

Review of Classes III and VI Year-end assessments

November 2016



Bhutan Council of School Examinations and Assessment

Acknowledgements

Overall direction and advice: Tenzin Dorji, Secretary of Examinations, BCSEA

Authors

Pedup Dukpa, SRO, REC
Sonam Lhamo, EMO, BCSEA
Kesang Deki Tshering, Subject Specialist,
BCSEA
Sangay Tenzin, CPO, BCSEA
Kinley Dema, EMO, BCSEA
Arjun Kumar Gurung, Principal EMO, BCSEA
Mani Dorji, EMO, BCSEA
Sharda Rai, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Renuka Chettri, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA

Data Collection:

Pedup Dukpa, SRO, REC
Tshering Tenzing, Executive Specialist,
BCSEA
Sangay Tenzin, CPO, BCSEA
Sonam Lhamo, EMO, BCSEA
Kinley Dema, EMO, BCSEA
Arjun Kumar Gurung, Principal EMO, BCSEA
Mani Dorji, EMO, BCSEA
Sharda Rai, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Renuka Chettri, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Loden Chozin, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Pema Wangdi, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Jambay Wangmo, ICT Officer, BCSEA
Chador Wangmo, PA to Secretary, BCSEA
Kezang Dema, Administrative Asst., BCSEA

Research Tools Development:

Pedup Dukpa, SRO, REC
Tshering Tenzing, Executive Specialist, BCSEA
Kesang Deki Tshering, Subject Specialist,
BCSEA
Sangay Tenzin, CPO, BCSEA
Sonam Lhamo, EMO, BCSEA
Kinley Dema, EMO, BCSEA
Arjun Kumar Gurung, Principal EMO, BCSEA
Mani Dorji, EMO, BCSEA
Sharda Rai, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Renuka Chettri, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA

Data Entry and Transcription:

Pedup Dukpa, SRO, REC
Kesang Deki Tshering, Subject Specialist,
BCSEA
Sangay Tenzin, CPO, BCSEA
Sonam Lhamo, EMO, BCSEA
Kinley Dema, EMO, BCSEA
Arjun Kumar Gurung, Principal EMO, BCSEA
Mani Dorji, EMO, BCSEA
Sharda Rai, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Renuka Chettri, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Shriman Gurung, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Pema Wangdi, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Loden Chozin, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Kencho Dem, Subject Coordinator, BCSEA
Jambay Wangmo, ICT Officer, BCSEA
Chador Wangmo, PA to Secretary, BCSEA
Babita Gurung, Administrative Asst., BCSEA

Forward

This report was prepared by the Assessment and Monitoring Division (AMD), BCSEA, in collaboration with the Royal Education Council (REC) to get further insights into the perception of the students, teachers, principals and DEOs/TEOs on the Classes III and VI year-end competency based assessment. The year-end competency based assessment for Classes III and VI are being conducted annually by the BCSEA so that the information obtained could be used to improve and strengthen the assessment system and also to obtain optimum benefit from such competency based assessment.

This report fulfils the AMD's mandate of providing support to study the existing competency-based assessment system and exploring ways to strengthen it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the schools, principals, teachers, students and the DEOs/TEOs for getting involved in providing relevant and reliable data required to generate this report.

Sangay Tenzin
Chief Program Officer
Assessment and Monitoring Division
Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment

ISBN 978-99936- 718-6- 2

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Chapter One: Introduction	4
1.1 Education system of Bhutan.....	4
1.2 Brief history of examination system of Bhutan.....	4
1.3 Mandate of the BCSEA.....	6
1.4 Context of the Study.....	7
1.5 Key Research Questions.....	7
1.6 Significance of the Study	8
1.7 Organisation of the report.....	8
Chapter Two: Literature Review	10
2.1 Purpose of assessment.....	10
2.2 Assessment.....	10
2.2.1 Bhutanese Context: Assessment in Classes III and VI.....	10
2.3 Traditional Assessment system	12
2.4 Modern Assessment system	12
2.4.1 Competency Based Assessment	13
2.5 Procedures of Assessment.....	13
2.5.1 Types of Tests	14
2.5.2 Standardized Assessment	14
2.6 Benefits of Standardized Testing.....	16
2.7 Disadvantages of Standardized Testing.....	17
2.8 Alternative Practices	17
2.9 Countries that have Assessment Practices Similar to Bhutan.....	18
2.10 CASE STUDY	18
2.10.1 England (Statutory Assessment Test-SATs)	18
2.10.2 Singapore (Primary School Leaving Examination-PSLE)	19
2.10.3 HONG KONG (Territory-wide System Assessment-TSA).....	20
Chapter Three: Methodology	21
3.1 Sampling Design	21
3.2 Instrumentation.....	24
3.2.1 Conceptual Framework	24

3.2.2 Piloting of Research Instruments	25
3.2.3 Teacher/Principal/DEO/TEO Survey Questionnaire	25
3.2.4 Class VI Student Survey Questionnaire	26
3.2.5 Semi-structured FGD Questions for Teachers.....	26
3.2.6 Semi-structured Oral Questions for Class III students	26
3.2.7 One-on-One Interview Question with School Leaders (Principals and DEOs/TEOs)	26
3.4 Data Analysis	26
4. Main Study Findings	28
A. General Perception of the Target Respondents.....	28
A.1.1 Overall impression of Class III year-end assessment	28
A.1.2 Overall impression of Class VI year-end assessment	29
A.2 View on the importance of the year-end assessment	30
A.3 Understanding of the rationale behind the year-end assessment	31
B. High Stake	33
B.1 Year-end assessment as board examination.....	33
B.2 Worry about the year-end assessments	34
B.3 Student pressure	35
B.4 View on whether teachers teach for the year-end assessment.....	36
B.5 Taught according to the learning outcomes	36
B.6. View on the confidence of students to do well.....	37
B.7 Tuition and Remedial Classes	37
B.8 Student view of the coverage of syllabus.....	38
B.9 Students feedback on homework and assessment practices.....	38
C. Relevancy of the year-end assessment.....	42
C.1.1 DEOs/TEOs, Principals and Teachers view on relevancy of year-end assessment	42
C.1.2 Students view on relevancy of the year-end assessment	42
C.2.2 View on whether Class VI year-end assessment is appropriate.....	43
C.3.1 Conceptual learning gap between Class III and IV.....	44
C.3.2 Conceptual learning gap between Class VI and VII	44
D. Weightage of the year-end assessment	45
D.1. Weightage of Class III year-end assessment	45
D.2. Weightage of Class VI year-end assessment.....	46
E. Setting of questions by BCSEA.....	47

E.1. Setting of questions for Class III	47
E.2. Setting of questions for Class VI	48
E.3 Should BCSEA focus on just the Class X and XII examinations.....	49
E.4 Decentralized setting of questions to schools.....	49
F. Alternatives	51
F.1 View on strengthening National Education Assessment	51
G. Implementation.....	51
G.1 Continous Assessment Marks	52
G.2 Allocation of classes to Class III and VI teachers.....	52
G.3 Usage of year-end assessment data	52
G.4 Professional Development.....	53
Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations.....	54
5.1 Discussion.....	54
5.2 Recommendations:	55
6. REFERENCES	56
Annexure:.....	60
1. Ministry of Education Approval Letter.....	60
2. National Statistical Bureau Survey Clearance Letter.....	61
3. Enumerator’s Instruction Manual	62
4. Teacher/Principal/DEO/TEO Survey Questionnaire	65
5. Student Survey Questionnaire	73
1. Semi-structured Focus Group Discussion Questions for Teachers	76
2. Semi-structured Oral interview questions for Class III students.....	78
3. Semi-structured One-on-One Interview Questions.....	79
4. Descriptive Statistics of the Teacher/Principal/DEO/TEO Survey Questionnaire.....	80
6. Descriptive Statistics of the Student Survey Questionnaire.....	103
7. Summary of the findings of the FGDs.....	111
8. Summary of the findings of the One-on-One Interviews.....	118
9. Summary of the findings of the Oral interviews.....	122

List of Tables

Table 1. Composition of Class III assessment marks	11
Table 2. Composition of Class VI assessment marks	11
Table 3. Required sample size by target respondents	21
Table 4. Proportionate strata sample size matrix	22
Table 5. Detailed proportionate strata sample size matrix.....	23

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1. Conceptual framework</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Figure 2. The process of data analysis.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Figure 3. Overall impression of the Class III year-end assessment</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Figure 4. Overall impression of the Class VI year-end assessment</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Figure 5. Target respondents view on the importance of year-end assessments.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Figure 6. Teachers and Students view on the importance of Class III year-end assessment</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Figure 7. Teachers and Students view on the importance of Class VI year-end assessment</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Figure 8. Understanding of the rationale behind the year-end assessment.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Figure 9. Understanding of the rationale behind the year-end assessment (Class III and VI teachers).....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Figure 10. Students understanding of the reasons for the year-end assessment.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Figure 11. Target respondents understanding of the objective of the year-end assessment</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Figure 12. Target respondents view on year-end assessment as board examination</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Figure 13. Target respondents view on the worry about the year-end assessment.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Figure 14. Target respondent view on whether students are under pressure</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Figure 15. Target respondents view on whether teachers teach for the year-end assessments.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Figure 16. View on whether students are taught according to the learning outcomes</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Figure 17. Target respondents view on their confidence in students to do well</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Figure 18. Students Feedback on Tuition and Remedial Classes</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Figure 19. Feedback on subject-wise syllabus coverage by Students</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Figure 20. Students view on homework and pressure</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Figure 21. Student view on fairness in correction.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Figure 22. Student view on record keeping by teachers</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Figure 23. Class III Teachers feedback on the subject wise coverage of syllabus</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Figure 24. Class III Teachers feedback on stress caused by assessment practices</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Figure 25. Class VI Teachers feedback on the subject wise coverage of syllabus</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Figure 26. Class VI Teachers feedback on stress caused by assessment practices</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Figure 27. Target Respondents view on whether the year-end assessment is relevant</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Figure 28. Students view on relevancy of the year-end assessment</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Figure 29. Target respondents view on whether the year-end assessment is appropriate</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Figure 30. Target respondents view on whether the year-end assessment is appropriate</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Figure 31. View on whether there is conceptual learning gap between Class III and IV</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Figure 32. View on whether there is conceptual learning gap between Class VI and VII</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Figure 33. View on whether the Class III year-end assessment weightage is appropriate.....</i>	<i>45</i>

<i>Figure 34. Class III teachers teaching the subject view on the weightage</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Figure 35. Target respondent view on the Class VI year-end assessment weightage</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Figure 36. Class VI teachers teaching the subject view on the weightage</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Figure 37. Setting of questions by BCSEA for Class III should be continued.....</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Figure 38. Setting of questions by BCSEA for Class VI should be continued</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Figure 39. BCSEA should focus on Classes X and XII examinations.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Figure 40. View on the school based assessment.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Figure 41. View on the readiness of schools to receive soft copy of questions</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Figure 42. Teachers view on the readiness of schools to handle the year-end exam</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Figure 43. View on strengthening the NEA as alternative to the year-end assessments</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Figure 44. View on whether school ranking is appropriate</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Figure 45. Feedback on continuous assessment.....</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Figure 46. Teachers' feedback on allocation of classes</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Figure 47. Teacher view of the usage of year-end exam data.....</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Figure 48. Teachers view on the need for PD on School Based Assessment by location</i>	<i>53</i>

Executive Summary

Context

This study was commissioned to the task force comprising of officials from Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment, Royal Education Council and Education Monitoring Division to do an in-depth review of the Classes III and VI year-end assessment by ascertaining whether the key stakeholders (students, teachers, principals, parents, Dzongkhag Education Officers and Thromde Education Officers) viewed it to be high stake and check the readiness of schools to develop their own questions and conduct the examination as per the mode of assessment prescribed by the curriculum designed by REC among others. This would enable the policy and decision makers to make informed decision on the way forward for the year-end assessment for Classes III and VI.

Methodology

A mixed-method approach was used as it enabled collecting both the quantitative and qualitative data from the target respondents. Survey method was used to collect quantitative data from Class VI students, teachers, principals and DEO/TEOs, while for the Class III students oral method was used. Focus group discussion (FGD) and one-on-one interview with identified target respondents such as teachers, principals and DEOs were used to collect qualitative data to draw out further insights.

Multi-stage probabilistic sampling procedure was used to determine the sample size that is truly representative of the population. The formula published by the research division of the NEA, US, was used to calculate the required sample size for the identified target respondents (Table 1).

$$\text{Required Sample Size, } n = \frac{X^2 N P (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

- Where,
- X² is the table value of Chi-Square @ d.f. = 1 for desired 95 % confidence level = 3.841;
- N is the total population size of the target respondent;
- P is the population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 since this would provide the maximum sample size); and
- d is the degree of accuracy = 0.05.

Table 1. Required sample size by target respondents

Target Respondent	Total population (N)	Required sample size for this study (n)
Class III Student	12503	373
Class VI Student	14539	374
Class III Teacher	532	223
Class VI Teacher	1064	282
Total	28638	1252

Instrumentation

The conceptual framework was used as an analytical tool to visually present the key factors under consideration. It was first developed so as to get clarity on scope of the work as well as to decide on the required information to do a review of the year-end assessment for Classes III and VI (Figure 1).

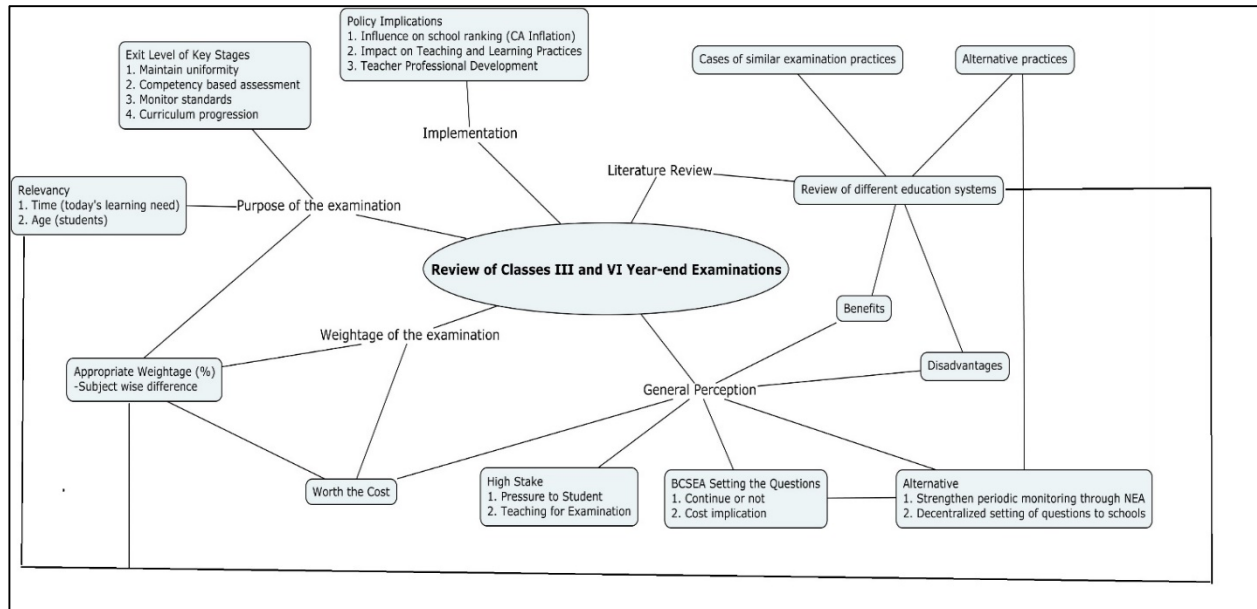


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Main Findings

This study provides empirical evidence to ascertain the fact that most DEOs, TEOs, principals, teachers, and students view the Classes III and VI year-end assessment as board examination. The reason for this outlook was identified to be due to a combination of factors, the most important factor identified was the year-end results being used to influence school ranking and the individual teacher performance and the arrangement of BCSEA setting the question papers. Consequently, schools, principals, teachers and students felt undue pressure even though technically the actual weightage for the year-end assessment is less than 50 percent. This study also confirmed the practice of manipulation of the Continuous Assessment (CA) marks mainly to positively influence the school and individual teacher performance ratings.

All respondents of this study was observed to understand the rationale behind the year-end assessment very clearly. At the same time almost all of them viewed the year-end assessment to be very important. As a result, it is not surprising that teachers teach for the year-end assessment and students are made to rehearse past question papers. Schools during the assembly make it a point to remind the students of the year-end assessment frequently and parents also remind the students to be serious and focus on doing the year-end assessment well. Principals in particular raised concern on Class III students not taking the year-end assessment seriously. Almost all schools provide remedial classes to the Classes III and VI students due to the year-end assessment and about 40 percent of students across the country take tuitions, this illustrates the buildup of stress and anxiety in students. In particular, more than 85 percent of the students explicitly

expressed worry about the year-end assessment and 70 percent of the students stated to be under pressure to prepare for the year-end assessment.

From the field, contradictory view on the relevancy of year-end assessment was received. In particular, the data received from the survey on the relevancy of the Class III year-end assessment was very different from the FGD and interviews. In the survey significant proportion of the target respondents expressed that both the Classes III and VI year-end assessment were relevant. However, during the FGD with teachers and during the one-on-one interview with the school leaders (Principals, DEOs and TEOs) many of them stated that the students were too young for any strong form of written examination and they strongly suggested the discontinuing of the setting of questions by BCSEA. As an alternative, many of the respondents proposed the institution of Dzongkhag level (central) preparation of the competency based questions, along with the conduct and evaluation of the papers. This strategy was stated to have multiple benefits in terms of curbing manipulation, providing opportunity to all schools and teachers to be a part of the process of evaluation (which was pointed out to be presently benefitting only a handful of teachers) and ensuring professional justice is done in assessment. Further, more than 90 percent of the teachers stated that they know the technique of setting the questions and that they know the context better and will be in a better position to do professional justice in assessing their students.

Recommendations:

1. Ministry of Education (EMD) to review school ranking practice to curb manipulation of marks and to enable effective assessment of the true performance of students and schools.
2. BCSEA to stop setting the questions for the Class III year-end assessment and to assist Dzongkhags to conduct the proper assessment of students without putting too much pressure on students.
3. REC to review the weightage of Class VI year-end assessment and collaboration with BCSEA and MoE on putting an effective monitoring and support mechanism for effective CA in Schools
4. Strengthen Class VI year-end assessment by instituting Dzongkhag level evaluation instead of the individual schools doing their own evaluation mainly to curb manipulations and to improve the efficiency to fulfill the overall objective of conducting the assessment.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Education system of Bhutan

Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck, the first King of Bhutan ushered modern education system into Bhutan by sending forty-six boys to India for study in 1914¹. Since, then the number of students that have availed modern education has significantly increased. Currently, there are 251 Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Centres, 539 Schools catering to Classes PP to XII, 96 Extended Classrooms, 51 Central Schools, 20 Autonomous Schools, 11 Special Institutes, 13 Tertiary Institutes, 8 Technical Institutes, 14 Continuing Education Centres and 721 Non-Formal Education Centres catering to 203,269 students (AES, 2015). As per the National Statistical Bureau's projection, the population of Bhutan at 2015 was 757,042, which would imply that 27 percent of the total population of Bhutan is enrolled in schools and institutes.

The school based education structure in Bhutan comprises of 11 years of free basic education from Classes Pre-Primary (PP) to X, divided into four years of lower primary education (PP-III), followed by three year of upper primary education (IV-VI) and four years of secondary education (VII-X). After Class X, a cohort of students continue their education in Classes XI and XII, while a different cohort of students either join the vocational training institutes or tries to enter the job market. Similarly, after completion of Class XII, a cohort of students continue their studies at the tertiary level either inside the country or outside the country, while the rest tries to enter the job market.

The formal entry age to school is six and the medium of instructions in the schools are Dzongkha (national language) and English. Apart from the conventional subjects, the school curricula also include training in traditional arts, crafts, health and physical education, and moral education.

There are Non-Formal Education (NFE) provision for those youths and adults who missed the chance for formal schooling. Similarly, there are provision for Continuing Education for individual who want to continue their education or upgrade their education level.

1.2 Brief history of examination system of Bhutan

Ever since modern education was introduced, schools have had some form of written examinations as a dominant feature. The brief history of examinations and the agency overseeing it is as follows:

- In 1972, the Department of Education introduced the 'All Bhutan Class V Common Examination' (ABCCE) as the first Bhutanese external examination, which was later renamed as the 'Primary School Certificate Examination' (PSCE) in 1986 at Class VI level.
- From 1972 to 1981, setting of the ABCCE papers and evaluation of the answer scripts were done by the Indian education authorities. In 1982 and 1983, question papers were still set outside Bhutan but the evaluation was done within Bhutan with the support of expatriate

¹ The monastic form of education existed for centuries before Modern Education in Bhutan and it continues to do so contributing to the flourishing language, arts, literature and philosophy, among others.

chief examiners however, from 1984 onwards, both the setting of question papers and evaluation of answer scripts were done within the country.

- In 1974, the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (Class X) and the Indian School Certificate Examination (Class XII) were first conducted in Bhutan by the Council for Indian School Certificate Examination. An ‘Examination Cell’ was established as a separate unit headed by the Controller of Examinations under the Directorate of Education to coordinate and conduct the examinations.
- In 1975, the ‘All Bhutan Class VIII Examination’ also called the Lower Secondary School Certificate Examination (LSSCE) was initiated. This examination was developed and processed by the Indian education authority until the mid-1980s when the responsibility for the conduct was localized.
- In 1986, the name ‘Examination Cell’ was changed to the ‘Bhutan Board of Examinations’.
- From 1989 to 2001, BBE conducted the Class X examination of the Institute of Language and Cultural Studies.
- From 1989 to 2003, BBE conducted the Primary Teachers’ Certificate Examination (PTCE) of the National Institute of Education now called the Paro College of Education, Royal University of Bhutan. Similarly, from 1994 to 2003, BBE also conducted the Zhungkha Teachers’ Certificate Examination (ZTCE) of the National Institute of Education.
- In the 1990s, BBE became the Associate Member of the Council of Boards of School Education (COBSE) in India.
- In 1993, BBE Board was constituted and it had its 1st Board meeting on 10th April 1994.
- In 1996:
 - the first joint Bhutan Board and Indian Certificate of Secondary Education Examination was held; and
 - BBE developed and conducted the Class XII examination of the Institute of Language and Cultural Studies.
- From 1996 to 2000, question papers for Dzongkha, History and Civics, Geography and Economics were set and evaluated in Bhutan, while the remaining subjects such as English, Mathematics, Sciences, Computer Science and Commerce were administered by the Indian partner.
- In 1999, the responsibility for the ‘All Bhutan Class VI Common Examination’ was devolved to the schools. Question papers, model answers and marking schemes were provided by the BBE every year in December. The schools conducted the examination and sent the consolidated results to the BBE for analysis and feedback. Similar arrangement had been applied to the Lower Secondary School Examination for Class VIII since 2006.
- In 2001, BBE took over the complete conduct of Class X examinations and named it as the Bhutan Certificate of Secondary Education. This examination was pre-poned from March to December. In the same manner, the Indian School Certificate Examination was conducted in December 2001.

- From 2002, BBE started coordinating the National Education Assessment (NEA) using standardized test.
- In 2004, the first nation-wide monitoring study on Class VI literacy and numeracy was completed. Thereafter, NEA on Class VI Dzongkha (2006), followed by Class X Mathematics and English (2007), Class VI Literacy and Numeracy (2011), and Class X Mathematics and English in 2013 were conducted.
- In 2006, BBE took over the complete conduct of the Class XII examination which was renamed as the Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate Examination.
- In 2009, the ILCS Classes X and XII examinations were named as Language and Cultural Studies Certificate Examination. In the same year, BBE started to conduct this examination for the Dzongkha Language Institutes.
- In 2011:
 - ‘Bhutan Board of Examinations’ was delinked from the Ministry of Education and renamed as the ‘Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment’ (BCSEA);
 - BCSEA started the Competency Based Assessment for Class III to assess the core competency in the three main subjects: English, Mathematics and Dzongkha; and
 - BCSEA developed Teacher Reference for Competency Based Assessment (TRCBA) instruments for Classes V, VII and IX.
- In 2014:
 - BCSEA incorporated the Competency Based Assessment in Dzongkha Environmental Science (EVS) for Class III and in all subjects for Class VI. Competency based items were also incorporated in the Classes X and XII examinations; and
 - BCSEA became a member of Network on Education Quality and Monitoring in Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP, UNESCO, Bangkok, Thailand).

1.3 Mandate of the BCSEA

The following are the mandates of the BCSEA:

- Creating research capability and assessment practices of international quality;
- Improving the standard of public examinations and assessment practices in schools;
- Monitoring through feedback and input regarding levels of student’s learning;
- Providing professional development to principals, teachers and other personnel in the field of examinations and assessment;
- Conducting research into policies and programmes to improve the quality of student learning and teaching;

- Providing insight and support to study existing school-based assessment practices and strengthen the same;
- Developing and publishing research-based support materials to strengthen school based assessment and practices;
- Providing examples of best practices;
- Conducting national and international conferences, seminars, symposia etc. in areas of assessment; and
- Facilitating exchange programmes with other international institutes of repute.

1.4 Context of the Study

After the institutionalization of the Competency Based Assessment Test (CBAT) in all subjects for Classes III and VI in 2014, the issue regarding the confusions of the year-end assessment being treated as a board examination started to surface. As a result, during the 4th BCSEA Board of Director's (BoD) meeting held on 30th May 2015 this issue was discussed among other agenda. Hence, the BoD advised the formation of a task force comprising of officials from MoE, REC and BCSEA to look into the issue.

During the task force meeting held on 13th August 2015, after thorough deliberation on the year-end assessment and CA conducted in schools (School Based Assessment), it was observed that parents and students may be viewing the year-end assessment as board examinations. Further, it was remarked that schools may be able to develop their own questions and conduct the examination as per the mode of assessment prescribed by the curriculum designed by REC. With this backdrop, the task force recommended the need to conduct an empirical study to ascertain the facts and make recommendations on the year-end assessment.

Further, the Cabinet also directed BCSEA to conduct an in-depth study to review the year-end assessment of Classes III and VI. Accordingly in the 7th BCSEA BoD meeting conducted on 26th May 2016 and the Biennial Education Conference held in Phuntsholing from 6th - 12th January 2016, a resolution to collaboratively conduct a study by REC, MoE and BCSEA was identified and endorsed.

1.5 Key Research Questions

To fulfill the objective of carrying out an in-depth study to review the year-end assessment for Classes III and VI, the following key research questions were formulated by the task force comprising of BCSEA and REC officials:

1. Is the current year-end assessment at Classes III and VI appropriate?
 - i. Is the current year-end assessment relevant in the context of today's learning needs?
 - ii. Does it help to maintain the standards across the country?
 - iii. Does it help to enhance student learning competencies?

- iv. To what extent is the Classes III and VI year-end assessment effective in achieving the student learning outcomes?
2. What are the views of the target respondents on the present assessment system?
 - i. Is it viewed as a high stake examination?
 - ii. Is the weightage appropriate?
 - iii. Are students under pressure?
 - iv. Should BCSEA continue setting the question paper?
 - What are the policy implications?
 - Would teachers be more autonomous and accountable?
3. What are the findings of the literature review on the year-end assessment for Classes III and VI?
 - i. Are there cases of similar examination practices?
 - ii. What are the benefits and disadvantages of standardized testing?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The following are the significance of the study:

1. This study is a home-grown document generated in collaboration with BCSEA and REC and it has the potential to further strengthen the professional ties among these agencies;
2. This study consolidates all data available on the Classes III and VI year-end assessment and hence has the potential to serve as a comprehensive reference document;
3. This study provides an opportunity to all relevant stakeholders such as the students, teachers, principals, DEOs, TEOs and education officials to voice out their concerns and suggestions for effective implementation of the assessment practices;
4. This study ascertains the appropriateness of Classes III and VI year-end assessment while also clarifying the public view; and
5. This study enables the policy and decision makers to make informed decisions on the way forward for the year-end assessment for Classes III and VI.

1.7 Organisation of the report

The review report is organized into five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, main study findings, and discussion and recommendation. In the introduction chapter, a brief write up on the education system of Bhutan and the history of BCSEA, mandate of BCSEA, context of the study and the significance of the study are stated. In the methodology chapter, sampling design and instrumentation are indicated. In the findings chapter, the general perception of the target respondents in terms of the overall impression of Classes III and VI year-end assessment, view on the importance of the year-end assessment, teachers' and students' view on the importance of Classes III and VI year-end assessment, understanding of the rationale behind the year-end assessment, teachers' and students' understanding of the rationale behind the assessment, and

students' feedback on homework and assessment practices, are presented. Followed by a chapter on discussion and recommendation.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Purpose of assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to measure the learner's knowledge, reasoning skills and aptitude. Apart from these, it is to maintain the quality and standard of the education. A test may be administered orally or on paper or on a computer practically in a confined area.

2.2 Assessment

Assessment is the process of deciding, collecting and making judgments on the evidence of students' performance in specific learning targets (Harlen, 2007). It encompasses both the classroom based assessment and large-scale external tests and examinations, commonly termed as formative and summative assessment.

