

Topic: To be Hanged Till Educated

India's nightmarish **college admission process** started on **Monday, 29 May, 2017**, reminding everyone there's little life in this round-the-clock stress if your marks are **below 95 percent**.

In New Delhi — India's National Capital, home to the prestigious **Delhi University** and its clutch of top-notch colleges, *pandemonium* prevailed as authorities asked those above 95 percent to wait for special orientation classes. They were the *have-beens*.

The rest of *have-nots* were herded into a cacophonous auditorium where lecturers and counsellors kept reiterating something the students weren't ready to hear: Why it is important to **look elsewhere if marks are below 95 percent**.

Everything the students were told revolved around the highly competitive cut-off marks, or the base grade, that students must get before paying their fees and walking into the classes after friendly bouts of ragging from the seniors. A large chunk of the crowd knew they were **up for nothing**. "*Fill, fill, fill* up the forms for all courses, you do not know what you will eventually get. **Whatever comes is a bonus,**" screamed the counsellor.

Among the crowds were many who had come to the University with specific aspirations.

One of the India's most prestigious colleges, **Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC)**, had **100 percent as cut off** marks in the first list last year for **honours courses in commerce and humanities** — of which economics is a part — and closed the list in the **first shot** unlike other colleges which had a second round, even a third round of admission roll calls. Worse, there are chances that the **campus colleges will see a jump in cut-off this year** for most courses as the **number of students** across India **who scored 95 percent** and above in the CBSE Class XII has seen a **jump of around eight percent**. SRCC's officiating principal, Jaswinder Singh, principal of SGTB Khalsa College agrees with the stipulated increase in the cut-off marks and stiffening of the competition.

The **Delhites** will be facing more trouble this year as the number of students who have scored marks more than 95 percent has **gone down**, whereas the number has **increased** for the applicants who will be applying from **all over India**. Although, Delhi University has added 2000 seats in undergraduate courses, yet it is not going to be a relief as the number of aspirants has risen by four times. After observing such struggle in the campus, one wouldn't be surprised to find out the online application scenario even worse. The helpline is of no help as the students report.

Suman Kumar, principal of **Bluebells School** in **Delhi** feels it's all about mounting numbers and huge crowds of students seeking admissions for the best colleges.

"It's a pity that the students have to **suffer so much** and it's high time the CBSE **rethinks** evaluation norms, and students must look for alternate options, pursue second or third choices and not get frustrated. But it's easier said than done," Kumar said. As a principal, she has been at the heart of this nightmarish process, she knows what students go through **year after year** in a system that refuses to change.

Topic
Introduction

Students feel that their **gruelling study schedules, frequent testing and round-the-clock stress** was not worth the visit to a university "**where the doors are closed from the first day**". Due to this fierce admission process, it has left no option for the students but to take admission in the private institutions, which have ridiculous and unaffordable fees. As a result, parents have to take loans and borrow money, which further puts burden on the students as they are obliged to return the earnest efforts of their parents.

India's education **loan book** currently **stands at a whopping Rs 15,000 crore**, This will obviously increase as the demand for quality education as well as inflation is on the rise. An average domestic loan costs the around 4-5 lacs, whereas, an international study loan ranges between Rs. 20-60 lacs.

Reports say students in India — **unlike in the Western nations** — are under a constant state of anxiety, unable to study, concentrate, remember, sleep or eat. Many feel guilty because their parents have spent so much money on their children and have high expectations from them. "Parents often impose their own unfulfilled ambitions on their children.

Studies have time and again proved that students in India are **on the edge all the time**, thanks to **rising middle-class aspirations, parents' unrealistic ambitions, poor teaching standards in schools and fiercely competitive college admissions race**.

"Isn't it sheer nonsense for 1.5 million to take entrance for medical and engineering colleges when only 10,000 will get through?" I think parents, teachers and the students themselves need to make a better assessment about choosing the career pathway.

