Two-Exam Scheme

General Studies Paper II (GS-II) – Governance, Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Why is in News?

The CBSE has proposed a "Draft Scheme for Two Examinations, Class X from 2026," allowing students to take board exams twice a year to reduce stress and improve scores.

What is the two-examination scheme of CBSE?

- **Two exam scheme** - The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has proposed a “Draft Scheme for Two Examinations, Class X from 2026”.
- **Two exam sessions** - It allows students to take board exams twice a year i.e February/March & May (best score considered).
- **Alignment with NEP** - The initiative aims to align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of
    - Reduce stress among students.
    - Provide an additional opportunity to improve scores.
    - Promote a holistic assessment model.
    - To test core capacities/competencies rather than months of coaching and memorization.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

NEP 2020 aims to transform India's education system, replacing the 1986 policy, with a holistic, flexible, and skill-based approach.

School Education:

• 5+3+3+4 structure replaces 10+2 system.
• Focus on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).
• Competency-based board exams with reduced emphasis on rote learning.
• Mother tongue/regional language as medium of instruction (up to Grade 5).
• Multiple entry-exit options for flexibility.

Higher Education:

• Four-year UG programs with exit options.
• MPhil discontinued for streamlined higher studies.
• Multidisciplinary Education & Research Universities (MERUs) introduced.
• Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) for credit transfer.

Skill & Vocational Training:

• Vocational education from Class 6 onwards.
• Internships & coding integrated into school curriculum.

Exams & Assessment:

• Shift to conceptual & competency-based learning.
• Board exams twice a year for stress reduction.

Digital & Inclusive Education:

• Expansion of e-learning (DIKSHA, online platforms).
• Special focus on disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) for equitable access.

What are the issues with the two-exam scheme?

- While the reform appears student-friendly, it raises concerns related to:
  - Operational challenges in conducting and evaluating large-scale exams.
  - Financial burden on students, particularly from marginalized backgrounds.
  - Pedagogical concerns, including potential reinforcement of rote learning.
- **Logistical issues -** 26.6 lakh students expected for Class 10 exams in 2026 and 1.72 crore answer scripts to be evaluated across two sessions, requiring a vast pool of evaluators.
- **Increased students stress -** Instead of reducing stress, students may face intensive preparation for two exams, increasing pressure.
- **Overlap of board exams -** The overlap of Class 10 and 12 examinations adds another layer of administrative complexity, stretching school resources and placing an additional burden on the teachers responsible for evaluation.
- **Short remediation window** - Students scoring poorly in February will have only two months to prepare for the May attempt.
- Without structured remedial support, many may resort to rote memorization instead of true conceptual improvement with contradicts the goal of NEP 2020.
- **Financial burden on economically weaker students -** Policy mandates a non-refundable examination fee covering both attempts, even for students opting for a single attempt.
- Increased costs may create barriers for marginalized students, contradicting NEP 2020's goal of equitable education.
- **Coaching culture** - Emphasis on multiple examinations may still lead to 'coaching-driven preparation' rather than genuine conceptual learning.
- **Affects academic cycle -** Second exam results expected by **June-end**, compressing

the **admission cycle** for Class 11.
- Most schools start their **academic year in April/May**, creating **delays and uncertainty** for students awaiting second exam results.
- These factors are sighted as reason by some educationist that the proposed system may be more cumbersome.

What can Be Done?

- **Ensuring competency-based assessments -** Moving beyond logistical changes and focus can be given on **conceptual learning** and redesigning question papers to **test competencies, not memorization.**
- **Structured remedial support** - Introducing **remedial programs** between exams to help students improve.
- **Revising examination fee structure** - Making the policy more **equitable** for economically weaker students.

References

[The Hindu | Two exam scheme]

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