Literature differentiates formative and summative assessment as in, the former form of assessment takes into account all the classroom-assessment inclusive of frequent, interactive assessments of student progress, and the latter form of assessment is used as a measurement tool to check what the students have learnt at the end of a term, a unit. The scores of such assessment may be used to promote students, to ensure that required standards for certification either as a completion of a school or to enter certain occupations or further education are met. (EPPI, 2002; OECD, 2005a; Harlen, 2007). These scores can be taken as the sole basis for promotion and certification of students or they may be used in combination with formative assessment scores.

2.2.1 Bhutanese Context: Assessment in Classes III and VI

With the signing of McKinsey Project Compact for 2010 – 2013, the year-end assessment of Classes III and VI became Competency Based Assessment Test (CBAT) administered by the BCSEA in Classes III and VI since 2014. Class III CBAT is administered on all the students at the end of three years of schooling (excluding pre-primary) and Class VI CBAT is administered at the end of six years of schooling (excluding pre-primary). CBAT is designed to assess skills, abilities and knowledge acquired by the student at the end of the course of study. Both external and internal assessments are included in the promotion of students in lower and upper primary exit levels.

Standard test instruments for CBAT such as test blueprint, test items, model answers and marking scheme for each subject are produced by the test developers, comprising of teachers from various schools along with the subject coordinators and the test moderators to assure uniformity in assessment and distribution of marks. The CBAT items are aligned to the learning outcomes developed and prescribed by the Royal Education Council (REC). CBAT Framework is based on the broad domains encompassing content strand, skill, process and the context.

Class VI question papers are out of 100 marks with a writing time of 2 hours. The paper constitutes 50% competency based assessment test items and 50% traditional items. The items are ordered from the easiest items to the most difficult items and also along the developmental continuum. The items are designed to provide an opportunity to the students to demonstrate a high level of thinking skill. Both formative and summative assessments are applied while assessing a student at Class

VI. Formative assessment is normally done through observations and is not recorded to grade the students. Summative Assessment is used to determine a mark or a grade.

Class III question papers are out of 50 marks with a writing time of 1 hour. The items are carefully graded to cater for a wide range of student abilities using contexts and competencies that stimulate students' interest and engage in thinking. The assessment items consist of range of multiple choice items and free-response questions.

CBAT administered by the BCSEA is a criterion-referenced test. However, a child has to obtain a pass mark of 40% from the total score awarded after adding the CBAT test score to the score achieved through internal assessment. This determines the promotion of a child to the next grade.

CBAT is conducted annually for which the standardized test items are send by external agency BCSEA. Unlike public examinations, the conduct and the scoring is done at the school level. However, a part of the result is used in promotion of the students and to rank the schools nation-wide.

Royal Education Council has prescribed the following weightage in terms of percentage for all the subjects for promotion.

Table 1. Composition of Class III assessment marks

Subjects	Internal weightage (from school)	External weightage (CBAT Year-end test)
English	90%	10%
Dzongkha	90%	10%
Mathematics	75%	25%
EVS	70%	30%

Table 2. Composition of Class VI assessment marks

Subjects	Internal weightage(from school)	External weightage (CBAT Year-end test)
English	75%	25%
Dzongkha	75%	25%
Mathematics	60%	40%
Science	70%	30%
Social Studies	70%	30%

All primary and lower secondary schools are used as assessment centers for their own students. CBAT assessment is administered, supervised and evaluated by their own teachers in their respective schools. The fact that all the schools have the same assessment throughout the country makes the analysis and evaluation of the performance reliable as stated in literature.

Since the CBAT assessment alone cannot assess all the three areas: knowledge, skills and attitudes, the assessment procedure is made more holistic by giving equal importance to continuous assessment. Such model of holistic assessment not only tests the cognitive dimensions but also the crucial key competencies of the learners; at the same time the assessment results can be used for making important decisions about student, educators and schools. Further, to gauge the effectiveness of the education system, BCSEA conducts a national assessment called the National Education Assessment (NEA) periodically on the population or cohorts.

2.3 Traditional Assessment system

The traditional assessment was built with an understanding of teachers' role to deliver curriculum, students' role to learn the curriculum and the assessment's role to measure the academic achievement of the students. The education system was predominantly input led and subject oriented. Learning of the students was judged through the administration of series of examinations throughout the year. Such system encouraged spending considerable amount of time on memorizing and learning for the test. Traditional assessment was characterized by limited assessment particularly stereotyped assessment procedures with narrow scope of action learning. Hence, making the process of successful mastery of subject very difficult.

Traditional assessment tests only facts and memorized data. Griffin et al, in 2012 further stressed that such assessment practices typically fail to measure the higher order thinking skills, knowledge, attributes and characteristics of self-directed and collaborative learning that are increasingly important for the fast changing world and the global economy.

2.4 Modern Assessment system

With the demand for better quality of education and better understanding of the diverse human learning needs, traditional assessment was found inconsistent. Government and the education system felt the need to prioritize the move towards improving the quality and standard of assessment. This brought a paradigm shift in the education system from examination driven to learning driven system. Through this modern system, schools are in a better position to provide holistic education that not only delivers curricula but also the attributes necessary for life. The timely and reliable information about the performance/achievement of the schools are considered for proper decision making. The modern education system has a variety of assessment methods under the umbrella of SBA that primarily has teacher assessment as the central element carried out by teachers on a continuous basis.

According to the Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills, Griffin, McGaw & Care (2012) stated that four categories of skills are: ways of thinking (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making and learning); ways of working (communication and collaboration); tools for working (information and communications technology and information literacy); and skills for living in the world (citizenship, life and career, and personal and social responsibility). Therefore, the recent system has adopted curricula that include competencies, cross-curricular activities, active and individual learning based on learning outcomes. The learning outcomes provide basis for teaching-learning and holistic assessment of learner's key competencies. Learners are able to obtain information about the knowledge, attitudes and skills and are also motivated to excel through valuable feedbacks about their strengths and weaknesses.

2.4.1 Competency Based Assessment

OECD's Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo) defines competencies as the ability to successfully meet complex demands in a particular context. Rychen & Salganik (2003) added that competencies enable mobilization of knowledge, cognitive and practical skills, along with social and behavior components such as attitudes, emotions, values and motivations. The elements that remain central to the comprehension of competency are knowledge, skills and attitudes and should not be thought in isolation to its cognitive dimension only. Similarly, Grant et al in 1979 defined competency based assessment as a form of assessment that is derived from a prescribed set of outcomes from which the assessors, students and interested relevant stake holders can all make reasonably objective judgments with respect to student achievement or non-achievement of these outcomes.

Framework for Competency Based Assessment (2015) points out that the CBA assessment intends to measure how well students can apply the knowledge and skills acquired at school and in real life situations. It also aims to test if the students can extrapolate the knowledge by analyzing and reasoning while solving problems in variety of situations. The European Commission's Policy Guideline of Assessment of Key Competences in initial education and training (2012), states that the assessments designed for key competences need to serve that learners' key competencies are firstly developed and secondly reported. The EU has identified five key competencies: digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competencies, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression.

In Bhutan, to keep up with the needs of the Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills, the MoE took the initiative of making the elementary level assessment a competency based by signing McKinsey's project on Accelerating Bhutan's Socio Economic Development (ABSD) in 2011. This was issued as a mandate under Charter 7 of Performance Compact to create a robust performance management system for students, schools and districts. The initiative went on to establish competency based assessment system for students primarily focused on measuring holistic development including learning outcomes. Consequently, BCSEA introduced school level based assessment for Class III in 2011 with an objective to assess the core competencies in three main subjects – English, Mathematics and Dzongkha which later extended to all other subjects. Dr. Rinchen (Secretary, BCSEA) explicitly stated in Business Bhutan, 17th September 2011 (weekly newspaper), not to term this assessment as a board exam but as school level based exam or competency-based assessment test.

2.5 Procedures of Assessment

The three main procedures to provide information on student learning are public (external) examinations, national assessment and international assessment of educational achievement.

Public examinations are the conventional practice of assessing the students' learning and the national assessments are relatively new (Greaney & Kellaghan, 1996, Kellaghan, 2003, Greaney and Kellaghan 2001a: 2001b) which are administered to find out the level of achievement not of individual student but of a whole education system.

National assessments are designed to give report on the achievement level of an entire educational system or its part (specific age group or class level are targeted) at a given time; the results are not of any individual participating student which affect any certification or promotion process but taken as data that can be used in a diagnostic process to improve the system or part thereof.

International assessment is similar to national assessments with the main difference being that international assessment is administered in more than one country. As the instruments are not representation of any country's curriculum, all the participating nations have to agree on its appropriateness along with the target age of the examinees. Some commonly used international assessments are the Trend in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

2.5.1 Types of Tests

Tests are of two types: low stake and high stake. A test is called a low stake when it doesn't carry any significant or public consequences. The results typically matter more to an individual teacher or student than to anyone else. It is not used to name and shame any institute or country. High stake test brings about great influence on the certification, promotion of an individual or an institute or a country based on the outcome of its result.

2.5.2 Standardized Assessment

A standardized assessment is a test designed in such a way that questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent (Pophm, 1991). Keeping these variables consistent make the results objective, valid and meaningful when used to compare the quality of students' learning (Zucker, 2004). One of the goals of the standardized testing is to compare schools on a national level where every participating school has the same content covered on each of the test.

2.5.2.1 Countries that Practice Standardized Testing

In the United States of America, there were no standardized tests prior to 1965 in the early grades. The early grades were considered for growth and development in a child's life. The focus on the standardized testing in Mathematics and Science began when the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik in 1957, which the Americans considered as a challenge both politically and intellectually. By the late 1900s, the standardized testing took a lot of importance from kindergarten through college. Subjects frequently tested are Mathematics, Reading, Science and Writing. Other subjects are tested periodically. The assessments are active measure of progress of students from K-12.

For the Unites States, standardized tests are a vital tool for measuring the effectiveness of schooling and for holding schools and districts accountable for the education of children. Standardized test scores of elementary schools are published and are public record.

Other countries that rely on national student assessments to provide feedback on their educational systems are Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Assessments are conducted in three key stages in the United Kingdom which includes Key Stage

2 (Years 3 – 6), similarly in Australia the National Assessment Program (Literacy and Numeracy) are conducted in Years 3, 5 and 7. Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, USA administer national assessments on early years such as 3, 4, 5.

At the same time, sample student assessments are also administered in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Scotland and the United States.

In Asia, Bangladesh conducts public examinations at Classes 5, 8, 10 and 12 for selection, certification and promotion purposes. The ranking of the schools is based on these public examinations that are conducted annually; as such these examinations are regarded highly by both the government and the public. However, the examinations have been criticised of being too knowledge based that have students being taught to write the test and not being actually tested for their skills.

The Primary School Leaving Examination in Singapore is a national examination to assess their students' abilities to study either academics or vocational courses. South Korea, a major economy in Asia is a top performing nation in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country in Reading, Literacy, Mathematics and Science. The country's elementary and the secondary students are made to prepare for the College Scholastic Aptitude Test, which has an enormous and life/career deciding influence of the lives of the children taking it.

The West African Examination's Council established in 1952 administers and grades examination at lower grades in select countries (Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) and also the regional West African Senior School Certificate examination. The nature of these examinations conducted are high stake and used for future deciding careers and choices.

2.5.2.2 Countries Moving away from Standardized Testing

On the contrary, data show Finland, the country which has no practice of conducting high stake examinations annually are doing very well on the testing such as PISA. The focus is lifted from "studying for the test" to using formative assessment for looking into the educational need and support of the learners.

In 2013, China, a country which emphasizes greatly on high stake examinations, abolished examinations from grade I to III. In the United States, some educational systems in states like Florida and Miami are making a choice of moving out of standardized examinations and will eliminate all year-end exams for elementary school students.

However, there are cases in which the high stake testing which were once done away with have been reinstated. In France, the Brevet exam for lower secondary school was abolished in 1977 but it was reintroduced in 1986 the reasons being, "that the results had been declining in the experience of many people." (Kreeft, 1990, p.6). In Canada, Manitoba and New Brunswick are reintroducing curriculum based exit exams that had been abolished in the early 1970s.

In Jamaica when the Grade 4 Literacy Testing conducted as a school based assessment tool did not produce a reliable feedback to the country on the learner's proficiency on reading and mathematics, it was given the status of being a high stake which produced a slow but incremental improvement success once its status was changed from a school based testing item to a

standardized testing/high stake one where the teachers were held accountable. This change is an example of the wider test-taking accountability measures implemented in other countries such as the United States.

2.6 Benefits of Standardized Testing

One of the greatest benefits of standardized testing is that the teachers and the students are held accountable along with bringing the benefit of making the schools and teachers responsible for teaching the students what they are required to know for the tests because the results of such testing are mandated to be public information. Standard testing is based on a highly structured instructional framework which provide teachers with what the learners have to be taught. This means the syllabus content and the learning outcomes are kept in focus.

The Norway education system use the test results to evaluate how successful the school system is in providing all students with basic skills. Japanese use this as an important information on academic performance and pressurize schools to improve. In New Zealand, the National Education Monitoring Project use the result to provide detailed information about what the children know, think and do and also to recognize and bring about positive changes to educational practices.

The nature of the standard tests in general is objective: the test items are developed by experts; the students' responses are graded by people who do not know them; the process is kept confidential. Teacher-graded assessments are considered inadequate alternatives to standardized tests because they are subjectively scored and unreliable because of presence of variables and varying standards. This becomes more unreliable if teachers are not trained in testing and measurement (Phelps R. P, 2011)

The results of standardized testing provide the stakeholders information as to performance of the schools, locally or across the country. Standardized tests are inclusive and non-discriminatory because they ensure content is equivalent for all students. As the standard testing allows students of various background, states or localities to be compared, the results are an information for the stakeholders on the prevailing standard of the education.

Standardized tests are reliable and objective measures of student achievement. Without them, policy makers would have to depend on tests scored by individual schools and teachers which could have a huge influence on the overall rating. In standardized testing, multiple-choice items will not be subject to human subjectivity.

From the student's point of view, standardized tests score high on being fair tests. In a 2006 June survey, students of grade 6-12, it was found that 79% students believed it to be fair and that students took the tests seriously. Phelps R. P, 2011, found the standardized tests to have positive effect on student achievement.

A major, widely reported study concluded that high-stakes testing is "a failed policy initiative" (Amrein & Berliner, 2001). However, research-studies reveal quite the contrary that accountability measures linked to test scores actually improve student performance. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) concluded that a high-stake accountability system can raise pupil achievement in general. Professor Williams's study on high stake testing stated that the effect of such assessment has led to increase in rate of learning approximately.

2.7 Disadvantages of Standardized Testing

Criticism against the system of high-stake testing has it that, it has become pervasive in the current educational culture and both young students and those entering the tertiary institutes are all impacted by the pressure to succeed at this system. It affects the quality of education a child gets because of its push on attainment of high scores; students and teachers focus on subjects that are tested and teach test-testing skills. All these have led to the narrowing of the curriculum with less or no attention given on teaching analytical and critical thinking skills which diminish educational experience. It has been argued that it was not appropriate to use a single week of externally-marked tests to hold schools publicly accountable. The high-stake testing has affected all levels of children, even those who do not get tested, in making them ready for the test in the future. For example, it is said that instead of focusing on young child's development of social, emotional and physical growth, the educational system instead focusses on their academic skills. Psychologically and emotionally, students taking high stake examination are under stress with consequences like difficulty in sleeping or committing suicide.

On the teaching front, the teachers are criticized of channeling their creativity and knowledge in designing lessons which actively engages their students into test preparation thereby devaluing their expertise into making connections with students in their classrooms.

Standardized test scores have multiple effects on teachers and their teaching; literature shows that the effects are both negative and positive or none at all. Madaus (1985) noted that when the test scores and the accountability for them are tied with incentives, the teachers take it as a positive motivation. If it is treated as a collaborative effort of the both the administration and the teachers, it was taken as a motivator, Fish (1988). However, it was also noted that teachers who were inexperienced in teaching felt the pressure of the test score and their accountability than the experienced teachers, Fish (1988). When the teachers were made accountable for the poor/declining performance of their students by the authorities, they expressed anxiety and resorted to cheating – giving direct hints to students or changing student responses on tests – they suffer from very low self-esteem and feelings of anxiety, Fish (1988). These findings raise questions whether test scores signal improvement in students' learning or whether they simply reflect teaching to the test.

A survey showed that parents are confused about standardized testing and do not feel informed about assessment procedures and believe they are not equipped to assist their child in preparing for the test (Gleason, 2000). It was also stated in a report by Dounay (2000) that parents in some cases assert that high stake tests put a lot of pressure on young children.

2.8 Alternative Practices

Alternative methods to high stake testing that may outweigh the advantages of standardized testing are: performance assessment where students demonstrate their skills based on specific behavioural objective; maintaining portfolio where students select their own work samples. These methods help to reveal learning progress of the students to students themselves and the stakeholders. Keeping journals and interviews, opinion surveys are other positive methods for alternate assessment (Travis, 1996). One option is to utilize teacher made assessments more which would draw on the vast knowledge of teachers in designing both lessons and assessments. These reflect

actual student knowledge which are free of gender, class and racial bias. These methods have positive results on teachers and students because of the versatility and the creative nature. They provide flexibility to the teachers and students. Yet, these methods have been criticised to be too dependent on the teachers using them as they may not accurately cover material in the mandated syllabus. They are time consuming and effort based than the standardized testing.

2.9 Countries that have Assessment Practices Similar to Bhutan

In Sweden standardized assessments are administered to all students in certain grades but the assessments are graded by students' own teachers. Likewise, in the Bhutanese education system, standardized test items for Classes III and VI are sent by Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA) to schools. However, the administration and scoring are done by the schools. In Africa countries have a national examination at the end of primary schooling conducted by an external agency similar to Bhutan.

2.10 Case Study

The following sections contain brief summary of similar year-end assessments conducted at ages 8 and 12 in three different countries.

2.10.1 England (Statutory Assessment Test-SATs)

In the early 1980s, with the falling standards in schools and children's poor basic skills due to the early version of teacher based assessment being too time consuming, burdensome, mistrust of teachers and non-accountability of schools, the Conservative government of England overhauled the assessment practices in 1990s primarily with an intent to raise the standard of the education (Gipps, 2008 and Isaacs, 2012). In line with the move, in 1993, the national curriculum and assessment was reviewed that resulted in externally marked system at key stages 2 (year six) and 3 (year nine) in 1995 followed by publication of the results and rank orders based on the test outcomes. The Government also made widespread use of a 'target' culture for school improvement. Bew L. (2011) pointed out that the relentless demand to raise standards each year for individual schools led to the statutory tests becoming 'high stakes'. Initially, statutory tests at KS2 were intended to be used to assess whether a child of age 11 had reached the average level 4 but over time, the average level became the expected standard.

This practice remained fairly stable for ten years despite the complaint from the school leaders that the teaching was being narrowed down to those aspects that were being tested and excessive attention was being paid to those marginal students in the process of improving the test results. However, in 2008, a report was published indicating that the national testing had compromised 'rounded education' and teacher's creativity and children's access to balanced curriculum. It also reported that teachers were teaching for the test. It was recommended to retain key stage 2 testing in English and mathematics whereas to move towards teacher assessment in science.

Assessment of the KS2 comprise of teacher-led and test-based assessment. The Standards and Testing Agency (STA), an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE) is responsible for the development and delivery of statutory tests and assessments. The test papers are corrected by the external markers. The test raw scores are translated into scaled score of 100 that represents an expected standard. Later in the year 2014, based on the recommendation from the Expert Group

on Assessment, the testing of science at the KS2 was withdrawn as the existing statutory science test did not best assess children's knowledge, skills and understanding of science so that both science and technology could be assessed through high-quality teacher assessment and raise the profile of science. For the purpose of obtaining national data, Biennial science sampling test for pupil at KS2 is administered in the randomly selected schools and pupils by external administrators. Such test system does not publish data that identifies individual school or pupil nor are the results being used for school accountability.

2.10.2 Singapore (Primary School Leaving Examination-PSLE)

In 1960, the Ministry of Education introduced Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) as a national examination in Singapore for all the students graduating primary schools.

The test is taken near the end of the student's six years of education annually. This test is an attempt by the government to assess the proficiency in English, mother tongue languages, Maths and Science so that various education systems in the country could be standardized. It also intends to unite different ethnic groups through common syllabus and content.

A similar type of examination called International Primary School Examination (iPSLE) is being offered to those students studying abroad whose school has adopted similar curriculum to Singapore so that the schools abroad can use the data as a benchmarking tool to assess their standard of education in comparison with Singapore.

The test items, subject weightage, examination duration and examination time table are all centrally developed by the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB). Chin C.L in *Secondary School External Examination Systems: Reliability, Robustness and Resilience (2009)* states that all the primary schools serve as their own examination centres where the tests are conducted and supervised by the appointed teachers from other schools. All the examination answer scripts are evaluated using a common standard at decentralized marking centres located in schools by the teachers identified on random basis so that possible bias in marking could be curbed.

The performance in PSLE is norm referenced and the overall performance of a pupil is terms of aggregate score which is derived from the T-scores. In case of failures in the PSLE, they are retained in the same school so that they can retake the examination in the following year. Given the fact that, PSLE aggregate scores determine the pupil's entry to secondary schools and their courses which match their ability and learning pace, it is considered as a high-stake examination.

Though the current education system has enabled the Singaporean students to emerge among the top in the international tests such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA 2012 Results in Focus, 2014), the drawback of PSLE is that it exerts pressure on both students and parents. On the one hand, primary schools urge their students to work hard and on the other hand parents prepare their children even few months before the examination by buying text books and encouraging their children revise past question papers. In the year 2007, Ministry of Education in the course of planning to filter the average and below average students, had set very challenging questions and out of syllabus questions, once again in 2009, most of the students had not been able to complete the Mathematics paper on time.

2.10.3 HONG KONG (Territory-wide System Assessment-TSA)

The Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) is a territory-level assessment established in Hong Kong following the recommendation of the ‘Education Bureau’s Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong’ in 2000 to gauge student’s overall attainment of Basic Competencies in English language, Chinese language, and Mathematics. According to the Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 65/2012 issued in 2012, TSA was introduced to Primary Three (P3) in 2004, Primary Six (P6) in 2005 and Secondary Three (S3) in 2006.

It requires all the schools under Government subsidization to compulsorily participate and is held annually for P3 whereas P6 is administered in odd-numbered years since 2012 with a view to alleviate the pressure of frequent examination. The TSA Leaflet states that TSA is a low-stakes assessment as it does not identify performance of individual students nor it is used for the admission of students in secondary schools or for school ranking. TSA reports are strictly confidential and it is provided only to the school. On the one hand, TSA data helps the Government to keep track of the pupil’s progress and school’s academic standards for necessary policy review and on the other hand, the test reports are used by the schools to understand about the strength and weaknesses of students so that they can devise plans for enhancing teaching and learning.

However, many schools are concerned about their reputations and see good results as a way to attract enrolments in schools. Some teachers have reported that the Education Bureau has given underperforming schools a hard time to improve their results in the past. This has led to drilling of students; conducting extra classes; providing extra home works at weekends and holidays; incorporation of test elements into teaching and buying additional text books to tackle tough TSA questions with very short writing duration eventually mounting pressure on students, teachers and parents.

In this connection, in 2015, tens of thousands of parents concerning the impact of TSA on health and childhood of children as young as nine years old started online petition requesting to abolish P3 TSA exam. In light of the issue, the Education Bureau issued a new guideline to all primary schools to avoid mechanical drills, rote learning and conducting extra classes in the weekends and help students complete their homework at school so that they could get time to join extra-curricular activities. Currently, TSA is being suspended for further review so that better assessment policy could be put in place.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Given the objective of the study, a mixed-method approach was deemed appropriate to review the year-end competency based assessment of Classes III and VI as it enabled collecting both the quantitative and qualitative data from the target respondents. Survey method was used to collect quantitative data from Class VI students, teachers, principals and DEO/TEOs, while for the Class III students oral method was used. FGD and one-on-one interview with identified target respondents such as teachers, principals and DEOs/TEOs was used to collect qualitative data to draw out further insights to provide more robust evidence to support strategic policy interventions by relevant stakeholders.

3.1 Sampling Design

Multi-stage probabilistic sampling procedure was used to determine the sample size that is truly representative of the population. The formula (Equation 1) published by the research division of the NEA, US, (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) was used to calculate the required sample size for the identified target respondents (Table 3).

Equation 1. Formula for calculating the required sample size

$$\text{Required Sample Size, } n = \frac{X^2 N P (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where,
 X^2 is the table value of Chi-Square @ d.f. = 1 for desired 95 % confidence level = 3.841;
 N is the total population size of the target respondent;
 P is the population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 since this would provide the maximum sample size); and
 d is the degree of accuracy = 0.05.

Table 3. Required sample size by target respondents

Target Respondent	Total population (N)	Required sample size for this study (n)
Class III Student	12503	373
Class VI Student	14539	374
Class III Teacher	532	223
Class VI Teacher	1064	282
Total	28638	1252

The country has been divided into four strata with each comprising of a Thromde and some Dzongkhags. This was done to ease with the logistics arrangement for data collection and to ensure that the sample used in this study is truly representative of all Dzongkhags and location areas.

For proportionate stratification of the sample (Table 4 & 5), the required strata sample size was computed using the following formula (Equation 2). From all the schools identified as the sample, respective principals and the DEOs/TEOs were also selected as respondents for the study.

Equation 2. Formula for the required strata sample size

$$\text{Required strata sample size, } n_i = \frac{N_i}{N} * n$$

Where,

N_i is the population of target respondent in the i^{th} strata (where $i = 1, 2, 3$ and 4);

N is the total population of target respondent; and

n is the required sample size of target respondent.

Table 4. Proportionate strata sample size matrix

Target Respondent	Strata (S)	Total population (N_i)	Required sample size (n_i)
Class III Student	S1	4155	124
	S2	3059	91
	S3	3316	99
	S4	1973	59
Class VI Student	S1	4516	116
	S2	3642	94
	S3	3900	100
	S4	2481	64
Class III Teachers	S1	122	51
	S2	111	47
	S3	204	86
	S4	95	40
Class VI Teachers	S1	244	65
	S2	222	59
	S3	408	108
	S4	190	50
Total		28638	1253

Table 5. Detailed proportionate strata sample size matrix

Strata	Dzongkhag	Class III Student		Class IV Student		Class III Teacher		Class IV Teacher	
		N	n	N	n	N	n	N	n
S1	T/Thromde	1755	52	1808	47	26	11	52	14
	Thimphu	198	6	294	8	12	5	24	6
	Paro	674	20	828	21	22	9	44	12
	Punakha	449	13	526	14	18	8	36	10
	W/Phodrang	770	23	707	18	30	13	60	16
	Haa	243	7	268	7	9	4	18	5
	Gasa	66	2	85	2	5	2	10	3
Sub-Total		4155	124	4516	116	122	51	244	65
S2	P/Thromde	236	7	409	11	5	2	10	3
	Chhukha	875	26	1039	27	38	16	76	20
	Dagana	538	16	663	17	24	10	48	13
	Samtse	1410	42	1531	39	44	18	88	23
Sub-Total		3059	91	3642	94	111	47	222	59
S3	SJ Thromde	236	7	208	5	3	1	6	2
	S/Jongkhar	545	16	628	16	23	10	46	12
	Lhuntse	243	7	295	8	18	8	36	10
	Mongar	909	27	917	24	52	22	104	28
	PemaGatshel	390	12	477	12	31	13	62	16
	Trashigang	611	18	948	24	49	21	98	26
	Trashiyantse	382	11	427	11	28	12	56	15
Sub-Total		3316	99	3900	100	204	86	408	108
S4	G/Thromde	175	5	204	5	1	0	2	1
	Sarpang	597	18	786	20	22	9	44	12
	Trongsa	232	7	298	8	17	7	34	9
	Bumthang	170	5	344	9	13	5	26	7
	Zhemgang	328	10	365	9	26	11	52	14
	Tsirang	471	14	484	12	16	7	32	8
Sub-Total		1973	59	2481	64	95	40	190	50
Grand Total (S1+S2+S3+S4)		12503	373	14539	374	532	223	1064	282

3.2 Instrumentation

3.2.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was used as an analytical tool to visually present the key factors under consideration. It was first developed so as to get clarity on scope of the work as well as to decide on the required information to do a review of the year-end assessment for Classes III and VI (Figure 1).