The pressure in India increases because parents convey a deadly message to their children when in school: **Excel or be left behind**. *Temples in India are scribbled with pleas from students seeking admission to top colleges*. "Every year, students read in magazines about top colleges, wish there was a list for alternate courses, even worst colleges. But who will bell the cat?

As the students are not able to get admitted into Indian institutions that will help them get a good placement, students are choosing to study abroad and settle there. At least they can get a sustainable blue collar job if nothing more. The children and their parents are ready to pledge their homesc gold and silver to board the flight.

Seasoned journalist **Arindam Mukherjee**, who has been tracking **educational trends** in India for nearly **two decades** says the admission procedures remain totally convoluted; top colleges have no seats and a large chunk of private *colleges charge high fees but lack quality faculty*.

He cites the example of the JIPMER medical college in Puducherry, **considered among the best** in India, charging **Rs 20,000 per year** for a five year MBBS course, and the **Amrita School of Medicine in Kochi** charges **Rs 35,00,000 for a similar course**.

"So, the 95 percent plus marks becomes very, very important. Its your perfect stepping stone to get into the good colleges which will charge low fees, else you burn cash on private colleges," says Mukherjee.

Some claimed the biggest reason for stress for students in India is the **batch-shuffling system** followed in schools. *If bimonthly scores are less, students are clubbed with low-scorers and mediocre teachers. The best teachers go to the top groups with special blazers or scholar badges*.

In faraway Mumbai, *columnist and author Shobhaa De* said she feels the same every year. De is writing a column highlighting *why the education system in India needs a drastic overall, especially the admission process*. "I, for some strange reasons, continue to get nightmares around the time when admissions take place. What kind of marks are these? **Can a college realistically have a 100 percent cut off mark?**" asks De.

Every other day one reads newspaper reports of **a child committing suicide** because of poor grades. And my heart breaks. **Is a young life worth less than that certificate?** So what if the kid fails? *If parents can't stand by the child's failure, they don't deserve to participate in the success either.*

As parents, their job is to make the child feel good about himself/herself - no matter what! I have observed parents who take **a rejection** slip from a college as a **personal insult**. Parents who think *it is they who have failed* the test. Along with making their kid feel awful, they pile on personal guilt and frustration. They compare the child to other, high achieving siblings, or cousins, or neighbour's kids. This is not called instilling feelings of 'healthy competition'. It is anything but! **It is sadistic and cruel.** *Children can get scarred for life when insensitive parents taunt them about low grades, low achievements. Why demand perfection from a child? Are parents perfect?*

No wonder student suicide rate has shot up dramatically in the past few years.

Colleges need to review their own policies. It is cruel to reject students who fall into **the 'average'** category. What's wrong with average? Are high marks the be all and end all of a child's potential? What if the child is differently gifted? What if there are other, far greater achievements to boast of? Creative achievements, for example? Or a brilliant, out of the box idea? Such a child has no place in our colleges, which only look at a piece of a paper and decide a child's future. Most colleges go by marks alone - **there is no interview process**. How often do we as adults, miss a child's real potential, or true calling, because we are judging him/her on the basis of **one set of grades alone?**

Education is **not just** a **personal or domestic** issue, it concerns the **whole nation**. The **society, the government and the concerned education departments** ought to come together and find a healthy and sustainable structure that would bring better opportunities not only in the **engineering, managerial and medical studies**, but also help flourish **the creative, social and athletic fields**. All the colleges and universities should be better equipped with **human, financial and infrastructural** resources to produce a variety of individuals, who should be able to be employed in a variety of fields.

Read further:

<http://www.businessinsider.in/You-will-need-100-75-score-to-secure-an-admission-in-Economics-at-Lady-Shriram-College/articleshow/47813255.cms>

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2017/may/23/delhi-university-admission-aspirants-face-problems-while-registering-online-1608177.html>

<http://indianexpress.com/article/education/as-delhi-grapples-with-admission-chaos-gurgaon-parents-say-theyve-faced-it-too-nursery-4465379/>