff responsible for paper settling and drafting, printing paper, security and other helper/ worker for day-to-day work i.e cook, housekeeping etc, shall be strictly isolated and locked inside a specific location with zero external connectivity. They are not allowed to leave the facility or interact with the outside world until the exams are securely distributed or completed.

3.2 Accesses of such a building or any room locked in the building using unique biological data such as verification like fingerprint scans, iris recognition, or facial recognition to ensure that any unauthorized personnel can slip in or out. And every corner of this isolated place shall be under CCTV surveillance. as well as govt security officials.

3.3 The computers used for drafting and typesetting shall be completely cut off from the physical outside network and also cut off from the local office network, even the printer shared with other computers. It sits on a "digital island."

(a) the printer shall only plug directly into *only one* drafting computer using a specialized, permanent cable. This printer or pr shall not

be connected to internet or Wi-Fi, the internet, or any other computer. It belongs exclusively to that one machine. Data will flow one way from the computer to the paper this shall carry out under high security and under CCTV surveillance.

(b) The computer's operating system (like Windows or Linux) shall be customized in Non-routable operating environments in this system physically incapable of sending or receiving data over the internet. Even if someone accidentally plugged an internet cable or wifi into it, the computer system will not be aware of how to use it.

3.4 Any staff will not be allowed to bring any kind of electric means or any portable device and also all the plugs on the computer like USB ports, disc drives, or memory card slots are completely turned off or physically blocked.

Section 4: Military level Safeguard for Logistics and paper Deployment

4.1 During the transferring and distributing of physical examination papers Transport vehicles carrying out such distribution and transferring shall be accompanied by specialized high-level security or military officials.

4.2 For each exam center the physical examination papers shall travel in tamper evident or tamper resistance containers associated with GPS trackers to track real time location.

4.3 The containers shall be secured with dual key smart locks i.e biometric and cryptographic lock. This lock is programmed to automatically release lock mechanisms only on the day of examination at the exact designated time, linked to real-time geofenced coordinates of the test center; the lock will be unlocked and the paper will only distribute thereafter.

Section 5. Social media and communication messenger Platform Restriction

5.1 In the actual testing room and test centre no invigilator and other helping staff members shall be allowed to take with them any personal electronic device and communication means only communication will continue through landline allocated by the designated commission and examination bodies.

5.2 Inside the center and main examination room signals must be damped by using special technology which will block or weaken phone

and internet signals and prevent any hidden phone bearer or any cheating device from sending and receiving any messages**.**

5.3 Fast file sharing and messaging apps and social media platforms shall be temporarily banned for 15 to 30days before exam and also on the day of exam.

CONCLUSION

India is the nation with the largest youth population globally. Educated youths are the future of a country and it's the responsibility of the government to provide the youth with the best quality of education and provide with all opportunity, security to help in making a bright and successful future as well as resulting in progressive and developed country. The existing legislation is unfortunately lacking to provide with the necessity for secure future for the youth, the major objective of this existing legislation that is more focused on punishing rather than making the system and process secure. Just like how protection of the boundary of our nation is a primary concern of government saving our youth and the education system should be considered as a primary importance with the help of anti-paper leak structural reforms act it tries to focus on the effective regulations with the help of Independent assessment bodies, social media and internet restriction, military level security for the entire examination procedure, isolated paper making system will help us in providing a secure future of our youth and a good education system which is needed for our citizens to rebuild their trust on the government and make a secure future and motivation to study and build a new and progressive and self-reliance India.

Educated youth population is one of the most important pillars for becoming a developed country and to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047 of the government. The government reports show India is evolving in the field of education. More people are getting opportunities for education but along with the proper institutional infrastructure, systematic regulation the quality of education will improve and the goal of Viskit bharat of 100 percent literacy rate will be achieved with a secure education sector and example for other nations.

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