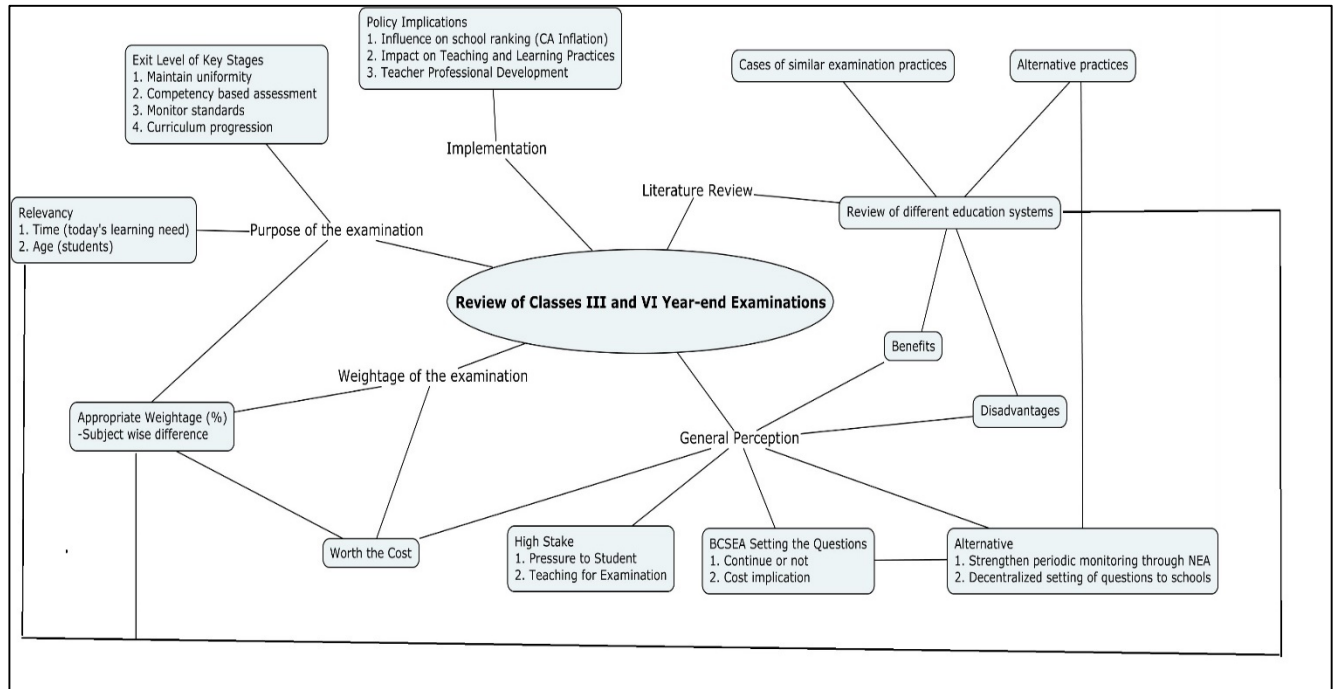


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

In particular, to operationalize the research questions, the conceptual framework was drawn after serious of discussions on the level of analysis necessary. This process helped identify variables needed in order to calculate the appropriate indicators.

In the development of the survey questionnaires, two important aspects of the design in terms of the structure of the questions and the type of response format for the questions were considered. From the three board structures namely closed-ended, open-ended and contingency questions, the first and last structure were used in the survey questionnaires. Closed-ended questions asked the respondents to choose a response that most closely represented his/her viewpoint from among a predetermined set of answers. While, the contingency question was a special case of the closed-ended question where there were provision to ask/filter question so as to enable subgroup of the population to answer a relevant set of questions.

The two type of questions mentioned above were used mainly due to the following advantages:

- For the respondent, closed-ended and contingency questions were easy and quick to answer;

- For the research team, closed-ended and contingency questions were easy to code and analyse;
- Contingency questions enable filtering/zooming in on the required subgroup; and
- These questions enable inclusion of more variables and questions unlike open-ended where it would be difficult to ask even few questions.

Further, acknowledging the disadvantages of closed-ended questions such as the introduction of bias due to the predetermined choice given to the respondent, not allowing for creativity in qualifying the response, among other reasons, FGD and one-on-one interview was considered mainly to provide the same respondents an opportunity to provide further insights on the issue during investigation. Hence, all respondents participated in the survey questionnaire as well as the appropriate FGD and one-on-one interview.

3.2.2 Piloting of Research Instruments

All research instruments (Survey Questionnaires, FGD, Oral-questions, One-on-One Interview) developed were pre-tested in 4 schools with 36 teachers and 95 students (these schools and respondents were not included in the actual sample of the study).

The primary purpose of the pre-test was to check whether the questions were understood by all respondents and to identify any areas that needed improvement. All respondents were given an opportunity to provide feedback on the research instrument, in particular, on items that were not clearly understood and on areas that were important but missing.

A Cronbach Alpha score of .829 was recorded during the piloting of the survey questionnaires. Based on the findings of the pre-test, some necessary changes were made to the research instruments.

3.2.3 Teacher/Principal/DEO/TEO Survey Questionnaire

The teacher/principal/DEO/TEO survey questionnaire primarily comprised of closed ended items consisting of Likert scale items which required the respondents to circle their responses. There were 6 broad sections and 113 items. (Refer to Annexure 4 for details). First section on demographic information had 10 items such as target respondent, gender, age etc... Second section had four sub-sections: overall impression with 3 items, exit level with 6 items including 1 contingency item, relevancy with 3 items, and curriculum progression with 4 items. Third section on weightage had 2 sub-sections: the first sub-section was applicable to Class III teachers with 5 items, while the second sub-section was applicable to Class VI teachers with 6 items. Fourth section on the general perception had 3 sub-sections: the first sub-section was on high stake examination with 9 items, second sub-section was on BCSEA question with 4 items and the three sub-section was on alternatives with 8 items. Fifth section on the benefits/disadvantages had two sub-sections: the first sub-section was applicable to Class III teachers with 12 items which included 3 contingency question, while the second sub-section was applicable to Class VI teachers with 13 items which included 3 contingency question. Finally the last section on implementation had 13 items which included 2 contingency questions.

3.2.4 Class VI Student Survey Questionnaire

The Student Survey questionnaires consisted of 6 broad sections and 39 closed-ended items. Likert-scale was used for scaling responses to the item. First section on demographic had six items; gender, age, location of school, type of school, parent/guardian background and parent/guardian occupation. Second section was about the feeling on assessment comprising of two items: feeling on the importance of Classes III and Class VI assessment. Third section on relevancy had seven items. Fourth section on general perception had ten items. Fifth section on benefits/disadvantages had seven items and the final section on assessment had seven items.

3.2.5 Semi-structured FGD Questions for Teachers

The semi-structured questions for FGD comprised of open-ended questions for the purpose of in-depth discussion. There were sub questions under each broad question. First broad question was on the purpose of examination. Second question was on the stake of the Classes III and VI year-end assessment. Third question was on the weightage of the subjects. The last broad question was on the way forward for the year-end assessment practices.

3.2.6 Semi-structured Oral Questions for Class III students

Semi-structured oral questions were basically framed to obtain information about the perception on Class III year-end assessment and whether they were under pressure due the year-end assessment.

3.2.7 One-on-One Interview Question with School Leaders (Principals and DEOs/TEOs)

The semi-structured questions framed were open-ended questions intended to seek information about the impression on Classes III and VI year-end assessment; the way forward for the year-end assessment practices and readiness of the Dzongkhags/schools to receive the question papers in soft copies.

3.3 Data Collection

While collecting data, ethical considerations such as getting informed consent from the concerned target respondents of the study was made. Privacy and confidentiality was also assured and maintained. Further, for the conduct of the nationwide survey, approval from the Ministry of Education and survey clearance from the National Statistics Bureau was sought and received.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data entry sheet and a codebook was prepared in SPSS version 20 for the entry of the quantitative data and the process that was used for the analysis of the data is as shown in Figure 2. The data analysis was mostly done using descriptive statistics such as frequency and cross-tabulations, while the analysis of the open-ended question were done using basic content analysis. Wherever possible triangulation of desk review data, quantitative data and qualitative data were done.

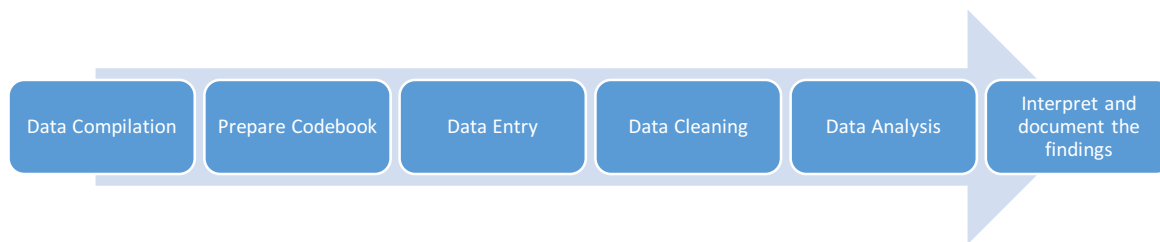


Figure 2. The process of data analysis

4. Main Study Findings

To address the key research questions highlighted in Chapter One and to provide necessary insights on the Classes III and VI year-end assessment, this chapter is organized into six sections: general perception of the target respondents, view on whether the year-end assessment is considered high stake, relevancy of the year-end assessment, appropriateness of the assessment weightage allocated, setting of the questions by BCSEA, and challenges and suggestions for improvement of the assessment practices. Whenever relevant, survey findings have been supplemented by the FGD and one-on-one interviews to provide more insights.

A. General Perception of the Target Respondents

In this section, the general perception of the target respondents in terms of the overall impression of Classes III and VI year-end assessment, view on the importance of the year-end assessment, teachers’ and students’ view on the importance of Classes III and VI year-end assessment, understanding of the rationale behind the year-end assessment, teachers’ and students’ understanding of the rationale behind the examination, and students’ feedback on homework and assessment practices, are presented. In the later sections, we will zoom in on specific areas as outline mentioned above.

A.1.1 Overall impression of Class III year-end assessment

About 70 percent of principals, DEOs/TEOs rated ‘Good’ and ‘Excellent’ while about 20 percent of them rated ‘Not Sure’, when asked about their overall impression of the Class III year-end assessment. (Figure 3)

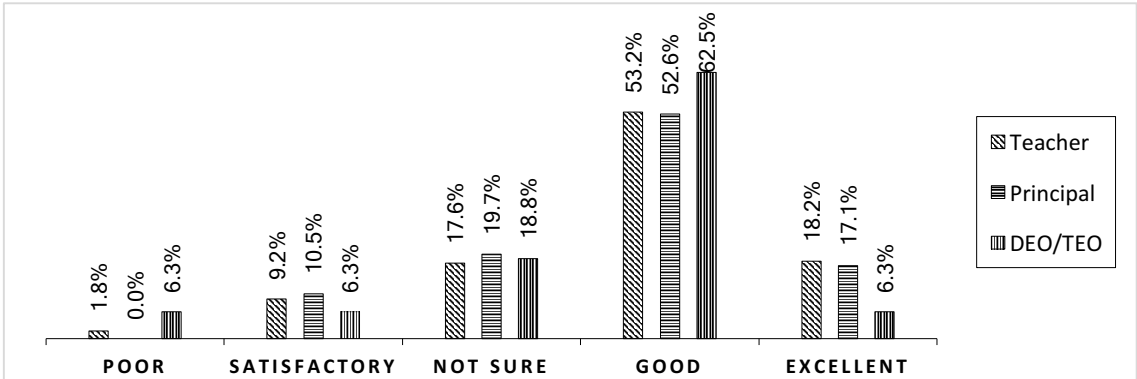


Figure 3. Overall impression of the Class III year-end assessment

The teachers who viewed the year-end assessment positively indicated that it helped maintain quality across schools and that they observed students taking pride in appearing for the external examination. The quality of the questions set by BCSEA was expressed to be better than the Dzongkhag and School level questions and some teachers were of the opinion that the weightage for the year-end assessment should be increased. While the few teachers who had apprehension about the year-end assessment specified that the standard of items was high, the existence of manipulation of both the formative and summative assessment marks, the examination not catering to all students’ abilities and it being stressful to the students.

Majority of principals explicitly indicated the year-end assessment to be a yardstick to measure student achievement and as such they embraced it. Some principals went on to say that the items cater to all abilities of learners with room for evaluative and analytical skills and that the examination was well aligned to the learning outcomes. However, there were principals who stated that the written examination at Class III was not appropriate; students located in rural areas were not able to perform at par with their urban counterparts due to the lack of parental guidance; and that the school based marking was unfair. All the principals interviewed raised concern on the practice of ranking school using academic performance to be unfair.

Most of the DEOs/TEOs stated that the Class III year-end assessment was important as it served as a benchmark to measure the student and school achievement. The few DEOs/TEOs who were not in favour of the year-end assessment expressed concern on the model marking scheme provided and on whether it was uniformly being followed by the schools. They also shared worry on the school level evaluation giving way to manipulation of marks mainly to increase the Performance Management System (PMS) scores which has a bearing on the school ranking.

A.1.2 Overall impression of Class VI year-end assessment

About 80 percent of teachers, principals, DEOs/TEOs viewed the Class VI year-end assessment positively by rating ‘Good’ and ‘Excellent’ and slightly more than 10 percent rated ‘Not Sure’ as shown in Figure 4.

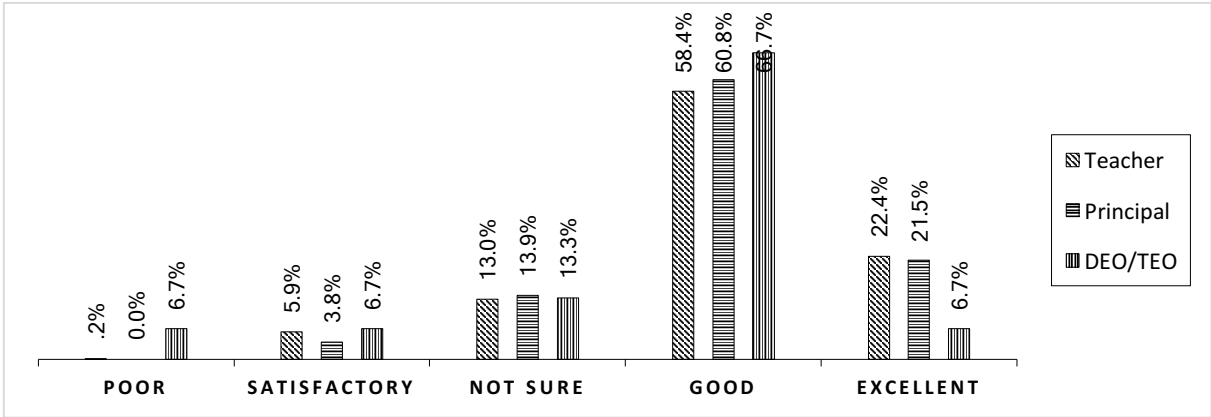


Figure 4. Overall impression of the Class VI year-end assessment

Almost all the teachers agreed on the year-end assessment being a good practice that motivates students to learn. Most of them also confessed that the present arrangement of BCSEA setting the questions to be convenient to them, however, a few expressed that some of the items in the year-end assessment was out of context. A very small cohort of teachers also communicated worry about the manipulation of marks at the school level, but all teachers raised concern on the practice of ranking schools as it was noted to defeat the purpose of student assessment.

Similarly, all of DEOs/TEOs and principals expressed the need to have the year-end assessment at the end of the primary exit level as they felt it was important to ascertain the standard of learning. Few of them also flagged the issue of schools across the country not uniformly abiding by the

model marking scheme provided by BCSEA whereby causing a lot of suspicion on the process of assessment.

A.2 View on the importance of the year-end assessment

Almost all the target respondents of the survey rated ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Agree’ when asked whether they viewed the year-end assessment as important (Figure 5). All target respondents were asked whether they thought parents viewed the year-end assessment as important, the average of all responses have been used to derive and highlight the parent ratings.

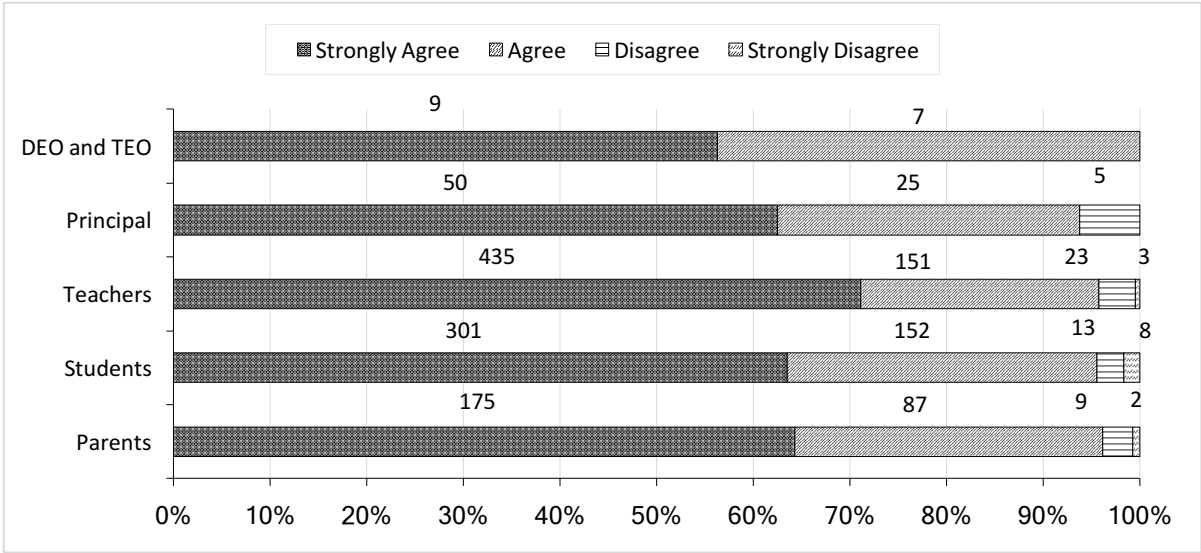


Figure 5. Target respondents view on the importance of year-end assessments

A.2.1 Teachers and Students view on the importance of Class III year-end assessment

When teachers and students were specifically asked about the importance of the Class III year-end assessment, more than 90 percent of them agreed on its importance as shown in Figure 6.

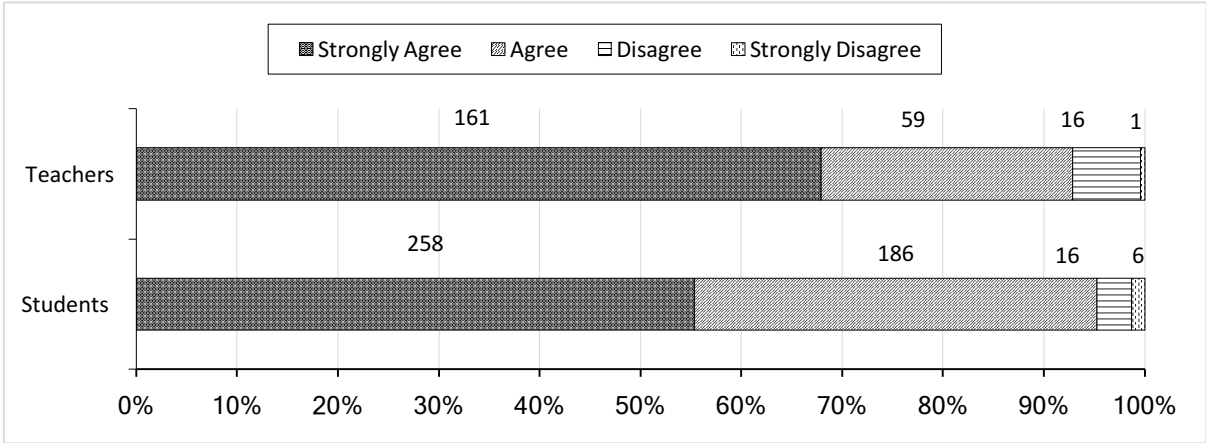


Figure 6. Teachers and Students view on the importance of Class III year-end assessment

A.2.2 Teachers and Students view on the importance of Class VI year-end assessment

When teachers and students were specifically asked about the importance of the Class VI year-end assessment, more than 95 percent of them agreed on its importance as shown in Figure 7.

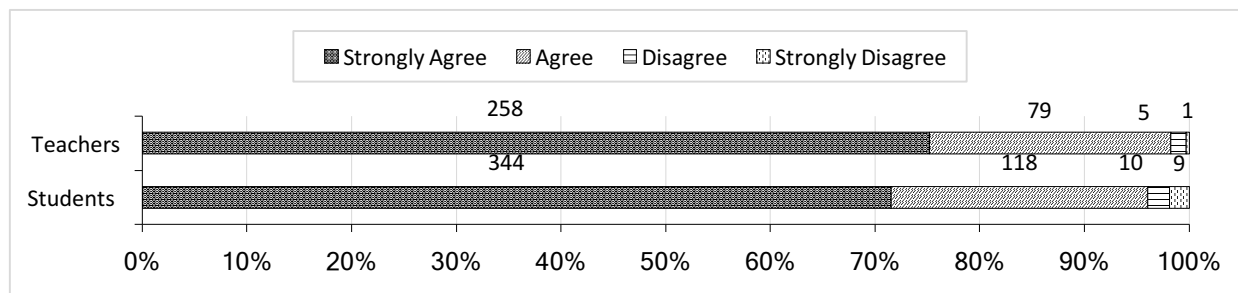


Figure 7. Teachers and Students view on the importance of Class VI year-end assessment

A.3 Understanding of the rationale behind the year-end assessment

Majority of the DEOs/TEOs (93 percent), principals (86 percent) and teachers (83 percent) reported that they understood the rationale behind the conduct of the year-end assessment by rating ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Agree’ as shown Figure 8.

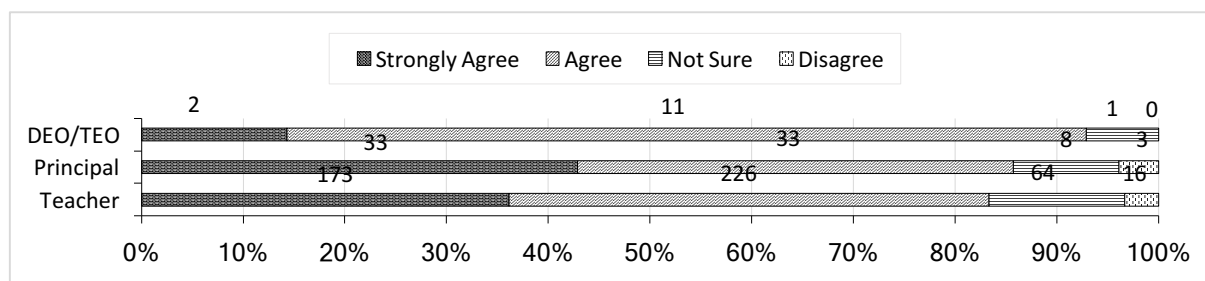


Figure 8. Understanding of the rationale behind the year-end assessment

A.3.1 Class III and VI Teachers understanding of the rationale behind the year-end assessment

When the Class III and VI teachers were specifically asked whether they understood the rationale behind the conduct of Class III and VI year-end assessments respectively, more than 80 percent of them reported that they understood the rationale behind the conduct of the year-end assessment as shown in Figure 9.

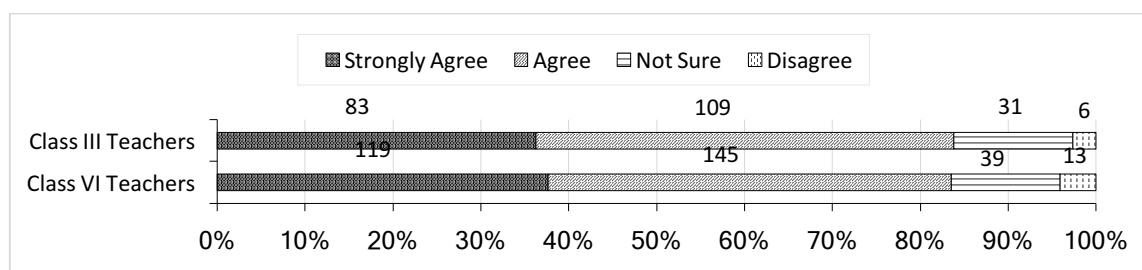


Figure 9. Understanding of the rationale behind the year-end assessment (Class III and VI teachers)

A.3.2 Students understanding of the reason for the year-end assessment

When Class VI students were specifically asked whether they know the reason for the conduct of the year-end assessment, more than 80 percent of them agreed as shown in Figure 10.

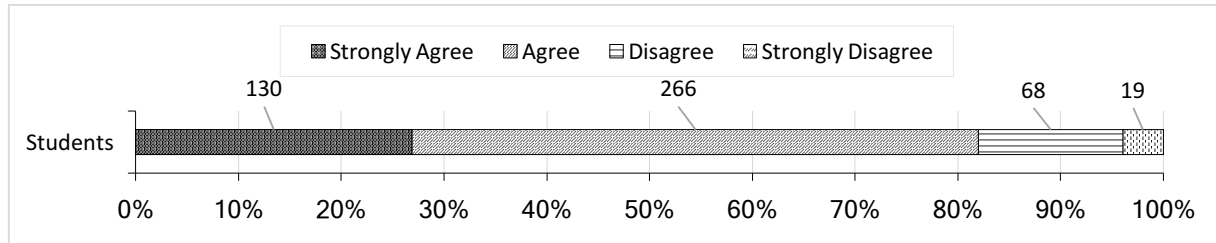


Figure 10. Students understanding of the reasons for the year-end assessment

A.3.3 Cross-checking of the understanding of the objective of the year-end assessment

To get further insights into the understanding of the objective of the year-end assessment, the target respondents were asked several questions. The findings (Figure 11) show a strong positive correlation to the above stated individual responses given on the year-end assessment, whereby establishing that majority of the respondents (more than 80 percent) viewed the year-end assessment to be serving its purpose by containing competency based items, monitoring student learning competencies, monitoring the standard across the country, and ensuring uniformity across all schools.

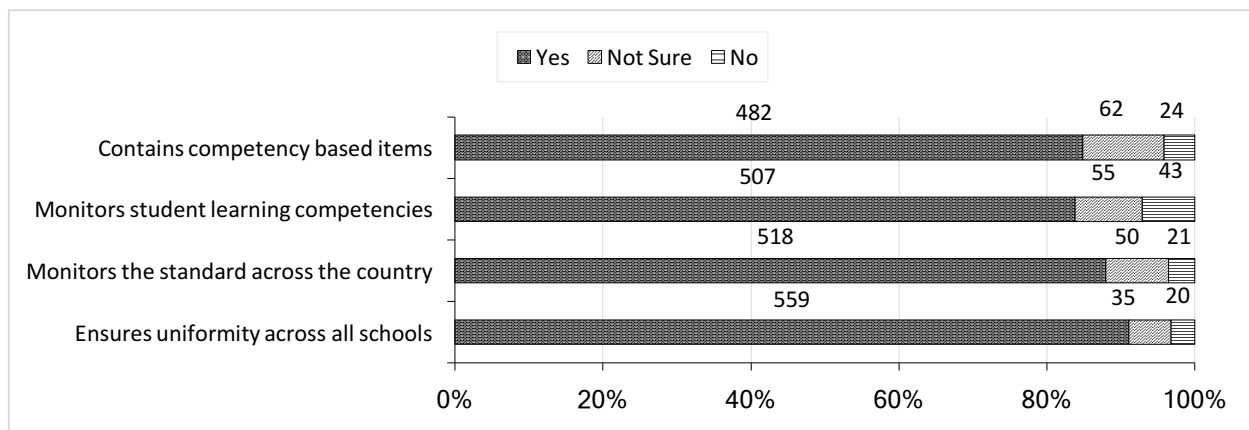


Figure 11. Target respondents understanding of the objective of the year-end assessment

B. High Stake

Before the commissioning of this study, there was a lot of speculation that the year-end assessment was viewed as high-stake examination (board examination). This study provides empirical evidence on the view of the respective target respondents along with other necessary information such as on worry about the year-end assessment, student pressure, whether teachers teach for the year-end assessment, whether students are taught according to the learning outcomes, target respondents' confidence in students to do well, whether students are taking tuitions and remedial classes and students' feedback on the coverage of syllabus.

B.1 Year-end assessment as board examination

About 70 percent of the DEOs/TEOs, 85 percent of principals, 90 percent of teachers and students and about 87 percent of parents viewed the year-end assessment as board examination (Figure 12).

