



Would the new CBSE Class 10 & 12 exam system benefit Arunachal students?

March 6, 2025

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The CBSE, in a public statement, has announced a draft proposal for a major change in the class 10 and 12 examinations from 2026, and have sought feedback from all stake-holders, before 9 March, 2025. This gives all of us interested in seeing an educationally progressing Arunachal, an excellent opportunity to introspect on our school education and the challenges before students and the government schools.

On the face of it, the CBSE proposal looks very attractive and compact. Students are being provided one more chance to improve their performance, if the first attempt was not satisfactory.

Secondly, the proposal aims to complete all the CBSE examinations in less than a month, from 15 February to 6 March. The results will be 'available' for class 10 on 20 April and for class 12 on 20 May; but in DigiLocker and not 'announced.'

Thirdly, the improvement examination is optional for students and is proposed to be completed from 5 to 20 May. The CBSE will declare the formal results on June 30.

The holding of two examinations, one after another in two months: Will it benefit or is suitable for Arunachal students? A majority of them – 62.6%- are in government schools. (ASER report 2023).

Our elders in the state will recollect that till late 90s, the CBSE written examinations used to start in March and end before mid-April. This ensured that school session in January and February was practically not disturbed by examination schedules. Nor did the CBSE or schools exams clash with any of our Arunachal festivals falling in February. In the proposed timetable of CBSE exams of Feb 2026, a major exam for class 12 is fixed on 20 February – our Statehood Day! (Readers would recall that this

January 2025, a UGC-NET exam that fell on Jan 15 – the Bihu and Pongal festival day – was cancelled just a day prior, on the appeal of the Tamil Nadu Government. The sudden cancellation put Arunachal students from the districts, who travelled all the way to Itanagar to great mental, physical and financial hardships.



As is public knowledge, classes of the new session in our government schools mostly start only by July, with many secondary and higher secondary schools busy with late admissions all through June. Whereas, in Delhi and the KV group schools, all affiliated to CBSE, classes of the new session start in mid April. States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu for several decades start their classes right in earnest from the first week of June, with even ministers attending a school on the first day! Shall not the state have an academic and exam calendar suited to our climatic and socio-cultural background? Scope for our education planners and leaders to think afresh.....

In Arunachal, entire students of a secondary/higher secondary school lose more working days, when the school holds the CBSE supplementary examinations of class 12 for a week in July. Half-yearly examinations and the recently introduced model examinations by the education department in government schools in January leads to loss of more "learning days" (as against 'working days').

With several other climatic, geographical and administrative factors causing loss of unhindered "learning time" during the academic year, our government school students benefit from hardly 6 months of 'productive learning time'!

This loss of "productive learning" is taking place for classes 1 to 4, when class 5 state public examination is held and for classes 6 and 7, due to class 8 public exams, both held in February first half. And such 'productive learning loss' is getting carried forward year after year. Right from class 1 to class 10 and then 12!

In 2023-24, the CBSE pass percentage of Arunachal government schools class 10 was reported just 49.4% ! It amounts to a system of our public examinations for some, depriving helpless others of learning!

Hence, Arunachal urgently needs today an intervention to increase the productive learning days for all classes in all govt schools. Till such time, one more CBSE Improvement examination, just after 2 months of the first public examination, will hardly benefit most of the students of government schools. During months of April and May, almost all of them are in their villages, with a large section of them involved in sundry farming with their families. One hardly finds any academic or reading environment or facilities in these villages.

In view of the above, it would best serve the interest of Arunachal school education and our students to continue the present single CBSE examination system with a supplementary examination in July (The decision when to accept the new model must be

with the state), to have all our CBSE public examinations start only in March, considering our region-specific requirements.

Since Arunachal government schools offer very few of the minor subjects in class 10 and 12, the CBSE's plan to complete all major examinations in three weeks can be implemented in March itself.

This will enable our rural students to devote the Apr -May vacation in their villages and help family farming activities, acquiring valuable hands on learning.

It is hoped that the educational planners, leaders and the state education department will request the CBSE to initially implement the two examination scheme on a pilot project in the metros and perhaps the KVs, before spreading it across the whole country; to introduce a flexible time-table exam schedule, taking into consideration the local socio-cultural and climatic conditions of different regions. While some states may find February convenient, states like Arunachal could have CBSE public exams only in March.

It is upto the educated elite and our enlightened leaders to protect the educational interests of the Arunachal government school students.

(The writer is an educational and reading promotion activist, with over 44 years of experience with Arunachali youth & and the Coordinator of the Lohit Youth Library Network)