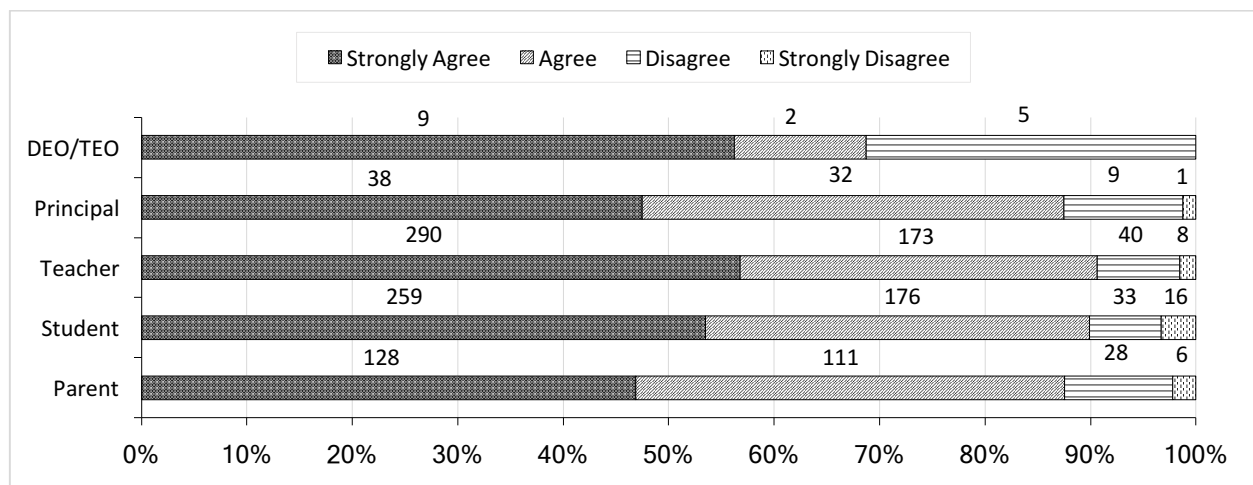


Figure 12. Target respondents view on year-end assessment as board examination

When teachers were asked why they felt the Classes III and VI year-end assessment were board examination, they stated reasons such as BCSEA setting the year-end questions for Classes III and VI and the requirement of the results to be sent back to BCSEA for analysis. Many of the teachers also said that the year-end assessment helps determine the learning standard of students across the country. The few teachers who did not consider it as board/high stake examination identified the lack of standard practices of high stake examination such as central evaluation, student recognition (scholarship), student index number and promotion solely based on examination result as justification. There were few teachers, who termed the year-end assessments as semi-board, given BCSEA's role in setting the questions and the fact that evaluation happens in the respective schools.

B.2 Worry about the year-end assessments

When target respondents were asked whether they were worried about the year-end assessment, students were noted to be the most (more than 85 percent) worried while the DEOs/TEOs were the least (less than 40 percent). It was also observed that the intensity of the worry increased as the circle of influence/reach with the students increased as shown in Figure 13.

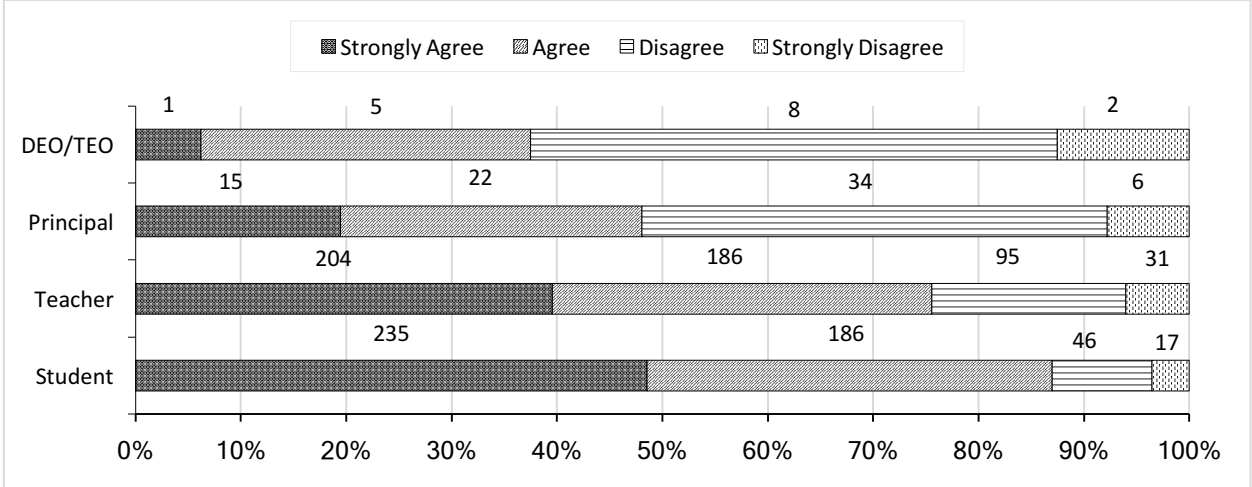


Figure 13. Target respondents view on the worry about the year-end assessment

Majority of the teachers voiced concern and worry on the pressure to cover the syllabus, unpredictability of questions and its standard, student’s performance influencing their individual performance and school ratings, pressure from parents and the requirement to send evaluated papers of the high and low achievers to BCSEA for analysis. The teachers teaching both the Class levels (III and VI) stated that the Class III students were too young to understand the questions and take the examination seriously. The teacher who did not feel under pressure reasoned the fact that evaluation happens at the school level, subjects having low weightage and the questions being in alignment with the prescribed syllabus.

Many Class III students expressed their worry due to the questions being set by the government in Thimphu. They felt that the questions would be more difficult for them to understand, whereby increasing the possibility of failing and making parent unhappy. Some students stated that their school principals tell them not to worry as the year-end assessment is like any other home examinations and that they would easily get through to the next level if they put in extra effort and leave no questions unanswered.

B.3 Student pressure

A similar finding as the worry of the year-end assessment was detected, when target respondents were asked whether students were under pressure to prepare for the year-end assessment. Proportionately, more students and teachers rated high on student being under pressure than the principals and DEOs/TEOs as shown in Figure 14.

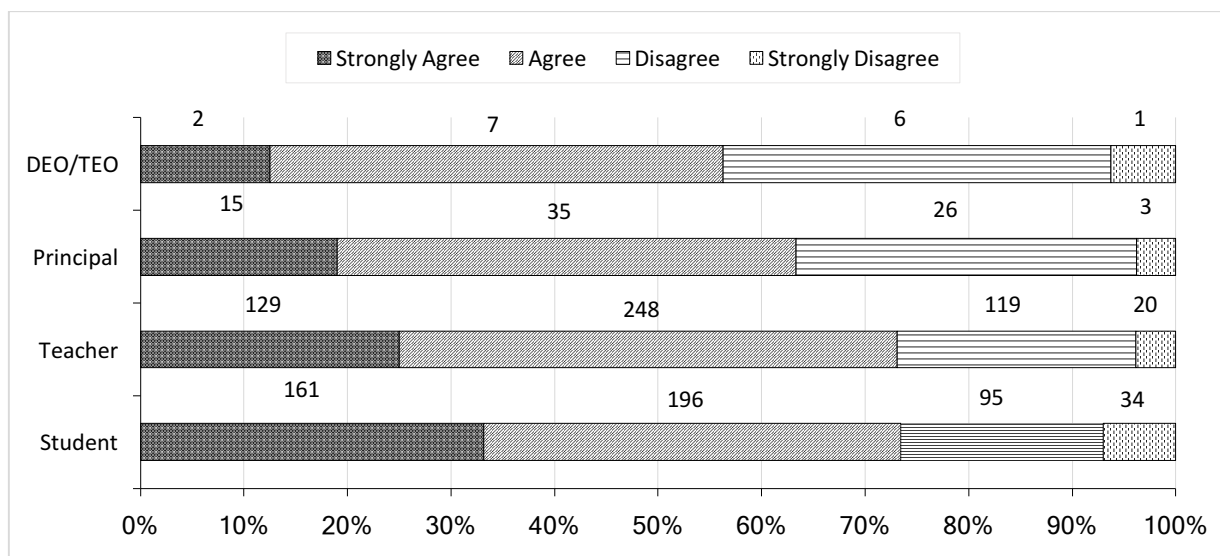


Figure 14. Target respondent view on whether students are under pressure

Majority of the teachers who rated high on students being under pressure confessed to have pressured the students due to coverage of syllabus and school ranking, they also admitted to the practice of giving more homework, project work, extra classes and remedial classes to prepare students for the year-end assessment. The experience of rehearsing the past question papers was also stated to contribute to instilling fear and anxiety in the students. Students were observed to be worried about the duration of writing examination. According to the teachers, students mostly worry about the type of questions that would be asked and whether it would be from the prescribed syllabus. Few teachers proclaimed that the questions set by BCSEA were of very high standard and that they do not cater to the cognitive levels of students. Promotion of students as a direct result of the year-end assessment was also shared.

On the other hand, teachers who stated that the students were not under pressure justified saying that the students were made familiar with the BCSEA question pattern by giving them adequate practice of the past papers and by giving similar questions in their mid-term examination. They also mentioned about the weightage assigned to the year-end assessment being very less.

When student were asked whether they were under pressure, they stated that their teachers and parents often remind them of the year-end assessment and that they fear failing.

B.4 View on whether teachers teach for the year-end assessment

83 percent of students agreed while only about 44 percent of teachers agreed to the statement, teachers teach for the year-end assessment, the details are as shown in Figure 15.

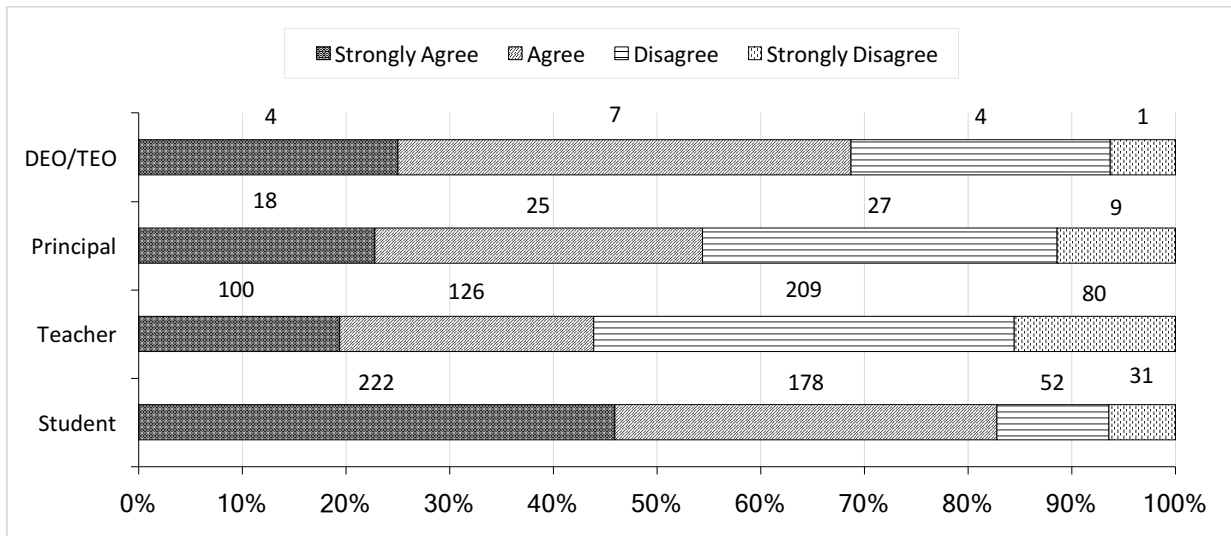


Figure 15. Target respondents view on whether teachers teach for the year-end assessments

Many students shared that they were often reminded in the morning assembly and in the class that the year-end assessment questions are not prepared by the school. Further, whenever their teachers spotted them playing, they were advised to study hard. Students also shared that they were made to prepare for the year-end assessment by going through the past papers.

B.5 Taught according to the learning outcomes

More than 80 percent of the target respondents reported that students are taught according to the learning outcomes, the details are as shown in Figure 16.

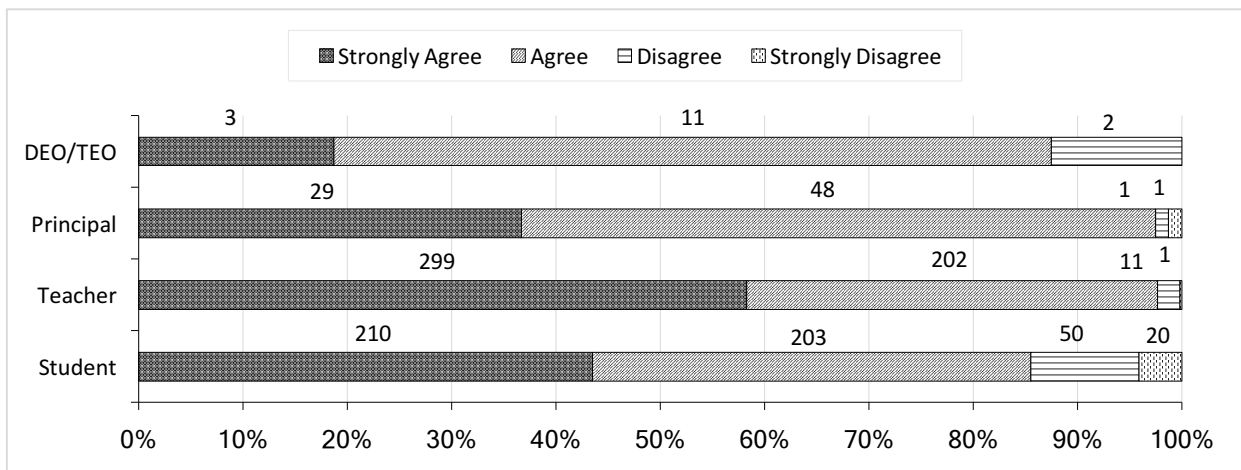


Figure 16. Target respondents view on whether students are taught according to the learning outcomes

B.6. View on the confidence of students to do well

85 percent of DEOs/TEOs, 91 percent of principals and 96 percent of teachers strongly agreed and agreed that their students would do well in the year-end assessment (Figure 17).

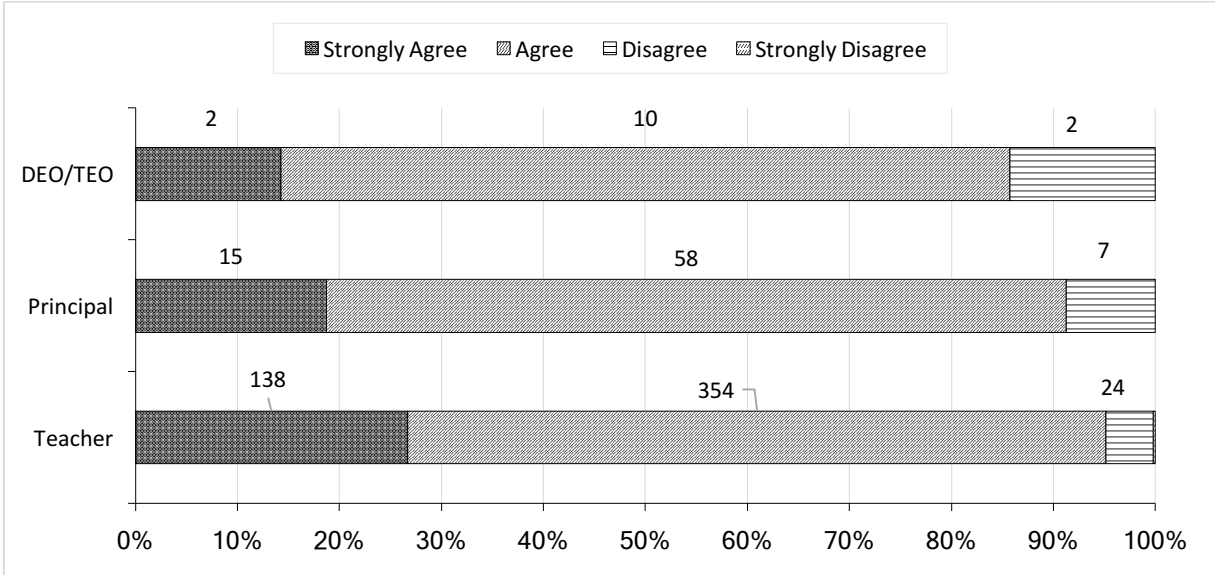


Figure 17. Target respondents view on their confidence in students to do well

B.7 Tuition and Remedial Classes

About 40 percent and 80 percent of students agreed to taking tuitions and to the school providing remedial classes to prepare for the year-end assessment (Figure 18).

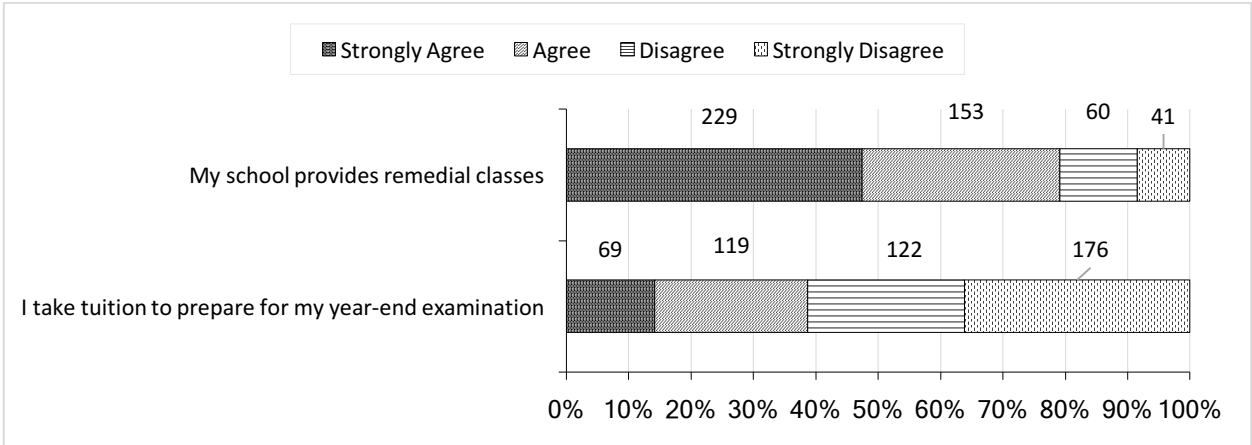


Figure 18. Students Feedback on Tuition and Remedial Classes

B.8 Student view of the coverage of syllabus

Earlier in the Section B.2, one reason teachers stated for the worry about the year-end assessment was the pressure to cover syllabus on time. When students were asked whether their teachers covered the respective subjects on time, more than 75 percent of them said ‘Yes’ (Figure 19).

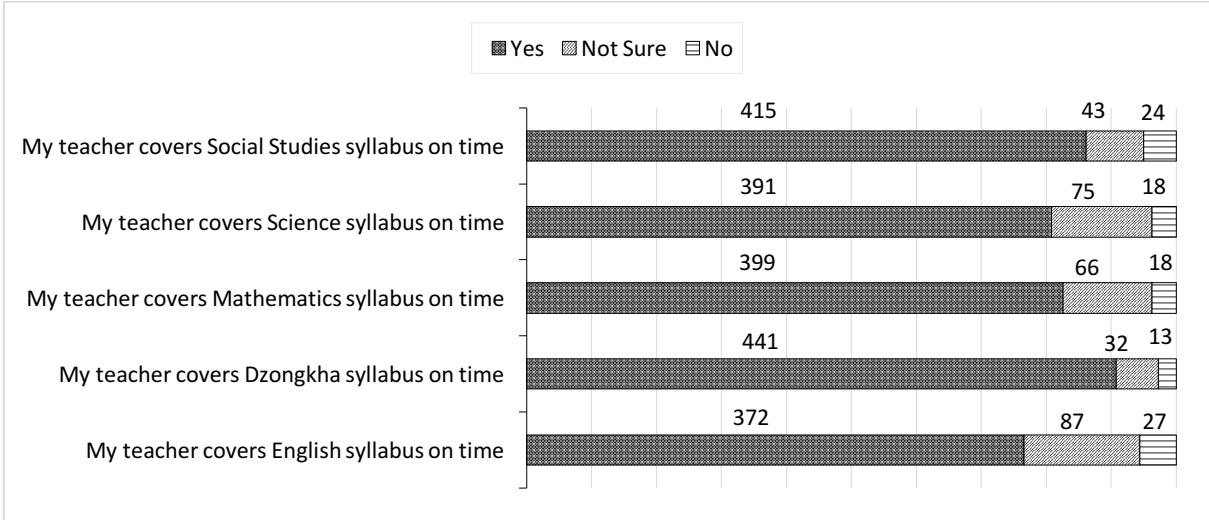


Figure 19. Feedback on subject-wise syllabus coverage by Students

B.9 Students feedback on homework and assessment practices

The consolidated findings of students’ response to the questions; whether their teachers assign them a lot of homework and whether they are pressurized with homework, classwork, project-work and test are shown in Figure 20. It is worth observing that 50 percent of the students stated that ‘I get a lot of pressure with test’, while 38 percent of students expressed being pressured with project work.

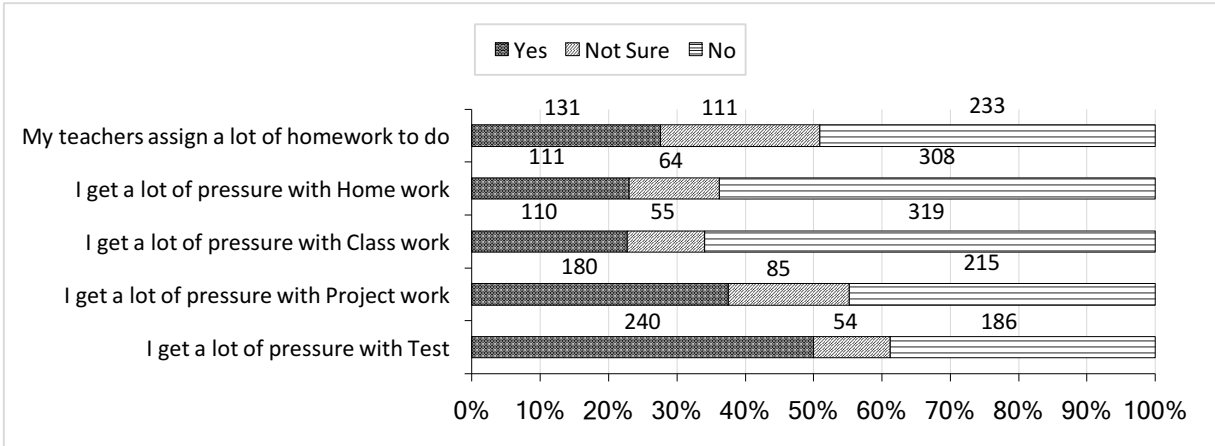


Figure 20. Students view on homework and pressure

When students were asked whether their teachers correct the homework, classwork, project work and test fairly, more than 60 percent of students reported that their teachers always correct their work fairly, and in particular 83 percent of students rated ‘Always’ for test paper correction (Figure 21).

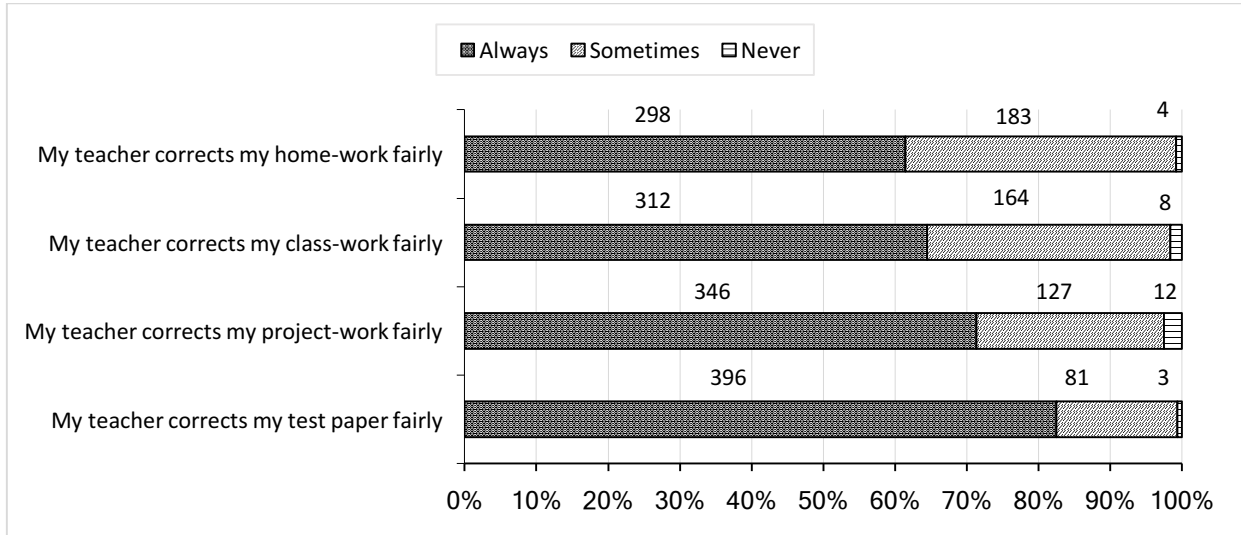


Figure 21. Student view on fairness in correction of home-work, class-work, project-work and test

About 85 percent of students stated that their teachers ‘Always’ keep proper record of their continuous assessment marks. 60 percent of the students stated that their teachers ‘Always’ keep proper record of their participation in co-curricular activities (such as debates, quizzes, games and sports etc.) as shown in Figure 22.

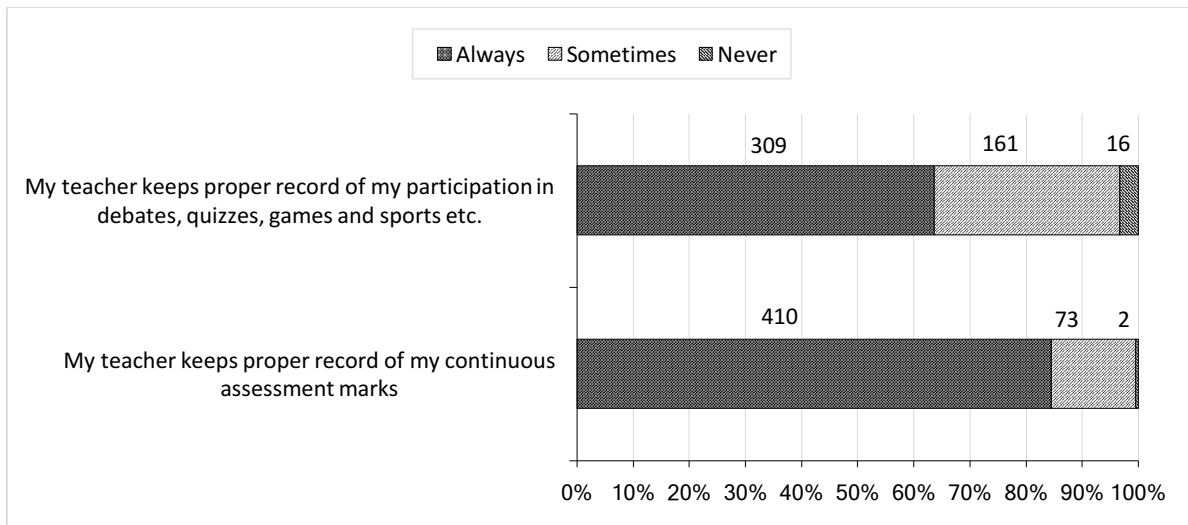


Figure 22. Student view on record keeping by teachers

B.9 Teachers view of coverage of syllabus

About 70 percent, 40 percent, 65 percent, and 45 percent of the respective subject teachers stated that Environmental Studies (EVS), Mathematics, Dzongkha and English respectively was ‘Always’ covered on time. (Figure 23)

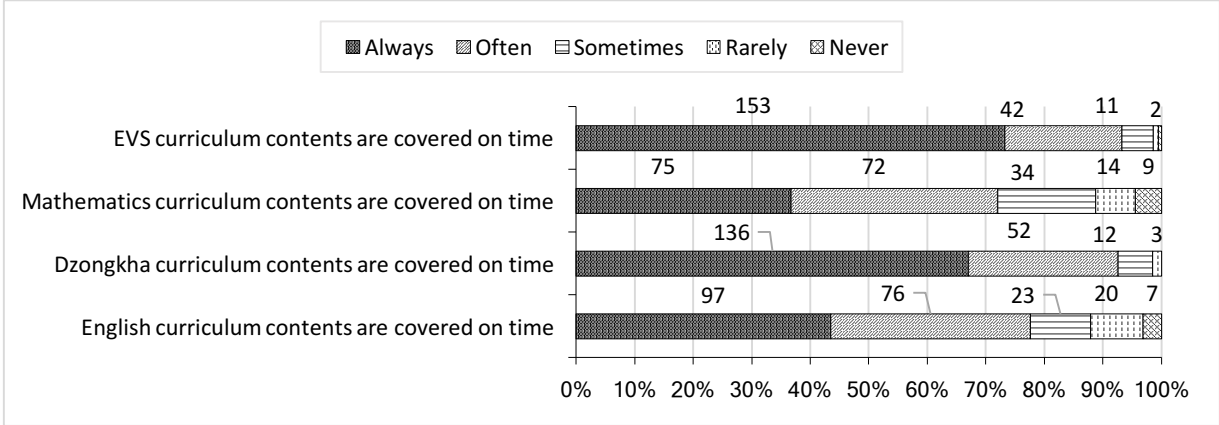


Figure 23. Class III Teachers feedback on the subject wise coverage of syllabus

About 40 percent of Class III teachers stated that they were ‘always’ and ‘often’ stressed with continuous assessment works, in particular, 60 percent of them stated to be stressed with homework while 65 percent were stressed with classwork, and about 50 percent stressed with test (Figure 24).

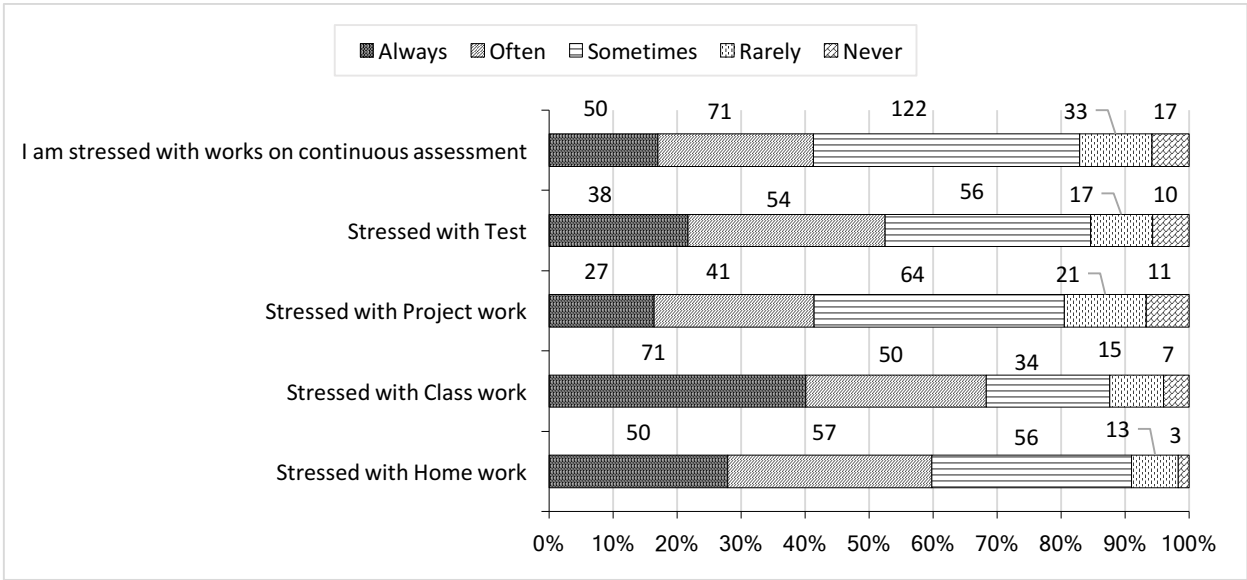


Figure 24. Class III Teachers feedback on stress caused by assessment practices

80 percent, 65 percent, 55 percent, 70 percent and 40 percent of the respective subject teachers stated that Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, Dzongkha and English respectively were ‘Always’ covered on time (Figure 25).

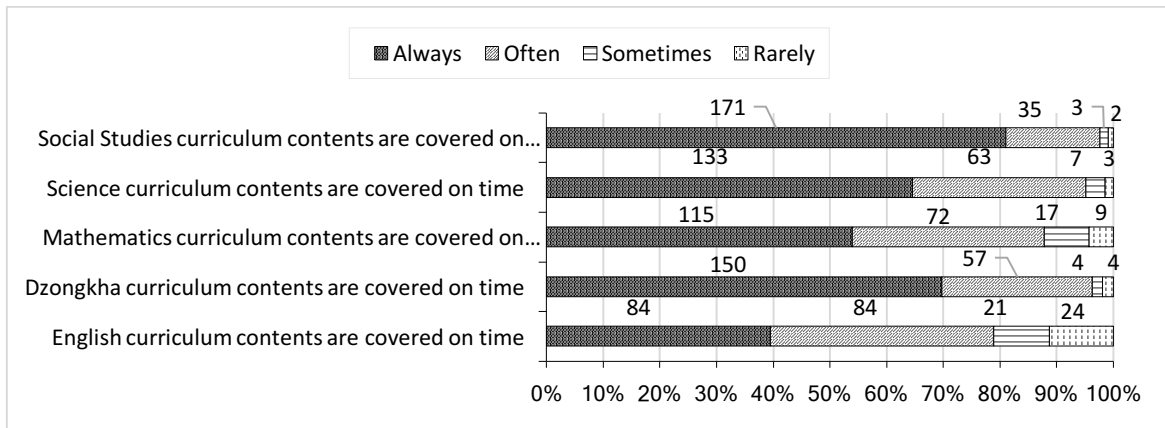


Figure 25. Class VI Teachers feedback on the subject wise coverage of syllabus

About 45 percent of Class VI teachers stated to be ‘Always’ and ‘Often’ stressed with continuous assessment works, in particular, 65 percent of them were stressed with homework and classwork, and 45 percent of them were stressed with test (Figure 26).

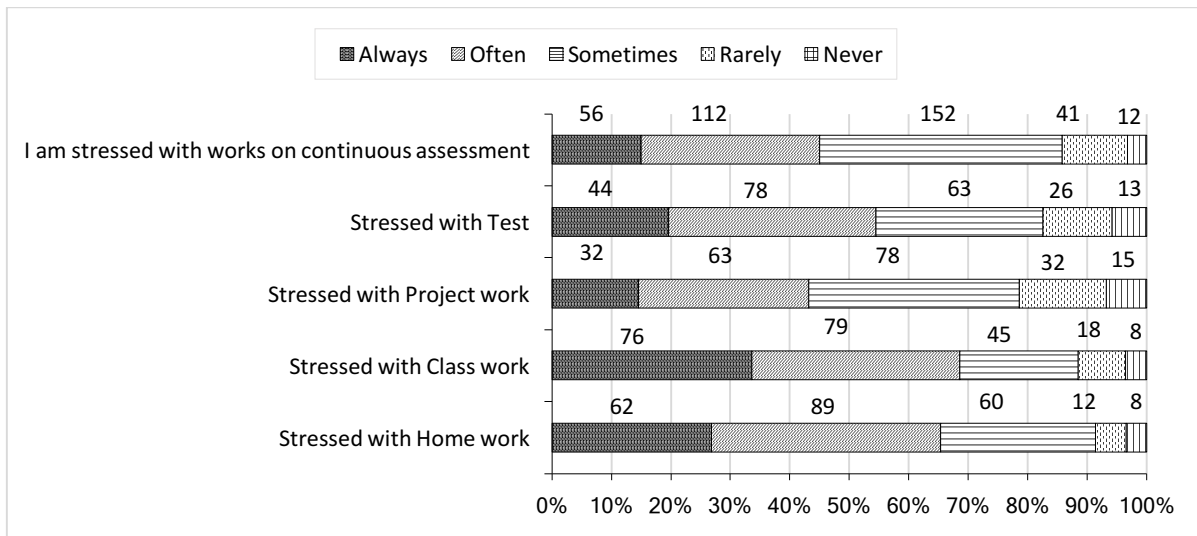


Figure 26. Class VI Teachers feedback on stress caused by assessment practices

C. Relevancy of the year-end assessment

To ascertain the target respondents’ view on the relevancy of the year-end assessment, questions on relevancy based on the context of today’s learning needs, suitability and appropriateness in terms of the age level of Classes III and VI students, and whether there is conceptual learning gap between Class III and IV students as well as between Class VI and VII students were asked.

C.1.1 DEOs/TEOs, Principals and Teachers view on relevancy of year-end assessment

More than 85 percent of DEOs/TEOs, principals and teachers rated that the year-end assessment was ‘Absolutely appropriate’ and ‘Slightly appropriate’ in the context of today’s learning needs (Figure 27).

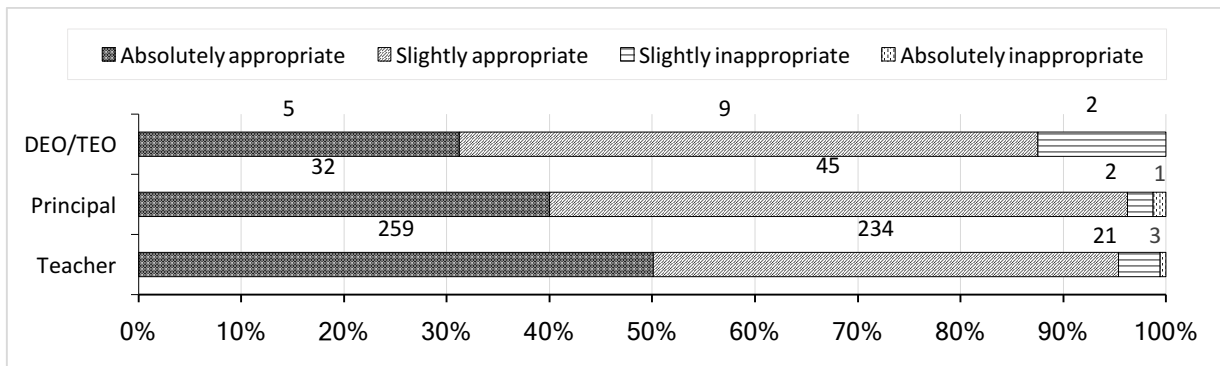


Figure 27. Target Respondents view on whether the year-end assessment is relevant in the context of today’s learning needs

C.1.2 Students view on relevancy of the year-end assessment

95 percent and 88 percent of students agreed that the year-end assessment was relevant to their learning needs and to it being suitable for their age (Figure 28).

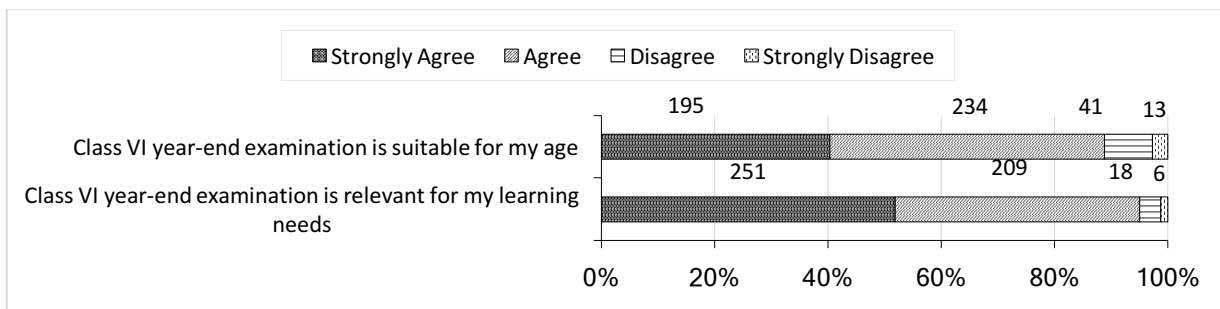


Figure 28. Students view on relevancy of the year-end assessment to their learning needs and their age

C.2.1 View on whether Class III year-end assessment is appropriate

More than 75 percent of DEOs/TEOs, principals and teachers reported that the Class III year-end assessment is appropriate as per age level of students (Figure 29).

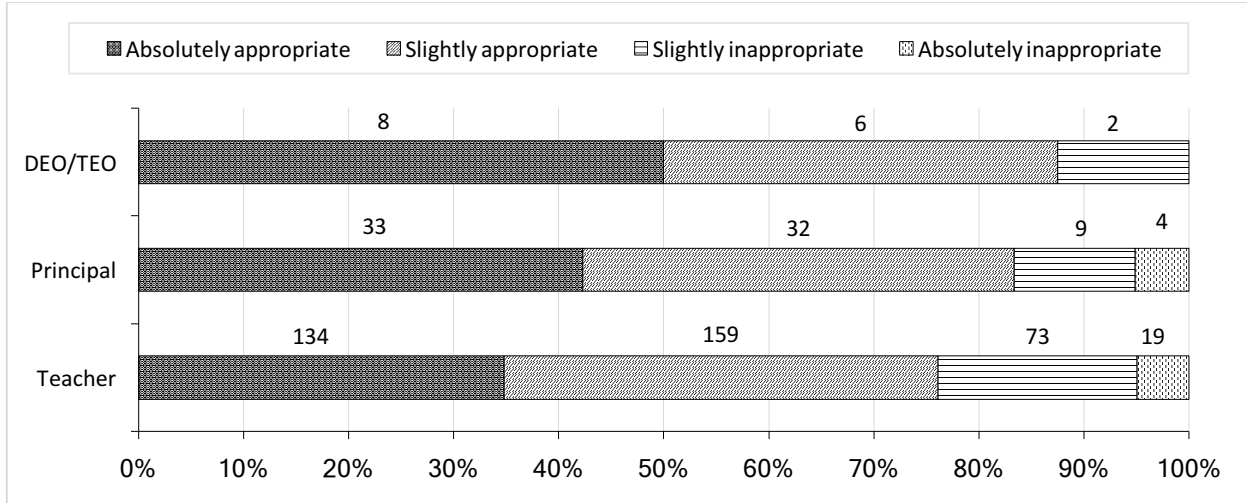


Figure 29. Target respondents view on whether the year-end assessment is age appropriate

C.2.2 View on whether Class VI year-end assessment is appropriate

Almost all the DEOs/TEOs, principals and teachers reported that the Class VI year-end assessment to be appropriate as per age level of students (Figure 30).

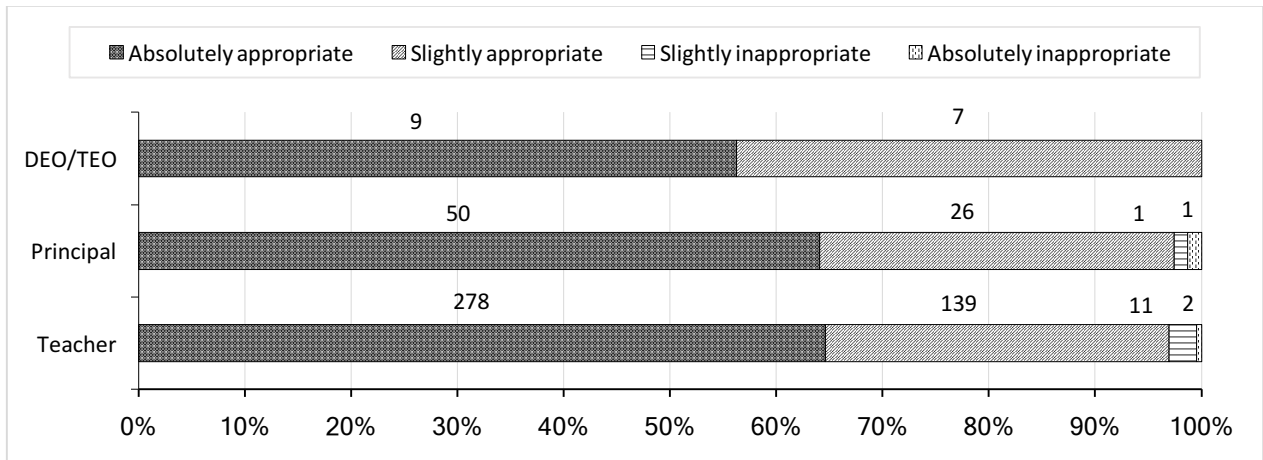


Figure 30. Target respondents view on whether the year-end assessment is age appropriate

C.3.1 Conceptual learning gap between Class III and IV

All the DEOs/TEOs, 87 percent of principals, 88 percent of teachers and 58 percent of students respectively agreed to the existence of conceptual learning gap between Class III and IV (Figure 31).

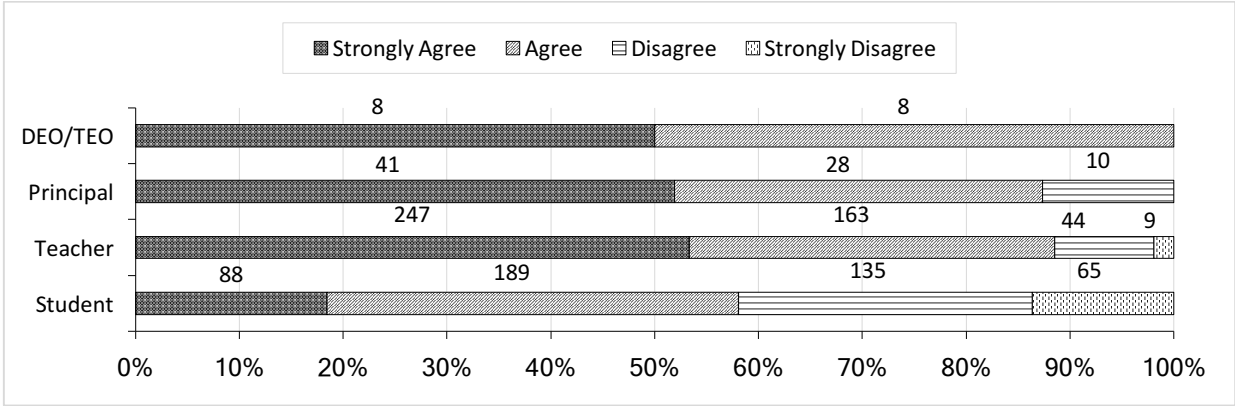


Figure 31. Target respondents view on whether there is conceptual learning gap between Class III and IV

C.3.2 Conceptual learning gap between Class VI and VII

87 percent of DEOs/TEOs, 72 percent of principals, 67 percent of teachers and 60 percent of students agreed to the existence of conceptual learning gap between Class VI and VII (Figure 32).

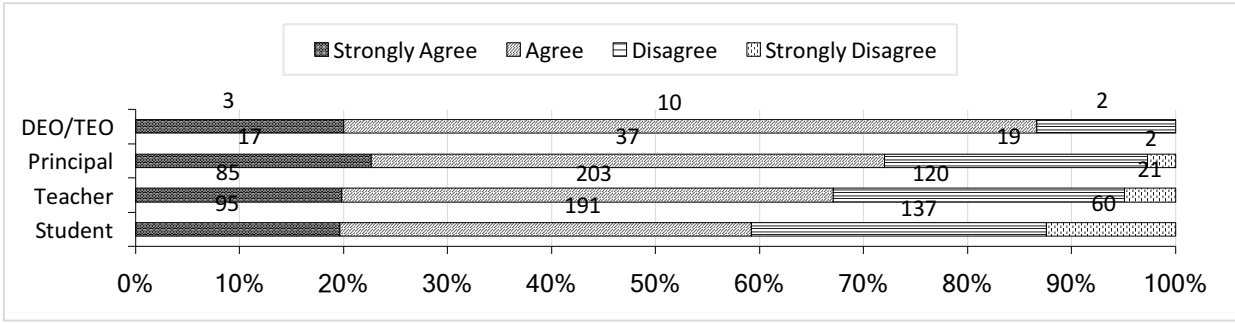


Figure 32. Target respondents view on whether there is conceptual learning gap between Class VI and VII

D. Weightage of the year-end assessment

Currently, four subjects: English, Dzongkha, Mathematics and EVS are taught in Class III. The assessment weightage is such that 10 percent is accounted for English and Dzongkha year-end assessment, while 25 percent and 30 percent is accounted for Mathematics and EVS year-end assessment respectively. The rest is assigned for continuous assessment. While in Class VI, five subjects: English, Dzongkha, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies are taught. The assessment weightage is such that 25 percent is accounted for English and Dzongkha year-end assessment, while 30 percent is accounted for Science and Social Studies year-end assessment and 40 percent is accounted for Mathematics year-end assessment. The rest is assigned for continuous assessment.

D.1. Weightage of Class III year-end assessment

About 80 percent of the DEOs/TEOs, principals and teachers reported that the Class III year-end assessment weightage to be appropriate (Figure 33).

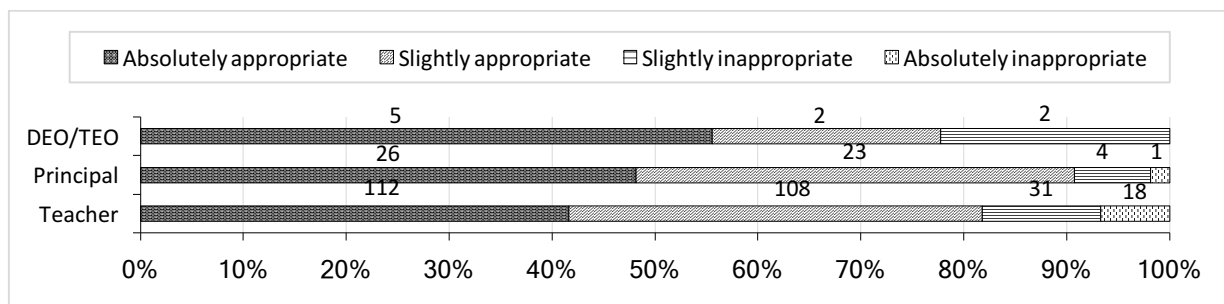


Figure 33. Target respondents view on whether the Class III year-end assessment weightage is appropriate

Similarly, more than 80 percent of the respective subject teachers reported that the Class III year-end assessment weightage to be appropriate to their subject (Figure 34).

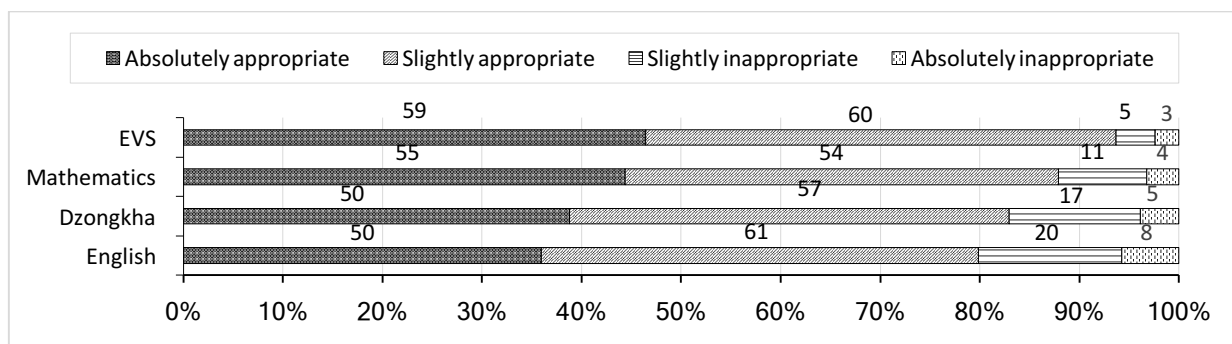


Figure 34. Class III teachers teaching the subject view on the weightage

The reason for appropriateness was described to be that the current arrangement gives more importance to formative assessment, not much of writing is taught at the pre-primary level and different abilities of students cannot be properly assessed using summative year-end assessment alone. However, teachers also felt that it would be better had the weightage been uniform across all the subjects. Teachers pointed out that with the existing weightage, no student is recorded to be performing poorly in the report card regardless of his/her performance in the year-end assessment as such contributing to conceptual learning gap when students reach grade IV. Some teachers highlighted English and Dzongkha subjects had the least weightage (10%) assigned and that they feared that students may get the wrong message that these subjects were not as important as other subjects.

D.2. Weightage of Class VI year-end assessment

More than 90 percent of the DEOs/TEOs, principals and teachers reported that the Class VI year-end assessment weightage to be appropriate (Figure 35).

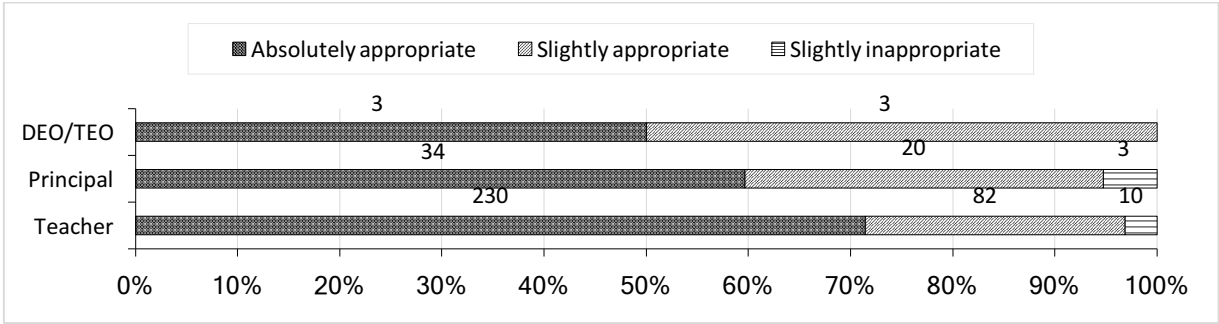


Figure 35. Target respondent view on the Class VI year-end assessment weightage

Almost all the respective subject teachers reported that the Class VI year-end assessment weightage to be appropriate to their subject (Figure 36).

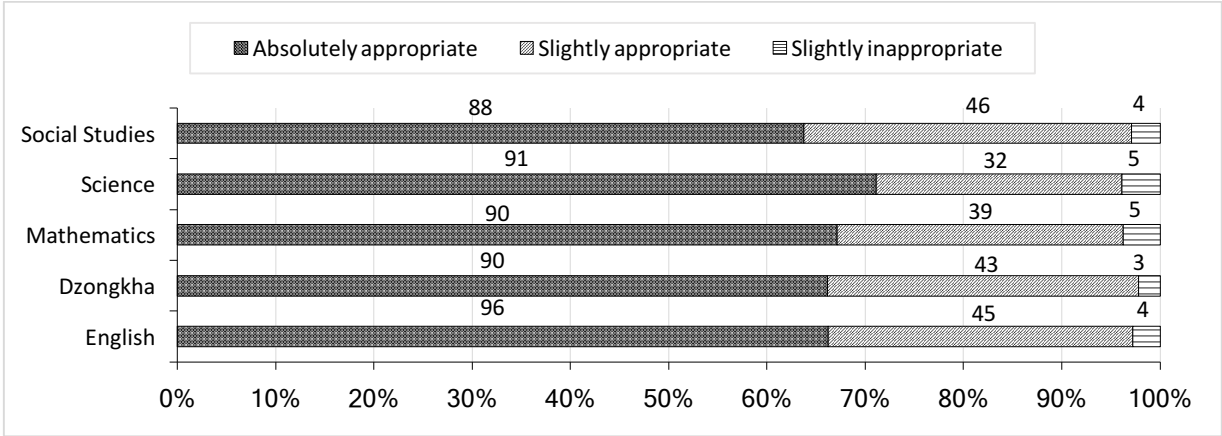


Figure 36. Class VI teachers teaching the subject view on the weightage

Almost all the Class VI teachers expressed that the weightage across the subjects was appropriate. However, there were few teachers who said that the weightage for Science and Social Studies was less.

E. Setting of questions by BCSEA

The current practice of setting of questions is such that, teachers from the field are invited during the summer break for about a week to create a question bank for the year-end assessments. While, the actual question paper moderation and finalization is done by BCSEA officials towards the end of August each year.

E.1. Setting of questions for Class III

44 percent of DEOs/TEOs, 73 percent of principals and 72 percent of teachers respectively indicated the setting of questions for Class III should be continued by BCSEA (Figure 37).

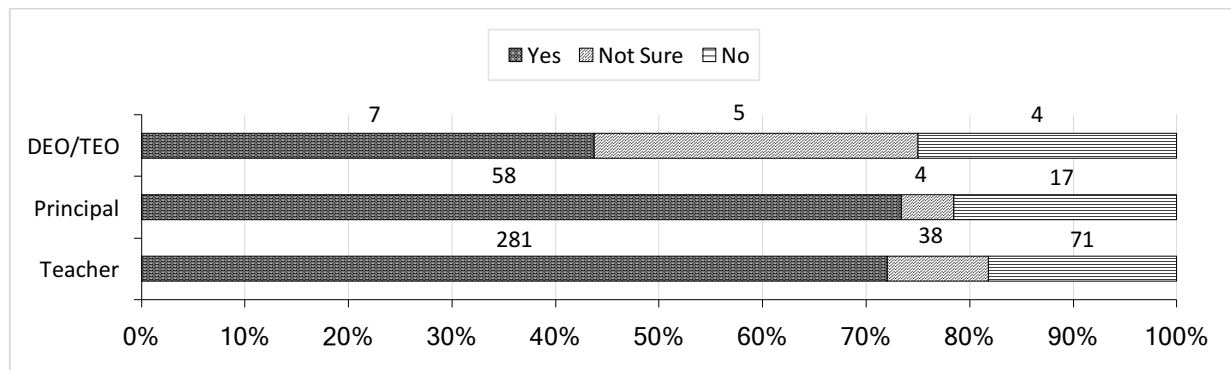


Figure 37. Setting of questions by BCSEA for Class III should be continued

The DEOs/TEOs who wanted the practice of BCSEA setting the questions for Class III to be continued stated that the year-end assessment helped maintain uniformity in terms of items and test education standard. While, the DEOs/TEOs who wanted it to be discontinued justified age inappropriateness, student and teacher pressure, the availability of other assessment tools such as formative assessment (CA), and school readiness to conduct school level assessment to save on government financing on such activities.

Most of the principals expressed the importance of BCSEA to set the question papers to avoid item variation and to instill a sense of seriousness in students and teachers. They also stated that the year-end assessment provides an opportunity to receive feedback on academic performance at different key stages. While a few of them pointed out that the children were too young to understand the meaning of examination and hence they did not take it seriously but it unnecessarily exerts pressure to the parents and teachers. There were few principals who explicitly mentioned strengthening the formative assessment rather than focussing on the summative assessment.

Most of the teachers who supported the continuity of BCSEA to set the year-end assessment questions said that the year-end assessment was important and that it served as a preparatory ground for future high stake examinations while adding accountability to the primary stakeholders (schools, teachers and students). Some of the teachers also voiced out concern on the lack of

professional competency in teacher to set the competency based questions. Hence, strongly supporting the continuity of centrally set questions. While some teachers specified that the examination at Class III was inappropriate given the young age of students, undue pressure to the students, parents and teachers and mismatch of item standard and learner aptitude. They strongly expressed the need to discontinue the year-end assessment at Class III, as they felt that teachers themselves are better equipped to ask the right questions to check the learning of their students. They also stated that teachers are becoming very complacent and lazy with the question setting as it is being conveniently done with BCSEA.

E.2. Setting of questions for Class VI

60 percent of DEOs/TEOs, 84 percent of principals and 88 percent of teachers respectively indicated that BCSEA should continue setting the questions for Class VI year-end assessment (Figure 38).

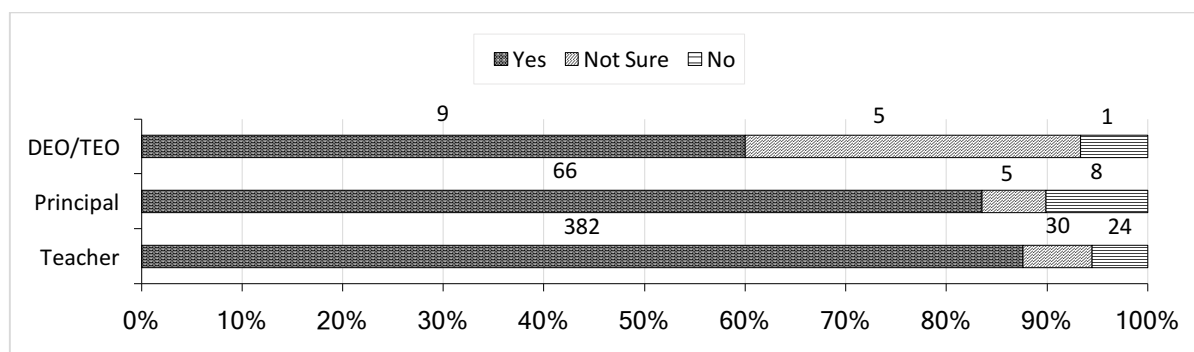


Figure 38. Setting of questions by BCSEA for Class VI should be continued

The DEOs/TEOs who wanted the practice of BCSEA setting the questions for Class VI to be continued stated that it helped to ascertain the standard of Class VI learning which is crucial given the primary exit level. It was also stated that the year-end assessment results helped teachers to check whether students are ready for the next level where they are introduced to few new subjects (Social studies and Science). It was also shared that the year-end assessment ensures teachers and students to work hard all round the year. However, there were some DEOs/TEOs who expressed concern on using the year-end results as a measure to determine/gauge the standard of primary education and ranking of the schools. The manipulation of CA marks at the school level and the ranking of schools to be unfair were acknowledged, in this context, central marking of Class VI year-end assessment like BCSE and BHSEC was proposed. There were also a few who said calling it ‘year-end examination’ was wrong and that it should be ‘year-end assessment’.

Most Principals expressed the need to check the learning standard of students at this important key stage. They also said that the year-end results ensures uniformity in setting of questions on competency based items whereby enabling the checking of the performance of schools across the country. However, all principals acknowledged and admitted to the existence of manipulation in CA marks mainly due to the school ranking and PMS ranking. To avoid this and to ensure proper justice in assessment, the need to establish central evaluation at the Dzongkhag level of the year-end assessment was flagged and proposed.

Majority of the teachers expressed the need of BCSEA to continue setting the questions for Class VI, they regarded the year-end assessment as a yard-stick to measure the standard of schools across the country. Besides the quality of paper and the question items used, it was pointed out that the year-end assessment helps check the teaching and learning process at the school level while preparing them for future board examinations. Additionally, it enables teachers to make it a point to cover the syllabus on time and help improve the student. Further, it was pointed out that the extra classes and remedial classes are instituted due to the year-end assessment. However, there was concern on judging the school by simply looking at the performance of each school in the year-end assessment. It was also shared that the current practice of conducting the evaluation at the respective school level does not assure uniformity and fairness. Few teachers also stated that if BCSEA were to discontinue to set the questions for Class VI then teachers might compromise on syllabus coverage and the overall standard of primary education. On the other hand, there were teachers who strongly felt that the year-end assessment should be decentralized as teachers were stated to be competent to set questions for the students and that they would better know the context. This approach according to them would eliminate fear and anxiety in students, however, they were not sure if it would affect the overall standard of primary education.

E.3 Should BCSEA focus on just the Class X and XII examinations

40 percent of DEOs/TEOs, 29 percent of principals and 23 percent of teachers specified that BCSEA should focus on just the Class X and XII examinations (Figure 39).

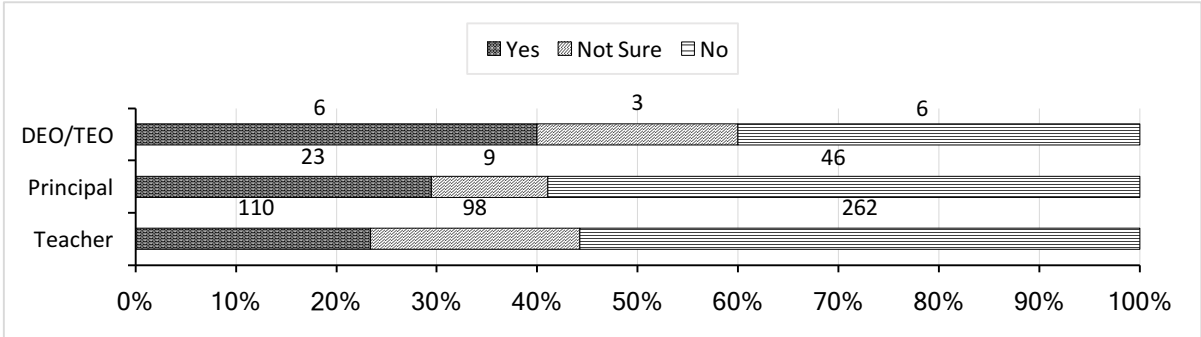


Figure 39. BCSEA should focus on Classes X and XII examinations

E.4 Decentralized setting of questions to schools

More than 90 percent of teachers indicated the school based assessment to be an important tool to examine the student performance and on formative assessment instilling a sense of responsibility among students (Figure 40).

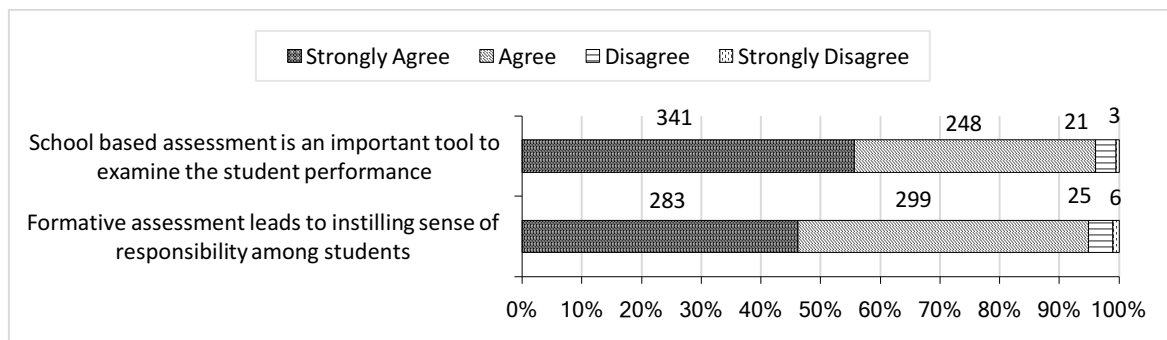


Figure 40. View on the school based assessment

About 70 percent of teachers stated that their school was in a position to receive the year-end question papers in soft copy/online (Figure 41).

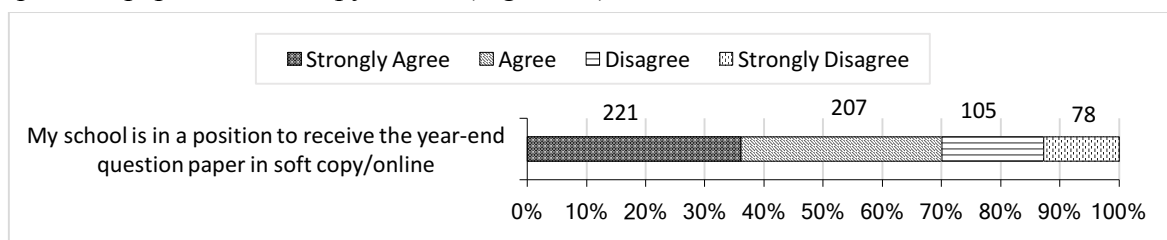


Figure 41. View on the readiness of schools to receive soft copy of questions

Almost all of the teachers agreed that they know the techniques of setting the question paper, and about 90 percent of them felt schools were ready to handle the Classes III and VI year-end assessment (Figure 42).

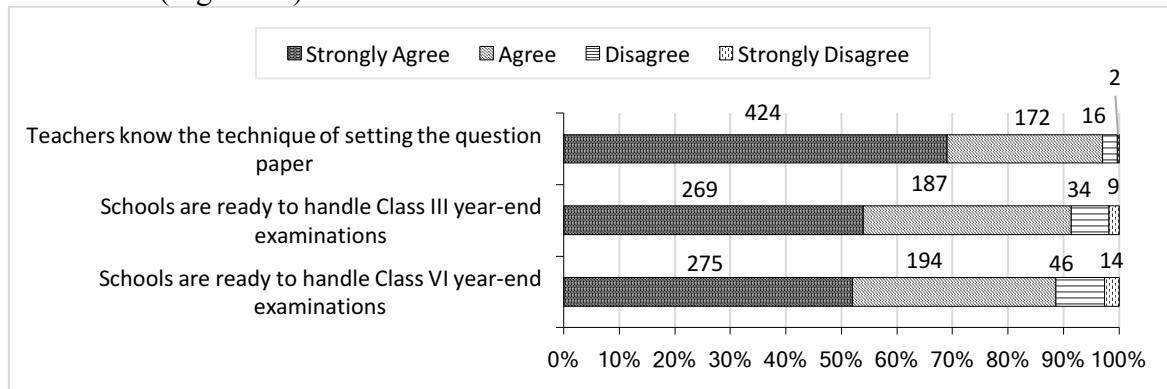


Figure 42. Teachers view on the readiness of schools to handle the year-end exam

F. Alternatives

F.1 View on strengthening National Education Assessment

More than 70 percent of the DEOs/TEOs, principal and teachers felt it important to strengthen National Education Assessment (NEA) as an alternative to the Classes III and VI year-end assessment (Figure 43).

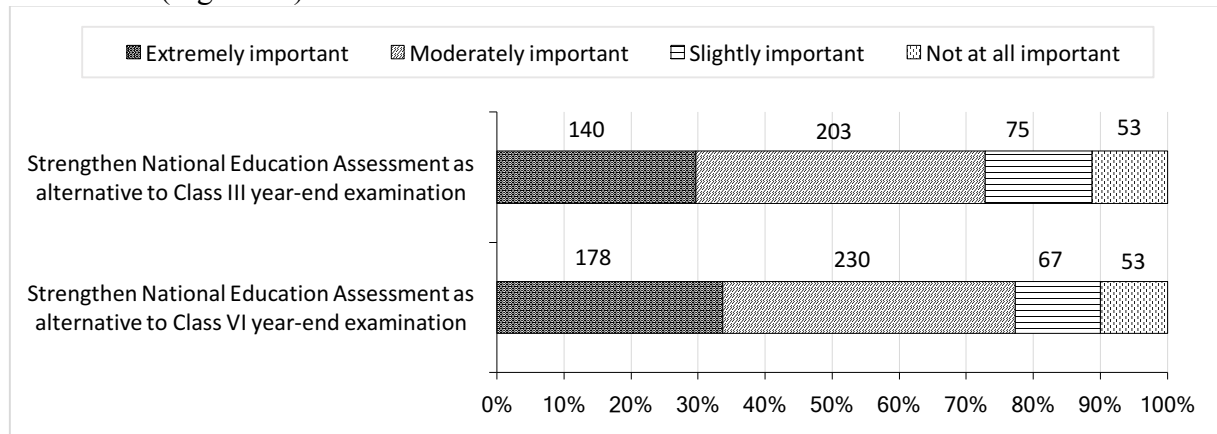


Figure 43. View on strengthening the NEA as alternative to the year-end assessments

Acknowledging the manipulation of CA marks, majority of DEOs/TEOs and principals expressed the need to institute Dzungkhag-based question development, conduct of the examination and evaluation of the papers as alternatives. They stated that it would help curb manipulation and to ensure fair assessment. However, the need for BCSEA to provide continuous support and refresher course were also highlighted.

G. Implementation

About 25 percent of the target respondents of the study expressed that the present practice of school ranking to be perfectly acceptable and appropriate (Figure 44).

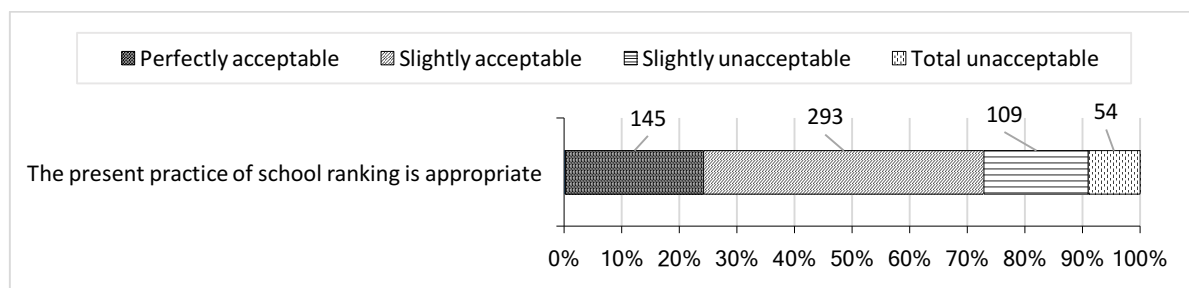


Figure 44. View on whether school ranking is appropriate

G.1 Continuous Assessment Marks

About 60 percent of the target respondents strongly agreed that the CA marks influence school ranking and 45 percent of the target respondents strongly agreed that it adequately addresses student learning (Figure 45).

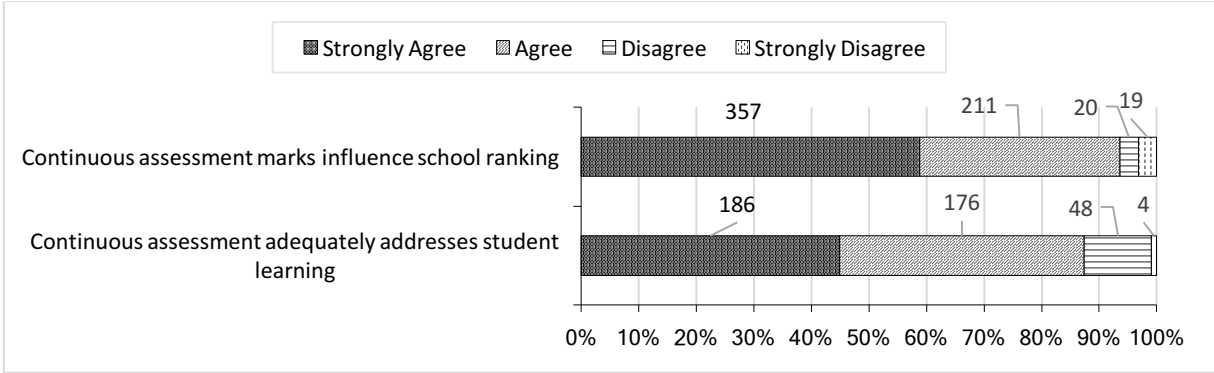


Figure 45. Feedback on continuous assessment

G.2 Allocation of classes to Class III and VI teachers

About 50 percent of the teachers when asked about the allocation of classes to Class III and VI teachers rated it was ‘Perfectly acceptable’ (Figure 46).

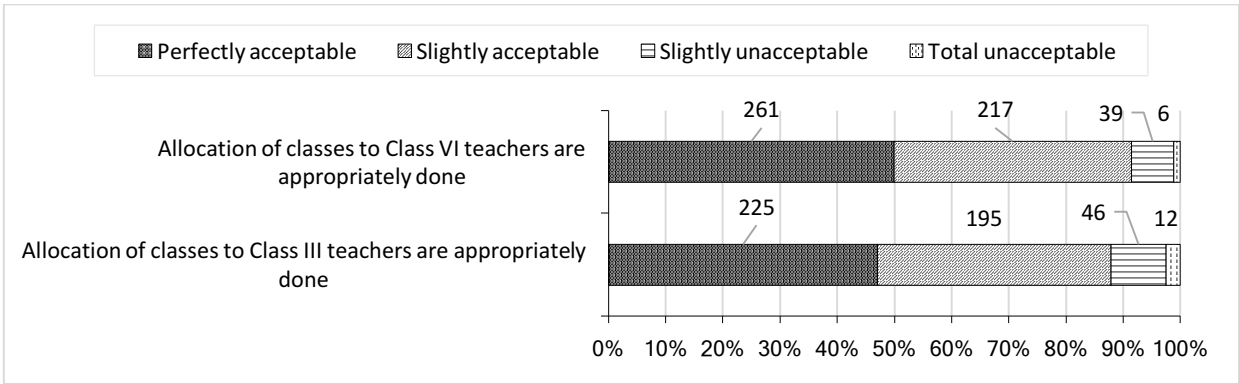


Figure 46. Teachers’ feedback on allocation of classes

G.3 Usage of year-end assessment data

According to more than 80 percent of teachers, their school uses the year-end assessment data to make informed policy decisions and to improve the classroom teaching practices, while about 80 percent of the teachers agreed to their school performance management becoming more meaningful using Classes III and VI year-end assessment results (Figure 47).

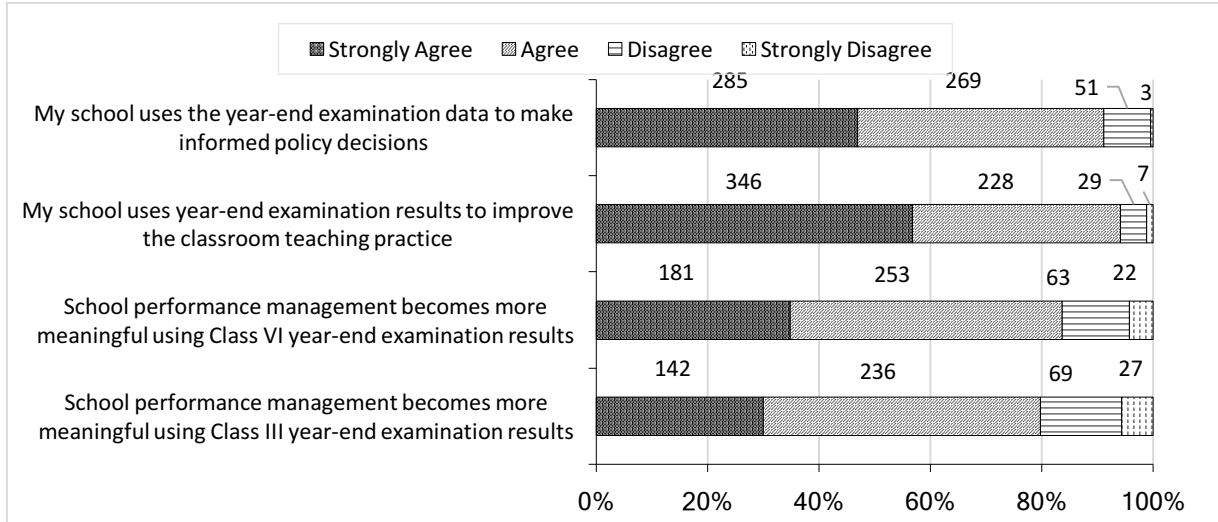


Figure 47. Teacher view of the usage of year-end exam data

G.4 Professional Development

Almost all teachers across all location areas indicated professional development on school based assessment to be ‘Very Desirable’ and ‘Desirable’ (Figure 48).

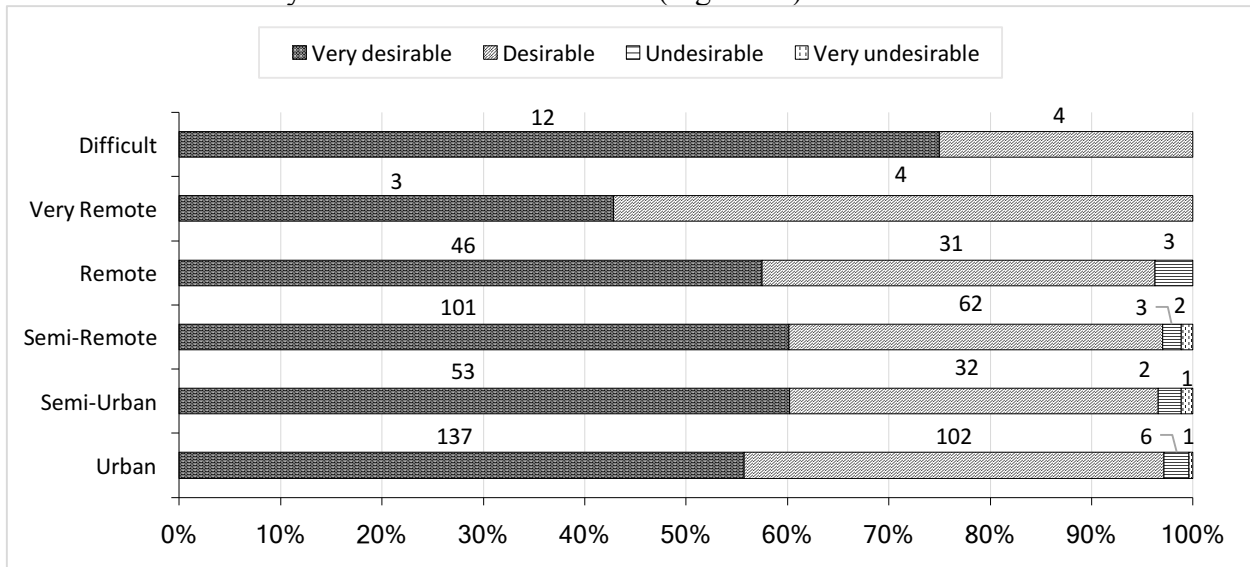


Figure 48. Teachers view on the need for PD on School Based Assessment by location

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Discussion

This study provides empirical evidence to ascertain the fact that most DEOs/TEOs, principals, teachers, and students view Classes III and VI year-end assessments as board examination. The reason for this outlook was identified to be due to a combination of factors, the most important factor was identified to be the arrangement of BCSEA setting the question papers and the results being used to influence school ranking and the individual teacher performance. Consequently, schools, principals, teachers and students were put under undue pressure even though technically the actual weightage for the year-end assessment is less than 50 percent. This study also confirmed the practice of manipulation of the CA marks mainly to positively influence the school and individual teacher performance ratings. It is worth noting that the respondents themselves strongly recommended the need to review the school ranking criteria so as to curb manipulation and other negative competition and suspicion.

All respondents of this study was observed to understand the rationale behind the year-end assessment very clearly. At the same time almost all of them viewed the year-end assessment to be very important. As a result, it is not surprising that the teachers teach for the year-end assessment and students are made to rehearse past question papers. Schools during the assembly make it a point to remind the students of the year-end assessment frequently and parents also remind the students to be serious and focus on doing the year-end assessment well. Principals in particular raised concern on Class III students not taking the year-end assessment seriously. Further, the fact that almost all schools provide remedial classes to the Classes III and VI students due to the year-end assessment and about 40 percent of students across the country take tuitions, illustrates the buildup of stress and anxiety in students. In particular, more than 85 percent of the students explicitly expressed worry about the year-end assessment and 70 percent of the students stated to be pressured to prepare for the year-end assessment.

From the field contradictory view on the relevancy of year-end assessment was received. In particular, the data received from the survey on the relevancy of the Class III year-end assessment was very different from the FGD and interviews. In the survey significant proportion of the target respondents expressed that both Classes III and VI year-end assessments were relevant. However, during the FGD with teachers and during the One-on-One interview with the school leaders (principals and DEOs/TEOs) many of them stated that the students were too young for any strong form of written examination and they strongly suggested the discontinuing of the setting of questions by BCSEA. As an alternative, many of the respondents proposed the institution of Dzongkhag level (central) preparation of the competency based questions, conduct of the examination and evaluation of the papers. This strategy was stated to have multiple benefits in terms of curbing manipulation, providing opportunity to all schools and teachers to be a part of the process of evaluation (which was pointed out to presently benefit only a handful of teachers) and ensuring professional justice is done in assessment. Further, a significant number of teachers (more than 90 percent) stated that they know the technique of setting the questions and that they know the context better and will be in a better position to do professional justice of assess all students.

5.2 Recommendations:

- a. Ministry of Education (EMD) to review school ranking practice to curb manipulation of CA marks and to enable effective assessment of the true performance of students and schools.
- b. BCSEA to stop setting the questions for the Class III year-end assessment and to assist Dzongkhags to conduct proper assessment of students without putting too much pressure on students.
- c. REC to review the weightage of Classes III and VI year-end assessment and collaborate with BCSEA and MoE on putting an effective monitoring and support mechanism for effective Continuous Assessment in Schools.
- d. Strengthen Class VI year-end assessment by instituting Dzongkhag level evaluation instead of individual schools doing their own evaluation, mainly to curb manipulations and to improve the efficiency to fulfill the overall objectives of conducting the assessment.

6. REFERENCES

1. 2016 key stage 2: assessment and reporting arrangements (ARA). (2016, January 15). UK: Standards and Testing Agency.
2. Annual education conference resolutions: 1st-7th annual education conference resolutions. (1997-2003). Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.bt/de/aec>
3. Assessment for learning: Territory-wide system assessment for schools. (2016). Hong Kong: Examinations and Assessment Authority. Retrieved from http://www.bca.hkeaa.edu.hk/web/TSA/en/pdf/TSA_HKEAA_Leaflet_Eng.pdf
4. Bew, L. (2011, June). Independent review of key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability: Final Report. Retrieved from <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2011-bew-report-ks2tests.pdf>
5. Curriculum guide for teachers: English class III. (2007). Paro: Curriculum and Professional Support Division, Department of School Education, Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan.
6. Deerman, M., Fluker, C., Panik, E., Powell, J., Shelton, K., Uline, C. S., & Notar, C. E. (May 2008). Standardized tests: Bellwether of achievement? *Asian Social Science, Vol. 4*, No. 5, 60-64.
7. Draft framework for competency based assessment. (2015). Babesa, Thimphu: Assessment and Monitoring Division, Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment.
8. Education and training 2020 work programme: Thematic working group ‘assessment of key competences’, literature review, glossary and examples. (2012, November). Brussel: School Education; Comenius, European Commission.
9. Education bureau’s promise to review school tests fails to satisfy union and parents. (2015, November 1). *South China Morning Post, Education and Community*. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/1874523/education-bureau-promise-review-school-tests>
10. English reading and literature: Class VI. (2006). Paro: Curriculum and Professional Support Division, Department of School Education, Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan.
11. Formative assessment: Improving learning in secondary classrooms. (2005a). Paris: OECD Publishing.
12. Gipps, C. (1993). The structure for assessment and recording: Assessing the national curriculum. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.



13. Grant, G., Elbow, P., Ewens, T., Gamson, Z., Kohli, W., Neumann, W., Olesen, V., & Riesman, D. (1979). *On competence: A critical analysis of competence-based reforms in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
14. Greaney, V. & Kellaghan, T. (1996). *Monitoring the learning outcomes of education systems*. Washington DC: World Bank.
15. Gurung, A. K. (2015, November 11). BCSEA journal of educational assessment. Babesa, Thimphu: Assessment and Monitoring Division, Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA).
16. Harlen, W. (2007). "Criteria for evaluating systems for student assessment": *Studies in educational evaluation*. Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 15-28.
17. Harlen, W., & Crick, R. D. (2002, June). A systematic review of the impact of summative assessment and tests on students' motivation for learning. London: EPPI-Centre, Institute of Education, University of London.
18. Herman, J. L. & Golan, S. (1991). *Effects of standardized testing on teachers and learning-another look: CSE technical report 334*. Los Angeles, CA: National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST).
19. Hong Kong education minister says controversial TSA exam could return next year. (2016, February 04). *South China Morning Post, Education and Community*. <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/1909670/hong-kong-education-minister-says-controversial>
20. Isaacs, T. (2010). *Educational assessment in England*. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0969594x.2010.491787>
21. Kellaghan, T. (2004, May). *Public examinations, national and international assessments, and educational policy*. Dublin: Educational Research Centre, St Patrick's College.
22. Kellaghan, T., & Greaney, V. (2000a). The globalization of assessment in the 20th century. *Assessment in Education*, 8, 87-102.
23. Kellaghan, T., & Greaney, V. (2000b). *Using assessment to improve the quality of education*. Paris: UNESCO, International Institute for Educational Planning.
24. LCQ3: Territory-wide System Assessment. (2015, November 04). *Press Releases*. Retrieved from <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201511/04/P201511040532.htm>
25. Lopen lamtoen: Lobrim sumpa. (2009). Paro: Royal Education Council (REC), School Education Division, Ministry of Education.
26. Merrell, C. (2012). *Developments in standardized assessment: a perspective from the UK*. Durham, UK: Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM), Durham University.

27. National student assessment. (2013). Bangladesh: Monitoring & Evaluation Division, Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary & Mass Education.
28. Nearly 40,000 parents join campaign to scrap 'too difficult' Hong Kong primary school exam: can you pass it? (2015, October 26). *South China Morning Post, Education and Community*. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/1872170/nearly-40000-parents-join-campaign-scrap-too>
29. Osburn, M. Z., Stegman, C., Suitt, L. D., & Ritter, G. (2004). Parents' perceptions of standardized testing: Its relationship and effect on student achievement. Arkansas: University of Arkansas. *Volume 4*, Number 1 (75-95)
30. Parents, teachers urge education minister to scrap controversial Primary 3 TSA tests. (2015, October 29). *Community and Education, Hong Kong*. Retrieved on <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2015/10/29/parents-teachers-urge-education-minister-to-scrap-controversial-primary-3-tsa-tests/>
31. Popham, W. J. (1991). Why standardized tests don't measure educational quality, *Educational Leadership*, *Vol. 56*, No. 6, pp. 8-15.
32. Pre-conference for 15th AEC. (2011, December 30). Thimphu: Ministry of Education.
33. Rosenkvist, M. A., (2010, November 22). Using student test results for accountability and improvement: A literature review. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 54, OECD Publishing.
34. Rotberg, I. C. (2006). Assessment around the world. (Vol. 64, Number 3). NCLB: Taking stock, looking forward (Pages 58-63).
35. Rychen, D. S., & Salganik L. H. (2000). Definition and selection of competencies: Theoretical and conceptual foundations (DeSeCo) background paper Neuchâtel: DeSeCo Secretariat. Paris: OECD.
36. School level exams for class III for uniform assessment of student performance. (2011, September 17). *Business Bhutan*. n.pag. Retrieved from <https://businessbhutan.bt/school-level-exams-for-class-iii-for-uniform-assessment-of-student-performance/>
37. Small, M., & Morrison, W. (2008). Understanding mathematics: Textbook for class VI. Paro: Curriculum and Professional Support Division (CAPSD), Department of School Education, Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan.
38. Social studies: Class VI student book. (2016). Paro: Royal Education Council (REC), Royal Government of Bhutan.
39. Spann, P. (2015, May 14). The negative effects of high-stakes testing.

40. Syllabus for classes IV-VI. (2012). Paro: Curriculum and Professional Support Division (CAPSD), Department of School Education, Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan.
41. Syllabus for classes PP-III. (2014). Paro: Department of Curriculum Research and Development (DCRD), Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan.
42. Tenzin, W., & Lepcha, S. (2012). Science: Class VI. Paro: Department of Curriculum and Research Development (DCRD), Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan.
43. Terri-wide system assessment of Chinese, English and mathematics at P3, P6 and S3 in 2012/13. (2012, May 17). Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 65/2012.
44. Thakhor lobjong: Lobrim sumpa. (2009). Paro: Royal Education Council (REC), School Education Division, Ministry of Education.
45. TSA row provides an opportunity to reshape Hong Kong's learning environment. (2015, December 23). *South China Morning Post, Insight and Opinion*. Retrieved on <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1893950/tsa-row-provides-opportunity-reshape-hong-kongs-learning>
46. Tshomrig dang kedyig: Lobrim dukpa. (2009). Paro: Royal Education Council (REC), School Education Division, Ministry of Education.
47. Vlaardingerroek, B., & Taylor, N. (2009, March 28). Secondary school external examination systems: Reliability, robustness and resilience. Retrieved from <http://www.cambriapress.com/cambriapress.cfm?template=15&bid=296>
48. Yeshey, K. (2013). Understanding mathematics: Textbook for class 3. Paro: Department of Curriculum and Research Development (DCRD), Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan.
49. Zucker, S. (2004, April). Administration practices for standardized assessments: Assessment report. Pearson Education.

Annexure:

1. Ministry of Education Approval Letter

	<p>དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་། ཤེས་རིག་ལྷན་ཁག་། Royal Government of Bhutan Ministry of Education Department of School Education School Planning and Coordination Division</p>	
---	--	---

DSE/SPCD/SLCU/ADM-01/2016/ 12 / 157 26 September 2016.

Secretary,
BCSEA
Thimphu.

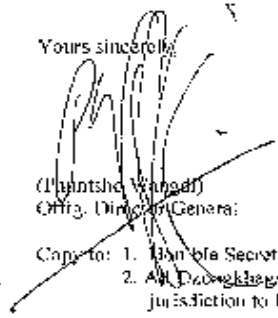
Subject: Approval to conduct Survey in Schools.

Dear Sir,

The Department of School Education would like to accord an approval to conduct survey in schools for Class III and VI annual examination question papers set by your Council (BCSEA), beginning from 1st October 2016. However, this survey programme should not hamper the normal academic session of the schools.

This is issued as per your proposal letter submitted to the Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Education vide letter No. BCSEA/ADM/MoE:2016-2017/9/25 dated September 24, 2016.

Yours sincerely,


(Phuntsho Wangyal)
Offg. Director General

Copy to: 1. Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Education for kind information.
2. All Dzongkhag/Thromde Education Officers, with a request to convey schools under your jurisdiction to facilitate the programme during their visit.

Post Box No. 112, Kawatense, Thimphu, Bhutan, Tel: 19, 1875 2 32525 www.education.gov.bt

2. National Statistical Bureau Survey Clearance Letter



དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་།
རྒྱལ་ཡོངས་ཚུལ་དཔྱད་བཀོད་འཛིན།

NATIONAL STATISTICS BUREAU
Royal Government of Bhutan



ཡིག་ཡང་

ཟླ་ ཚེས་ གནམ་ལོ་ ལྟ།

NSB/Survey/2016 /2576
September, 2016

22

Survey Clearance

This is to state that BCSEA will be conducting a survey on “Review of Classes III and VI year end examination”. The survey methodologies and questionnaires were submitted to NSB and we are pleased to clear the conduct of the above mentioned survey.

We wish the survey team Good Luck!

Chief
Survey & Data Processing Division

3. Enumerator's Instruction Manual

Expected Essential Qualities of an Enumerator

- **Presentation**
 - Appropriately dressed (neatly kept hair, comfortable shoes, national dress, decent makeup etc.)
 - Respect the school culture and exhibit proper decorum (not drinking and smoking or using illegal substances etc.)
 - Request for help/assistance but do not make undue demands for hospitality etc.
- **Time management and planning**
 - Before departure plan well and be clear on what, when, where and how you need to do what you need to do.
 - Be punctual and arrive few minutes before appointment time (e.g getting to the school 15 minutes before the actual time of survey)
 - Avoid foreseeable problems by being proactive and/or consulting with your team leader
- **Effective communication**
 - Be flexible in the use of Dzongkha and English to suit the situation.
 - Be respectful and polite in interacting with the school community.
 - Be approachable and open to encourage teachers to seek clarification on instructions and questions.
 - Be a good listener and a person of patience especially in encountering sensitive situations.
 - Express gratitude for the hospitality and cooperation extended by the school/teachers/principals.
- **Uphold research ethics**
 - Maintain confidentiality with information you have access to as a result of your involvement in the study as enumerators.
 - Maintain neutrality, and be un-biased.
 - Be thorough on the objectives of the study
 - Ensure no misinterpretation of the survey questions.

Basic Duties of an Enumerator

The list of basic duties is as follows:

- i. Attend Training Program (one day Enumerator training course) attentively
- ii. Study this enumerator's instruction manual carefully
- iii. Plan with strata team leader on data collection schedule and process
- iv. Carry survey questionnaires and travel to the sample schools in the designated Dzongkhag to monitor survey
- v. Work in close consultation with the assigned team leader and report on the progress and short comings

- vi. Liaise with the respective school principals with regard to the conduct of survey and coordinate time and Logistics
- vii. Professionally monitor the survey
- viii. Submit complete survey documents to respective team leader/focal person of BCSEA as per the time scheduled in the plan
- ix. Keep all information received confidential.

Materials to be taken

The following materials will be issued to the enumerator:

- i. DEO/Principal/Teacher Survey Questionnaires
- ii. Class VI student Survey Questionnaires
- iii. Semi-structured Focus Group Discussion and 1-1 Interview Questions (for moderators only)
- iv. Oral questions for Class III students
- v. Voice recorder (reminder: to seek content before using the recorder)
- vi. Blue ballpoint pen and a notepad for recording of field notes
- vii. Enumerator's Instruction Manual
- viii. Copy of the official approval letter from MoE for data collection
- ix. Copy of the official survey clearance letter from NSB
- x. Copy of the enumerators training power-point presentation slides

Guidelines for the conduct of the survey

- 1) Plan your days and time in advance
- 2) Make appointment with the school by contacting the principal/ vice principal. Explain the objective of the study and what is required of the schools
- 3) Communicate with Strata Team Leader on plans and issues
- 4) Carry the questionnaire with care to school and back to BCSEA Office
- 5) Get to the school at least 15 minutes before the appointment time (jointly decided with the school principal)
- 6) Meet the principal (greetings and gratitude for the opportunity)
- 7) Visit the survey venue and if necessary make changes
- 8) Make gentle and polite request to the principal for the teachers to fill the questionnaire in his/her physical absence
- 9) Greet the participants at the venue
 - a. Introduce yourself (if the principal does not do it for you)
 - b. Thank them for their time
 - c. Regrets for the inconveniences caused (if any)
 - d. Ensure comfort of participants
 - e. Briefly share the background of the study
- 10) Distribute questionnaires
 - a. Inform on the number of sections and pages in the booklet
 - b. Request the participants to read instructions carefully
 - c. Extend invitation for participants to seek clarification on instructions and questions while they complete the questionnaire
 - d. Provide time for the participants to read the cover letter
- 11) Indicate go-ahead if participants have read the cover page

- 12) In the first few minutes, be vigilant and proactive in observing issues and challenges participants might face in attempting the questions
- 13) Once completed, collect the questionnaire
- 14) Thank participants for their participation and their time (if all finish at a time if not as and when participants complete)
- 15) Count and cross check the number of questionnaires with the number of participants that sat for the survey
- 16) Code the papers
- 17) Pack the questionnaires carefully and seal the package with the cello-tape provided
- 18) Thank the principal/vice principal for the support before leaving the school
- 19) Report to BCSEA Office and hand over the packages to your respective Team leaders or to Ms. Sonam Lhamo, focal person for the study.

Time Schedule for Data Collection

Date	Activity
29 th -30 th September 2016	Training of Enumerators at BCSEA Conference Hall
1 st -15 th October 2016	Data Collection
17 th October 2016	Report to BCSEA Office to hand over the completed questionnaires and forms
18 th October 2016	Administrative matter (payment of TA-DA etc.)
19 th October -10 th November	Data punching, Data analysis and technical report writing
Mid November	Report presentation to educational stakeholders
December 2016	Report presentation to the Annual Education Conference
January 2017	Report printing and publication

4. Teacher/Principal/DEO/TEO Survey Questionnaire



འབྲུག་གི་སློབ་ལཱ་ཚོས་རྒྱུགས་དང་བརྟུན་ཞིབ་ཚོགས་ལྷན་ཁག།
Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment
Royal Government of Bhutan



Date: 1st October 2016

Teacher/Principal/DEO/TEO Survey Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a follow up on the resolution endorsed during the 17th Annual Education Conference - 2016, Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA) in collaboration with Royal Education Council (REC) and Ministry of Education (MoE) is in the process of conducting a study to review the year-end assessments for Classes III and VI. As such, we would like to solicit your kind help and assistance in completing this survey questionnaire.

There are no right or wrong answers. The only correct responses are those that are true to you. Participation is voluntary and on an anonymous basis. If you do decide to take part then we request you to please complete the whole questionnaire honestly and sincerely as your response will have a bearing on the overall analysis of the study.

Please feel free to contact the survey administrator if there is need to clarify any question(s).

We thank you for your effort and cooperation.

Kind Regards,

Tenzin Dorji
(Secretary)

A. Demographic information (Please circle your response)

1. Target respondent

Teacher	Principal	DEO/TEO
1	2	3

2. Gender

Male	Female
1	2

3. Age

21-30	31-40	41-50	50+
1	2	3	4

4. Location

Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Remote	Remote	Very Remote	Difficult
1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Type of school (if DEO/TEO, skip this item)

Government School	Private School
1	2

7. Years in service

Below 5	6-10 year	11-15 year	16-20 year	21-25 year	26+ year
1	2	3	4	5	6

8. Highest Professional Qualification

PTC/ZTC	B.Ed Primary	B.Ed Secondary	Bachelor degree	PGCE/PGDE	Master Degree	PhD
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. Nature of service

Regular	Contract	Temporary	Volunteer
1	2	3	4

10. Class level currently teaching (if DEO/TEO, skip this item)

Class III	Class VI	Others (please specify)
1	2	3. Class

11. Subjects currently teaching (if DEO/TEO, skip this item)

Dzongkha	English	Mathematics	EVS	Social Studies	Science
1	2	3	4	5	6

B. Please circle your response

1. Overall Impression		Poor	Satisfactory	Not Sure	Good	Excellent
1	My overall impression of the Class III year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4	5
2	My overall impression of the Class VI year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I understand the rationale behind conducting the year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4	5

2. Exit level		Not Sure	No	Yes
1	Year-end assessment ensures uniformity across all schools.	1	2	3
2	Schools have standard assessment tools to record student progress.	1	2	3
3	Year-end assessment monitors student learning competencies.	1	2	3
4	Year-end assessment contains competency based items. <i>(If you circle 3, then go to item 5, otherwise continue onto item 6 of this table)</i>	1	2	3
5	Items test the use of knowledge	1	2	3
	Items linked to learning outcomes	1	2	3
	Items are context based	1	2	3
	Items test all cognitive levels	1	2	3
6	Year-end assessment helps monitor the standard across the country.	1	2	3

3. Relevancy		Absolutely inappropriate	Slightly inappropriate	Slightly appropriate	Absolutely appropriate
1	Year-end assessment is relevant in the context of today's learning needs.	1	2	3	4
2	Year-end assessment is appropriate as per age level of Class III students.	1	2	3	4
3	Year-end assessment is appropriate as per age level of Class VI students.	1	2	3	4

4. Curriculum Progression		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Students are taught according to the learning outcomes.	1	2	3	4

4. Curriculum Progression		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2	Year-end question paper is based on the curricular mode of assessment.	1	2	3	4
3	There is conceptual learning gap between Class III and IV.	1	2	3	4
4	There is conceptual learning gap between Class VI and VII.	1	2	3	4

C. Weightage of examination (applicable only to Class III teachers)

5. Weightage of Class III		Absolutely inappropriate	Slightly inappropriate	Slightly appropriate	Absolutely appropriate
1	Year-end assessment weightage is appropriate for Class III.	1	2	3	4
2	The weightage given for English is appropriate.	1	2	3	4
3	The weightage given for Dzongkha is appropriate.	1	2	3	4
4	The weightage given for Mathematics is appropriate.	1	2	3	4
5	The weightage given for EVS is appropriate.	1	2	3	4

(Applicable only to Class VI teachers)

5. Weightage of Class VI		Absolutely inappropriate	Slightly inappropriate	Slightly appropriate	Absolutely appropriate
1	Year-end assessment weightage is appropriate for Class VI.	1	2	3	4
2	The weightage given for English is appropriate.	1	2	3	4
3	The weightage given for Dzongkha is appropriate.	1	2	3	4
4	The weightage given for Mathematics is appropriate.	1	2	3	4
5	The weightage given for Science is appropriate.	1	2	3	4
6	The weightage given for Social Studies is appropriate.	1	2	3	4

D. General Perception

6. High stake		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I feel the year-end assessment is important.	1	2	3	4
2	Parents feel the year-end assessment is important.	1	2	3	4
3	I view the year-end assessment as board examination.	1	2	3	4
4	Parents view the year-end assessment as board examination.	1	2	3	4
5	Schools view the year-end assessment as board examination.	1	2	3	4
6	I am worried about the year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4
7	Students are under pressure to prepare for year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4
8	My students will do well in their year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4
9	Teachers teach for the year-end assessments.	1	2	3	4

7. BCSEA questions		Not Sure	No	Yes
1	Setting of questions by BCSEA for Class III to be continued.	1	2	3
2	Setting of questions by BCSEA for Class VI to be continued.	1	2	3
3	Students are eager to appear the year-end assessment.	1	2	3
4	BCSEA to focus only on Classes X and XII year-end assessments.	1	2	3

8. Alternative		Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Extremely important
1	Strengthen National Education Assessment as alternative to Class III year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4
2	Strengthen National Education Assessment as alternative to Class VI year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4
Decentralised setting of question to schools		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
3	My school is in a position to receive the year-end question paper in soft copy/online.	1	2	3	4
4	School based assessment is an important tool to examine the student performance.	1	2	3	4
5	Teachers know the technique of setting the question paper.	1	2	3	4

8. Alternative		Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Extremely important
6	Schools are ready to handle Class III year-end assessments.	1	2	3	4
7	Schools are ready to handle Class VI year-end assessments.	1	2	3	4
8	Formative assessment leads to instilling sense of responsibility among students.	1	2	3	4

E. Benefits/Disadvantages (**applicable to Class III teachers**)

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	English curriculum contents are covered on time.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Dzongkha curriculum contents are covered on time.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Mathematics curriculum contents are covered on time.	1	2	3	4	5
4	EVS curriculum contents are covered on time.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Year-end assessment questions cater to diverse needs of students.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I am stressed with works on continuous assessment. (If you circled 4 or 5 rating then go to item 7, otherwise go to item 8 of this table)	1	2	3	4	5
7	Home work	1	2	3	4	5
	Class work	1	2	3	4	5
	Project work	1	2	3	4	5
	Test	1	2	3	4	5
8	Continuous assessment adequately addresses student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
9	School based assessment enables teachers to be more accountable.	1	2	3	4	5
10	School based assessment provides flexibility in addressing special need children.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I refer to the year-end questions while developing my own test questions. (if DEO/TEO skip this item)	1	2	3	4	5
12	Model answers provided by BCSEA are useful to me. (if DEO/TEO skip this item)	1	2	3	4	5

Benefits/Disadvantages of Class VI		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	English curriculum contents are covered on time.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Dzongkha curriculum contents are covered on time.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Mathematics curriculum contents are covered on time.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Science curriculum contents are covered on time.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Social studies curriculum contents are covered on time.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Year-end assessment questions cater to diverse needs of students.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I am stressed with works on continuous assessment. (If you circled 5 or 4 rating then go to item 8, otherwise go to item 9 of this table)	1	2	3	4	5
8	Home work	1	2	3	4	5
	Class work	1	2	3	4	5
	Project work	1	2	3	4	5
	Test	1	2	3	4	5
9	Continuous assessment adequately addresses student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
10	School based assessment enables teachers to be more accountable.	1	2	3	4	5
11	School based assessment provides flexibility in addressing special need children.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I refer to the year-end questions while developing my own test questions. (if DEO/TEO skip this item)	1	2	3	4	5
13	Model answers provided by BCSEA are useful to me. (if DEO/TEO skip this item)	1	2	3	4	5

F. Implementation

Policy implication		Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
1	The present practice of school ranking is appropriate.	1	2	3	4
2	I do professional justice while assessing my students.	1	2	3	4
3	Continuous assessment marks influence school ranking.	1	2	3	4
4	School performance management becomes more meaningful using Class III year-end assessment results.	1	2	3	4

Policy implication		Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
5	School performance management becomes more meaningful using Class VI year-end assessment results.	1	2	3	4
6	Academic works of students are recorded for evidence.	1	2	3	4
7	My school uses year-end assessment results to improve the classroom teaching practice.	1	2	3	4
8	Allocation of classes to Class III teachers are appropriately done.	1	2	3	4
9	Allocation of classes to Class VI teachers are appropriately done.	1	2	3	4
10	My school uses the year-end assessment data to make informed policy decisions.	1	2	3	4
		Very undesirable	Undesirable	Desirable	Very desirable
11	I need professional development on school based assessment techniques.	1	2	3	4
12	I prefer to teach Class III students. (if DEO/TEO skip this item)	1	2	3	4
13	I prefer to teach Class VI students. (if DEO/TEO skip this item)	1	2	3	4

5. Student Survey Questionnaire



འབྲུག་གི་སློབ་གྲིལ་ཚེས་རྒྱུགས་དང་བརྟག་ཞིབ་ཚོགས་མཉམས།
Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment
Royal Government of Bhutan



1st October 2016

Student Survey Questionnaire

Dear Student,

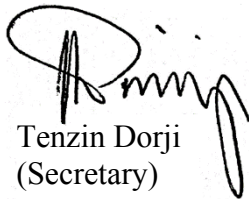
We are conducting a study to review the year-end assessments for Classes III and VI. Therefore, we would like you to complete this survey questionnaire.

There are no right or wrong answers. Your participation is on voluntary basis. Please complete the whole questionnaire sincerely, so as to help us in the overall analysis of the study.

Do not hesitate to ask the survey administrator if you have any doubt.

We thank you for your effort and cooperation.

Kind Regards,


Tenzin Dorji
(Secretary)

Instruction: Please circle your answer in the given table

1. Gender

Male	Female
1	2

2. Age

9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years	15+ years
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Location of school

Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Remote	Remote	Very Remote	Difficult
1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Type of school

Government School	Private School
1	2

5. Parent/Guardian background

	Educated	Not-educated
Father	1	2
Mother	1	2
Guardian	1	2

6. Parent/Guardian occupation

Parent/Guardian Occupation	House-wife/husband	Farmer	Government	Corporate	Non-Government	Business	Armed Force	National Work force
Father	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mother	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Guardian	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

7. My feeling on examination

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I feel the Class III year-end assessment is important.	1	2	3	4
2	I feel the Class VI year-end assessment is important.	1	2	3	4

8. Relevancy

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I know the reasons for the Class VI year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4
2	Class VI year-end assessment is relevant for my learning needs.	1	2	3	4
3	Class VI year-end assessment is suitable for my age.	1	2	3	4
4	I am aware of the learning outcomes.	1	2	3	4
5	I am taught as per the learning outcomes.	1	2	3	4
6	I found it much difficult to learn in Class IV than in Class III.	1	2	3	4
7	I found it much difficult to learn in Class VI than in Class V.	1	2	3	4

9. General Perception

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	My parents feel the year-end assessment is important.	1	2	3	4
2	My teachers feel the year-end assessment is important.	1	2	3	4
3	I view the year-end assessment as board examination.	1	2	3	4
4	My parents view the year-end assessment as board examination.	1	2	3	4
5	My teachers view the year-end assessment as board examination.	1	2	3	4
6	I am worried about the year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4
7	I am under pressure to prepare for year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4
8	My teachers teach for the year-end assessments.	1	2	3	4
9	I take tuition to prepare for my year-end assessment.	1	2	3	4
10	My school provides remedial classes.	1	2	3	4

		Not Sure	No	Yes
11	My teacher covers English syllabus on time.	1	2	3
12	My teacher covers Dzongkha syllabus on time.	1	2	3
13	My teacher covers Mathematics syllabus on time.	1	2	3
14	My teacher covers Science syllabus on time.	1	2	3
15	My teacher covers Social Studies syllabus on time.	1	2	3
16	My teachers assign a lot of homework to do.	1	2	3
17	I get a lot of pressure with: Home work	1	2	3

		Not Sure	No	Yes
	Class work	1	2	3
	Project work	1	2	3
	Test	1	2	3

		Never	Sometimes	Always
1	My teacher corrects my home-work fairly.	1	2	3
2	My teacher corrects my class-work fairly.	1	2	3
3	My teacher corrects my project-work fairly.	1	2	3
4	My teacher corrects my test paper fairly.	1	2	3
5	My teacher keeps proper record of my continuous assessment marks.	1	2	3
6	My teacher keeps proper record of my participation in debates, quizzes, games and sports etc.	1	2	3
7	Lessons taught in my class is useful to me in real life.	1	2	3

You have come to an end of the survey.

Thank you for your participation and wishing you the best.

6. Semi-structured Focus Group Discussion Questions for Teachers

(Not more than 2 hours)

1. Welcome
2. Get consent on recording
3. State the scope of the study

Q1. What is the purpose of examination?

- What is your impression on year-end assessment?

Q2. Do you consider the year-end assessments as a high stake examination?

- Why?
 - Are students under pressure?
 - Are you under pressure?

Q3. Do you follow the curriculum (REC) weightage for year-end assessment?

- Is the weightage appropriate?
 - Subject wise

Q4. Should BCSEA continue setting the question papers?

- Why? Provide reasons
- Would teacher be more accountable?
- If BCSEA discontinues, what should be the alternative in place?
- If BCSEA were to continue, what suggestions would you have for improvement?
- School readiness

7. Semi-structured Oral interview questions for Class III students

1. Welcome
2. Get consent on recording
3. State the scope of the study

Q1. Do you like coming to school? Reasons

Q2. Who sets the year-end assessment question papers? (Note the show of hands)

Q3. Are you worried (tensed) about the year-end assessment?

Q4. Do your parents remind about the year-end assessment?

Q5. Do your teachers remind about the year-end assessment?

Q6. Do you get a lot of homework? Which subject?

Q7. Do you get remedial classes?

Q8. Do you take tuition?

8. Semi-structured One-on-One Interview Questions

(not more than 40 minutes)

1. Welcome
2. Get consent on recording
3. State the scope of the study

Q1. Do you like coming to school? Reasons

Q2. Who sets the year-end assessment question papers? (Note the show of hands)

Q3. Are you worried (tensed) about the year-end assessment?

Q4. Do your parents remind about the year-end assessment?

Q5. Do your teachers remind about the year-end assessment?

Q6. Do you get a lot of homework? Which subject?

Q7. Do you get remedial classes?

Q8. Do you take tuition?

9. Descriptive Statistics of the Teacher/Principal/DEO/TEO Survey Questionnaire

Demographic Information

Table 1. Respondent by Dzongkhag

	Teacher		Principal		DEO/TEO	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Bumthang	16	88.9%	1	5.6%	1	5.6%
Chukha	31	83.8%	5	13.5%	1	2.7%
Dagana	19	86.4%	3	13.6%	0	0.0%
Gasa	6	85.7%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
Haa	15	83.3%	2	11.1%	1	5.6%
Lhuentse	13	81.3%	2	12.5%	1	6.3%
Mongar	32	88.9%	3	8.3%	1	2.8%
Paro	29	85.3%	4	11.8%	1	2.9%
PemaGatshel	13	81.3%	2	12.5%	1	6.3%
Punakha	18	90.0%	2	10.0%	0	0.0%
Samdrup J	27	93.1%	1	3.4%	1	3.4%
Samtse	44	67.7%	20	30.8%	1	1.5%
Sarpang	23	85.2%	3	11.1%	1	3.7%
Thimphu	21	84.0%	3	12.0%	1	4.0%
Trashigang	23	82.1%	4	14.3%	1	3.6%
Trashiyangtse	13	86.7%	1	6.7%	1	6.7%
Trongsa	15	93.8%	1	6.3%	0	0.0%
Tsirang	19	90.5%	2	9.5%	0	0.0%
W Phodrang	34	87.2%	5	12.8%	0	0.0%
Zhemgang	7	70.0%	3	30.0%	0	0.0%
G Throm	8	88.9%	1	11.1%	0	0.0%
P Throm	13	81.3%	2	12.5%	1	6.3%
T Throm	75	88.2%	9	10.6%	1	1.2%
SJ Throm	7	77.8%	1	11.1%	1	11.1%

Table 2: Respondent by Dzongkhag and Classes Taught

Dzongkhag	Teacher				Principal			DEO/TEO	
	Teaching Class III	Teaching Class VI	Teaching Class III	Teaching Class VI	Other	n	%		
Bumthang	6	32%	11	58%	0	0%	1	5%	

Chukha	14	37%	18	47%	0	0%	1	3%	4	11%	1	3%
Dagana	8	35%	12	52%	0	0%	0	0%	3	13%	0	0%
Gasa	3	38%	4	50%	0	0%	0	0%	1	13%	0	0%
Haa	6	29%	12	57%	1	5%	0	0%	1	5%	1	5%
Lhuentse	6	35%	8	47%	0	0%	0	0%	2	12%	1	6%
Mongar	16	39%	21	51%	0	0%	1	2%	2	5%	1	2%
Paro	12	32%	20	54%	0	0%	1	3%	3	8%	1	3%
PemaGatshel	4	24%	10	59%	0	0%	0	0%	2	12%	1	6%
Punakha	6	30%	12	60%	0	0%	1	5%	1	5%	0	0%
Samdrup J	14	42%	15	45%	0	0%	0	0%	2	6%	2	6%
Samtse	22	33%	24	36%	2	3%	7	10%	11	16%	1	1%
Sarpang	9	31%	16	55%	1	3%	1	3%	1	3%	1	3%
Thimphu	10	37%	13	48%	0	0%	0	0%	3	11%	1	4%
Trashigang	11	38%	13	45%	0	0%	2	7%	2	7%	1	3%
Trashiyangtse	7	44%	7	44%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	1	6%
Trongsa	6	35%	10	59%	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Tsirang	7	33%	12	57%	0	0%	0	0%	2	10%	0	0%
Wangdue	20	44%	20	44%	1	2%	2	4%	2	4%	0	0%
Zhemgang	4	36%	4	36%	1	9%	0	0%	2	18%	0	0%
G Throm	4	44%	4	44%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%
P Throm	6	38%	7	44%	0	0%	0	0%	2	13%	1	6%
T Throm	30	34%	47	54%	0	0%	4	5%	5	6%	1	1%
SJ Throm	2	33%	4	67%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Table 3. Respondents by Gender

	Male		Female	
	n	%	n	%
Teacher	251	49.5%	256	50.5%
Principal	72	90.0%	8	10.0%
DEO/TEO	15	93.8%	1	6.3%

Table 4. Respondent by Age

	21-30		31-40		41-50		50+	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	148	28.5%	283	54.5%	68	13.1%	20	3.9%
Principal	0	0.0%	28	35.0%	42	52.5%	10	12.5%
DEO/TEO	0	0.0%	4	25.0%	12	75.0%	0	0.0%

Table 5. Respondent by Years in Service

	Below 5		6 - 10		11 -15		16 - 20		21 - 25		26+	
	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	116	22.4%	167	32.2%	101	19.5%	62	11.9%	32	6.2%	41	7.9%
Principal	0	0.0%	3	3.8%	18	22.5%	21	26.3%	18	22.5%	20	25.0%
DEO/TEO	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	25.0%	8	50.0%	4	25.0%	0	0.0%

Table 6. Respondent by Location

	Urban		Semi-Urban		Semi-Remote		Remote		Very Remote		Difficult	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	212	40.7%	75	14.4%	148	28.4%	66	12.7%	7	1.3%	13	2.5%
Principal	27	33.3%	13	16.0%	23	28.4%	15	18.5%	0	0.0%	3	3.7%
DEO/TEO	12	75.0%	4	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Table 7. Respondent by Highest Qualification

	PTC/ZT C		B.Ed Primary		B.Ed Secondary		Bachelor Degree		PGCE/PGD E		Master Degree		PhD	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	9	18.5%	25	48.3%	7	14.7%	2	5.2%	45	8.7%	2	4.6%	0	0.0%
Principal	1	14.8%	25	30.9%	6	7.4%	1	1.2%	2	2.5%	3	43.2%	0	0.0%
DEO/TEO	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%

Table 8. Respondent by Nature of Service

	Regular		Contract		Temporary		Volunteer	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	481	92.7%	35	6.7%	2	.4%	1	.2%
Principal	79	97.5%	2	2.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
DEO/TEO	16	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Table 9. Subject currently teaching by Respondent Teachers

Respondent currently teaching subject	n	%
Dzongkha	122	16%
English	178	24%
Mathematics	161	22%
EVS	94	13%
Social Studies	109	15%
Science	81	11%

Overall Impression

Table 1. Overall Impression of the year-end assessment

	Poor		Satisfactory		Not Sure		Good		Excellent	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
My overall impression of the Class III year-end assessment	8	1.7%	44	9.3%	85	17.9%	253	53.4%	84	17.7%
My overall impression of the Class VI year-end assessment	2	.4%	30	5.6%	70	13.1%	314	58.9%	117	22.0%
I understand the rationale behind conducting the year-end assessment	1	.2%	19	3.3%	73	12.7%	271	47.3%	209	36.5%

Table 2. Impression of the Class III year-end assessment

My overall impression of the Class III year-end assessment	Poor		Satisfactory		Not Sure		Good		Excellent	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	7	1.8%	35	9.2%	67	17.6%	202	53.2%	69	18.2%
Principal	0	0.0%	8	10.5%	15	19.7%	40	52.6%	13	17.1%
DEO/TEO	1	6.3%	1	6.3%	3	18.8%	10	62.5%	1	6.3%

Table 3. Impression of the Class VI year-end assessment

My overall impression	Poor	Satisfactory	Not Sure	Good	Excellent

of the Class VI year-end assessment	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	1	.2%	26	5.9%	57	13.0%	255	58.4%	98	22.4%
Principal	0	0.0%	3	3.8%	11	13.9%	48	60.8%	17	21.5%
DEO/TEO	1	6.7%	1	6.7%	2	13.3%	10	66.7%	1	6.7%

Table 4. Understanding of the rationale behind the year-end assessment

I understand the rationale behind conducting the year-end assessment	Poor		Satisfactory		Not Sure		Good		Excellent	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	1	.2%	16	3.3%	64	13.3%	226	47.1%	173	36.0%
Principal	0	0.0%	3	3.9%	8	10.4%	33	42.9%	33	42.9%
DEO/TEO	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	7.1%	11	78.6%	2	14.3%

Exit Level

Table 1. View on year-end exam ensuring uniformity across all schools

Year-end assessment ensures uniformity across all schools	Not Sure		No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	30	5.8%	18	3.5%	468	90.7%
Principal	4	5.0%	1	1.3%	75	93.8%
DEO/TEO	1	6.3%	1	6.3%	14	87.5%

Table 2. View on whether schools have standard assessment tools

Schools have standard assessment tools to record student progress	Not Sure		No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	38	7.4%	19	3.7%	459	89.0%
Principal	3	3.7%	3	3.7%	75	92.6%
DEO/TEO	2	12.5%	2	12.5%	12	75.0%

Table 3.View on year-end assessment monitoring student learning competencies

Year-end assessment monitors student learning competencies	Not Sure		No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	47	9.2%	30	5.9%	432	84.9%
Principal	6	7.7%	12	15.4%	60	76.9%
DEO/TEO	2	12.5%	1	6.3%	13	81.3%

Table 4. View on whether year-end assessment contain competency based items

Year-end assessment contains competency based items	Not Sure		No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	53	11.0%	19	3.9%	410	85.1%
Principal	7	9.9%	4	5.6%	60	84.5%
DEO/TEO	2	13.3%	1	6.7%	12	80.0%

Table 5. View on whether items test the use of knowledge

Items test the use of knowledge	Not Sure		No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	11	2.5%	11	2.5%	412	94.9%
Principal	1	1.6%	1	1.6%	60	96.8%
DEO/TEO	1	8.3%	1	8.3%	10	83.3%

Table 6. View on whether items linked to learning outcomes

Items linked to learning outcomes	Not Sure		No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	15	3.4%	10	2.3%	410	94.3%
Principal	3	5.0%	4	6.7%	53	88.3%
DEO/TEO	1	8.3%	0	0.0%	11	91.7%

Table 7. View on whether items are is context based

Items are is context based	Not Sure		No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	33	7.6%	25	5.8%	375	86.6%
Principal	4	6.6%	5	8.2%	52	85.2%

DEO/TEO	2	18.2%	1	9.1%	8	72.7%
---------	---	-------	---	------	---	-------

Table 8. View on whether items test all cognitive levels

Items test all cognitive levels	Not Sure		No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	42	9.6%	28	6.4%	366	83.9%
Principal	10	16.7%	2	3.3%	48	80.0%
DEO/TEO	3	23.1%	2	15.4%	8	61.5%

Table 9. View on whether year-end assessment helps monitor the standard across the country

Year-end assessment helps monitor the standard across the country	Not Sure		No		Yes		4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	42	8.5%	20	4.0%	434	87.5%	0	0.0%
Principal	6	7.9%	1	1.3%	68	89.5%	1	1.3%
DEO/TEO	2	13.3%	0	0.0%	13	86.7%	0	0.0%

Relevancy

Table 1. View on whether the year-end assessment is relevant

Year-end assessment is relevant in the context of today's learning needs	Absolutely inappropriate		Slightly inappropriate		Slightly appropriate		Absolutely appropriate	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	3	.6%	21	4.1%	234	45.3%	259	50.1%
Principal	1	1.3%	2	2.5%	45	56.3%	32	40.0%
DEO/TEO	0	0.0%	2	12.5%	9	56.3%	5	31.3%

Table 2. View on whether the year-end assessment is appropriate (Class III)

Year-end assessment is appropriate as per age level of Class III students	Absolutely inappropriate		Slightly inappropriate		Slightly appropriate		Absolutely appropriate	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	19	4.9%	73	19.0%	159	41.3%	134	34.8%
Principal	4	5.1%	9	11.5%	32	41.0%	33	42.3%
DEO/TEO	0	0.0%	2	12.5%	6	37.5%	8	50.0%

Table 3. View on whether the year-end assessment is appropriate (Class VI)

Year-end assessment is appropriate as per age level of Class VI students	Absolutely inappropriate		Slightly inappropriate		Slightly appropriate		Absolutely appropriate	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	2	.5%	11	2.6%	139	32.3%	278	64.7%
Principal	1	1.3%	1	1.3%	26	33.3%	50	64.1%
DEO/TEO	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	43.8%	9	56.3%

Curriculum Progression

Table 1. View on whether students are taught according to the learning outcomes

Students are taught according to the learning outcomes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	1	11	202	299
Principal	1	1	48	29
DEO/TEO	0	2	11	3

Table 2. View on whether the year-end question paper is based on the curricular mode of assessment

Year-end question paper is based on the curricular mode of assessment	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	3	15	216	280
Principal	2	0	36	41
DEO/TEO	0	0	11	5

Table 3. View on whether there is conceptual learning gap between Class III and IV

There is conceptual learning gap between Class III and IV	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	9	44	163	247
Principal	0	10	28	41
DEO/TEO	0	0	8	8

Table 4. View on whether there is conceptual learning gap between Class VI and VII

There is conceptual learning gap between Class VI and VII	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	21	120	203	85
Principal	2	19	37	17
DEO/TEO	0	2	10	3

Weightage of Class III year-end assessment

Table 1. View on whether the Class III year-end assessment weightage is appropriate

Year-end assessment weightage is appropriate for Class III	Absolutely inappropriate	Slightly inappropriate	Slightly appropriate	Absolutely appropriate
Teacher	18	31	108	112
Principal	1	4	23	26
DEO/TEO	0	2	2	5

Table 2. View on subject-wise weightage by Class III teachers teaching the subject

Weightage given for:	Absolutely inappropriate	Slightly inappropriate	Slightly appropriate	Absolutely appropriate
English	8	20	61	50
Dzongkha	5	17	57	50
Mathematics	4	11	54	55
EVS	3	5	60	59

Table 3. View on whether the Class VI year-end assessment weightage is appropriate

Year-end assessment weightage is appropriate for Class VI	Absolutely inappropriate	Slightly inappropriate	Slightly appropriate	Absolutely appropriate
Teacher	0	10	82	230
Principal	0	3	20	34
DEO/TEO	0	0	3	3

Table 4. View on subject-wise weightage by Class VI teachers teaching the subject

Weightage given for:	Absolutely inappropriate	Slightly inappropriate	Slightly appropriate	Absolutely appropriate
English	0	4	45	96
Dzongkha	0	3	43	90
Mathematics	0	5	39	90
Science	0	5	32	91
Social Studies	0	4	46	88

General Perception

Table 1. Perception of respondents on whether the year-end exam is important

I feel the year-end assessment is important	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	3	18	118	375
Principal	0	5	25	50
DEO/TEO	0	0	7	9

Table 2. Perception of parents view of the year-end exam

Parents feel the year-end assessment is important	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	1	26	169	312
Principal	0	3	37	40
DEO/TEO	0	1	7	8

Table 3. Perception on year-end assessment as board examination

I view the year-end assessment as board examination	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	8	40	173	290
Principal	1	9	32	38
DEO/TEO	0	5	2	9

Table 4. Perception of parent view of the year-end exam as board exam

Parents view the year-end assessment as board examination	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	7	45	206	249
Principal	2	7	37	32
DEO/TEO	0	3	4	9

Table 5. Perception of schools view on the year-end exam

Schools view the year-end assessment as board examination	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	4	28	163	314
Principal	3	9	27	40
DEO/TEO	0	3	4	9

Table 6. Perception of worry about the year-end exam

I am worried about the year-end assessment	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	31	95	186	204
Principal	6	34	22	15
DEO/TEO	2	8	5	1

Table 7. Perception on whether students are under pressure

Students are under pressure to prepare for year-end assessment	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	20	119	248	129
Principal	3	26	35	15
DEO/TEO	1	6	7	2

Table 8. Perception of respondents on their confidence in students to do well

My students will do well in their year-end assessment	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	1	24	354	138
Principal	0	7	58	15
DEO/TEO	0	2	10	2

Table 9. Perception on whether teachers teach for the year-end assessments

Teachers teach for the year-end assessments	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	80	209	126	100
Principal	9	27	25	18
DEO/TEO	1	4	7	4

Setting of questions by BCSEA

Table 1. Setting of questions by BCSEA for Class III to be continued

Setting of questions by BCSEA for Class III to be continued	Not Sure	No	Yes
Teacher	38	71	281
Principal	4	17	58
DEO/TEO	5	4	7

Table 2. Setting of questions by BCSEA for Class VI to be continued

Setting of questions by BCSEA for Class VI to be continued	Not Sure	No	Yes
Teacher	30	24	382
Principal	5	8	66
DEO/TEO	5	1	9

Table 3. Students are eager to appear the year-end assessment

Students are eager to appear the year-end assessment	Not Sure	No	Yes
Teacher	151	52	301
Principal	24	12	44
DEO/TEO	6	4	5

Table 4. BCSEA to focus on Classes X and XII examinations

BCSEA to focus on Classes X and XII examinations	Not Sure	No	Yes
Teacher	98	262	110
Principal	9	46	23

DEO/TEO	3	6	6
---------	---	---	---

Alternative

Table 1. Feedback on strengthening NEA as alternative to Class III year-end exam

Strengthen National Education Assessment as alternative to Class III year-end assessment	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Extremely important
Teacher	48	66	155	107
Principal	4	8	39	27
DEO/TEO	0	1	8	6

Table 2. Feedback on strengthening NEA as alternative to Class VI year-end exam

Strengthen National Education Assessment as alternative to Class VI year-end assessment	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Extremely important
Teacher	49	59	179	147
Principal	3	7	41	26
DEO/TEO	0	1	9	5

Decentralized setting of questions to schools

Table 1. Readiness of schools to receive soft copy/online question papers

My school is in a position to receive the year-end question paper in soft copy/online	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	69	90	171	185
Principal	7	12	29	33
DEO/TEO	2	3	7	2

Table 2. School based assessment is an important tool to examine the student performance

School based assessment is an important tool to examine the student performance	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	3	20	199	294
Principal	0	1	36	43
DEO/TEO	0	0	11	4

Table 3. Teachers know the technique of setting the question paper

Teachers know the technique of setting the question paper	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	2	13	135	366
Principal	0	3	26	52
DEO/TEO	0	0	9	6

Table 4. Schools are ready to handle Class III year-end assessments

Schools are ready to handle Class III year-end assessments	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	8	26	146	222
Principal	1	7	30	43
DEO/TEO	0	1	10	4

Table 5. Schools are ready to handle Class VI year-end assessments

Schools are ready to handle Class VI year-end assessments	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	12	36	153	231
Principal	2	7	31	40
DEO/TEO	0	3	8	4

Table 6. Formative assessment leads to instilling sense of responsibility among students

Formative assessment leads to instilling sense of responsibility among students	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher	5	19	248	244
Principal	1	4	41	34
DEO/TEO	0	1	9	5

Benefits/Disadvantages (Class III Teachers)

Table 1. Consolidated table

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
English curriculum contents are covered on time	7	20	23	76	97

Dzongkha curriculum contents are covered on time	0	3	12	52	136
Mathematics curriculum contents are covered on time	9	14	34	72	75
EVS curriculum contents are covered on time	1	2	11	42	153
Year-end assessment questions cater to diverse needs of students	5	17	61	122	99
I am stressed with works on continuous assessment	17	33	122	71	50
Stressed with Home work	3	13	56	57	50
Stressed with Class work	7	15	34	50	71
Stressed with Project work	11	21	64	41	27
Stressed with Test	10	17	56	54	38
Continuous assessment adequately addresses student learning	1	6	43	125	145
School based assessment enables teachers to be more accountable	1	7	23	105	195
School based assessment provides flexibility in addressing special need children	6	17	57	99	150
I refer to the year-end questions while developing my own test questions	3	4	65	113	138
Model answers provided by BCSEA are useful to me	1	6	39	83	200

Table 2. English curriculum contents are covered on time

English curriculum contents are covered on time	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	6	20	16	56	68
Principal	1	0	7	15	28
DEO/TEO	0	0	0	5	0

Table 3. Dzongkha curriculum contents are covered on time

Dzongkha curriculum contents are covered on time	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	3	11	33	99
Principal	0	1	14	36
DEO/TEO	0	0	5	0

Table 4. Mathematics curriculum contents are covered on time

Mathematics curriculum contents are covered on time	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	9	14	30	48	47
Principal	0	0	4	19	27
DEO/TEO	0	0	0	5	0

Table 5. EVS curriculum contents are covered on time

EVS curriculum contents are covered on time	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	1	2	11	28	109
Principal	0	0	0	9	43
DEO/TEO	0	0	0	5	0

Table 6. Year-end assessment questions cater to diverse needs of students

Year-end assessment questions cater to diverse needs of students	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	5	14	51	95	80
Principal	0	3	9	25	16
DEO/TEO	0	0	1	2	2

Table 7. I am stressed with works on continuous assessment

I am stressed with works on continuous assessment	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	16	29	97	58	44
Principal	1	4	22	12	6
DEO/TEO	0	0	3	1	0

Table 8. Feedback on teachers stress

Stressed with:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Home work	3	10	45	46	44
Class work	6	12	27	38	63
Project work	10	19	50	30	24
Test	9	12	45	43	35

Table 9. Continuous assessment adequately addresses student learning

Continuous assessment adequately addresses student learning	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	1	5	33	100	121
Principal	0	1	8	24	21
DEO/TEO	0	0	2	1	2

Table 10. School based assessment enables teachers to be more accountable

School based assessment enables teachers to be more accountable	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	1	6	17	82	165
Principal	0	1	5	22	26
DEO/TEO	0	0	1	1	3

Table 11. School based assessment provides flexibility in addressing special need children

School based assessment provides flexibility in addressing special need children	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	6	12	45	81	125
Principal	0	5	12	16	21
DEO/TEO	0	0	0	2	3

Table 12. Usage of Class III year-end questions and answers by teachers

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I refer to the year-end questions while developing my own test questions	3	4	53	87	121
Model answers provided by BCSEA are useful to me	1	6	36	70	159

Benefits/Disadvantages (Class VI Teachers)

Table 1. Consolidated table

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
English curriculum contents are covered on time	10	24	21	84	84
Dzongkha curriculum contents are covered on time	0	4	4	57	150
Mathematics curriculum contents are covered on time	3	9	17	72	115
Science curriculum contents are covered on time	1	3	7	63	133
Social Studies curriculum contents are covered on time	0	2	3	35	171
Year-end assessment questions cater to diverse needs of students	4	11	58	151	147
I am stressed with works on continuous assessment	12	41	152	112	56
Stressed with Home work	8	12	60	89	62
Stressed with Class work	8	18	45	79	76
Stressed with Project work	15	32	78	63	32
Stressed with Test	13	26	63	78	44
Continuous assessment adequately addresses student learning	0	4	48	176	186
School based assessment enables teachers to be more accountable	0	6	34	147	242
School based assessment provides flexibility in addressing special need children	7	16	64	155	186
I refer to the year-end questions while developing my own test questions	4	8	82	145	175
Model answers provided by BCSEA are useful to me	1	5	37	120	251

Table 2. English curriculum contents are covered on time

English curriculum contents are covered on time	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	9	22	18	54	55
Principal	1	2	3	23	29
DEO/TEO	0	0	0	6	0

Table 3. Dzongkha curriculum contents are covered on time

Dzongkha curriculum contents are covered on time	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	4	3	32	110
Principal	0	1	18	39
DEO/TEO	0	0	6	0

Table 4. Mathematics curriculum contents are covered on time

Mathematics curriculum contents are covered on time	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	3	8	14	41	86
Principal	0	1	3	24	29
DEO/TEO	0	0	0	6	0

Table 5. Science curriculum contents are covered on time

Science curriculum contents are covered on time	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	1	3	6	38	94
Principal	0	0	1	18	39
DEO/TEO	0	0	0	6	0

Table 6. Social Studies curriculum contents are covered on time

Social Studies curriculum contents are covered on time	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	2	2	19	122
Principal	0	1	10	48
DEO/TEO	0	0	5	1

Table 7. Year-end assessment questions cater to diverse needs of students

Year-end assessment questions cater to diverse needs of students	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	4	9	49	120	121
Principal	0	2	8	25	25
DEO/TEO	0	0	0	5	1

Table 8. I am stressed with works on continuous assessment

I am stressed with works on continuous assessment	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	11	34	127	92	50
Principal	1	7	23	20	5
DEO/TEO	0	0	2	0	1

Table 9. Feedback on teachers stress

Stressed with:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Home work	7	10	46	70	57
Class work	7	13	35	60	71
Project work	14	28	59	49	30
Test	12	19	50	61	42

Table 10. Continuous assessment adequately addresses student learning

Continuous assessment adequately addresses student learning	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	4	31	147	161
Principal	0	13	26	23
DEO/TEO	0	3	2	2

Table 11. School based assessment enables teachers to be more accountable

School based assessment enables teachers to be more accountable	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	6	30	115	207
Principal	0	3	25	32

DEO/TEO	0	0	7	2
---------	---	---	---	---

Table 12. School based assessment provides flexibility in addressing special need children

School based assessment provides flexibility in addressing special need children	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Teacher	7	12	52	126	159
Principal	0	2	11	24	24
DEO/TEO	0	1	1	5	2

Table 13. Usage of Class VI year-end questions and answers by teachers

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I refer to the year-end questions while developing my own test questions	4	8	70	116	154
Model answers provided by BCSEA are useful to me	1	5	33	94	219

Implementation

Table 1. The present practice of school ranking is appropriate

The present practice of school ranking is appropriate	Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
Teacher	42	86	249	128
Principal	9	20	36	15
DEO/TEO	3	2	7	2

Table 2. I do professional justice while assessing my students

I do professional justice while assessing my students	Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
Teacher	1	3	68	439
Principal	1	1	26	51
DEO/TEO	0	1	6	4

Table 3. Continuous assessment marks influence school ranking

Continuous assessment marks influence school ranking	Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
Teacher	16	19	171	306
Principal	2	1	34	43
DEO/TEO	1	0	5	7

Table 4. School performance management becomes more meaningful using Class III year-end assessment results

School performance management becomes more meaningful using Class III year-end assessment results	Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
Teacher	21	48	195	116
Principal	6	19	36	19
DEO/TEO	0	2	4	7

Table 5. School performance management becomes more meaningful using Class VI year-end assessment results

School performance management becomes more meaningful using Class VI year-end assessment results	Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
Teacher	17	46	209	153
Principal	5	15	38	21
DEO/TEO	0	2	4	7

Table 6. Academic works of students are recorded for evidence

Academic works of students are recorded for evidence	Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
Teacher	1	7	92	413
Principal	0	1	20	59
DEO/TEO	0	0	7	6

Table 7. My school uses year-end assessment results to improve the classroom teaching practice

My school uses year-end assessment results to improve the classroom teaching practice	Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
Teacher	6	26	179	304
Principal	1	3	41	35
DEO/TEO	0	0	7	6

Table 8. Allocation of classes to Class III teachers are appropriately done

Allocation of classes to Class III teachers are appropriately done	Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
Teacher	12	45	152	176
Principal	0	0	34	45
DEO/TEO	0	1	9	3

Table 9. Allocation of classes to Class VI teachers are appropriately done

Allocation of classes to Class VI teachers are appropriately done	Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
Teacher	5	38	173	213
Principal	1	0	33	45
DEO/TEO	0	1	10	2

Table 10. My school uses the year-end assessment data to make informed policy decisions

My school uses the year-end assessment data to make informed policy decisions	Total unacceptable	Slightly unacceptable	Slightly acceptable	Perfectly acceptable
Teacher	2	46	217	248
Principal	1	5	42	32
DEO/TEO	0	0	9	4

Table 11. I need professional development on school based assessment techniques

I need professional development on school based assessment techniques	Very undesirable		Undesirable		Desirable		Very desirable	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher	4	.8%	13	2.5%	205	40.0%	290	56.6%
Principal	0	0.0%	1	1.3%	25	32.1%	52	66.7%
DEO/TEO	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	30.8%	9	69.2%

Table 12. Preference to teach Class III and VI

	Very Undesirable		Undesirable		Desirable		Very Desirable	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I prefer to teach Class III students	20	4.6%	53	12.1%	189	43.2%	176	40.2%
I prefer to teach Class VI students	8	1.6%	26	5.3%	198	40.3%	259	52.7%

2. Descriptive Statistics of the Student Survey Questionnaire

Demographic Information

Table 1. Grade VI student respondent by Age, Gender, Dzongkhag and Location

	Age	Gender		Location					
	Mean	Male	Female	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Remote	Remote	Very Remote	Difficult
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Bumthang	12	7	7	7	0	7	0	0	0
Chukha	12	11	21	0	0	24	8	0	0
Dagana	12	9	12	0	0	14	7	0	0
Gasa	13	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	7
Haa	12	4	9	7	0	6	0	0	0
Lhuentse	12	6	7	0	0	7	7	0	0
Mongar	12	14	14	7	0	14	7	0	0
Paro	12	15	12	7	14	0	7	0	0
Pema G	12	8	8	8	0	0	8	0	0

Punakha	12	11	10	8	6	0	7	0	0
Samdrup J	13	12	11	0	8	15	0	0	0
Samtse	13	17	28	8	15	8	6	0	8
Sarpang	13	8	13	7	0	14	0	0	0
Thimphu	12	9	12	7	0	14	0	0	0
Trashigang	12	10	11	7	7	7	0	0	0
Trashi Yangtse	13	5	9	0	0	7	0	7	0
Trongsa	12	7	5	7	0	0	5	0	0
Tsirang	12	6	7	0	7	6	0	0	0
Wangdue Phodrang	13	12	15	14	11	0	1	0	1
Zhemgang	12	5	2	0	0	0	7	0	0
G Throm	11	3	4	7	0	0	0	0	0
P Throm	12	5	9	14	0	0	0	0	0
T Throm	12	25	33	57	1	0	0	0	0
SJ Throm	12	4	4	8	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2. Grade VI student respondent by Dzongkhag

	Frequency	Percent
Bumthang	14	2.9
Chukha	32	6.6
Dagana	21	4.3
Gasa	7	1.4
Haa	13	2.7
Lhuentse	14	2.9
Mongar	28	5.8
Paro	28	5.8
Pema Gatshel	16	3.3
Punakha	21	4.3
Samdrup Jongkhar	23	4.7
Samtse	45	9.3
Sarpang	21	4.3
Thimphu	21	4.3
Trashigang	21	4.3
Trashi Yangtse	14	2.9
Trongsa	12	2.5
Tsirang	13	2.7
Wangdue Phodrang	28	5.8
Zhemgang	7	1.4

Gelephu Thromde	7	1.4
Phuentsholing Throm	14	2.9
Thimphu Throm	58	11.9
Samdrup Jongkhar Throm	8	1.6
Total	486	100.0

Table 3. Grade VI student respondent by Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	216	44.7
Female	267	55.3
Total	483	100.0

Table 4. Grade VI student respondent by Age

	Frequency	Percent
10	22	4.6
11	110	22.8
12	173	35.8
13	116	24.0
14	41	8.5
15+	21	4.3
Total	483	100.0

Table 5. Grade VI student respondent by Location

	Frequency	Percent
Urban	180	37.1
Semi-Urban	69	14.2
Semi-Remote	143	29.5
Remote	70	14.4
Very Remote	7	1.4
Difficult	16	3.3
Total	485	100.0

Table 6. Grade VI student respondent by Type of School

	Frequency	Percent
Government School	70	94.6
Private School	4	5.4

Total	74	100.0
-------	----	-------

Table 7. Grade VI student respondent parent/guardian background

	Educated		Not-educated	
	n	%	n	%
Father	259	57.9	188	42.1
Mother	149	33.2	300	66.8
Guardian	74	63.2	43	36.8

Table 8. Grade VI student respondent parent/guardian occupation

	House-wife/ husband		Farmer		Government		Corporate		Non- government		Pvt. Business		Armed Force		National Work Force	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Father	15	3.3	134	29	152	33.4	22	4.8	24	5.3	69	15.2	34	7.5	5	1.1
Mother	258	56.3	79	17.2	60	13.1	6	1.3	8	1.7	43	9.4	1	.2	3	.7
Guardian	9	9.0	26	26.0	32	32.0	4	4.0	6	6.0	17	17.0	3	3.0	3	3.0

Students overall feeling of the year-end assessment

Table 1. Students view of the year-end assessment

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I feel the Class III year-end exam is important	6	128.8	16	3.4	186	39.9	258	55.4
I feel the Class VI year-end exam is important	9	1.9	10	2.1	118	24.5	344	71.5
My parents feel the year-end assessment is important	7	1.4	4	0.8	134	27.6	340	70.1
My teachers feel the year-end assessment is important	4	0.8	6	1.2	113	23.3	363	74.7

Understanding the reasons for the conduct of the year-end exam

Table 1. Feedback on the understanding of the reasons for the year-end exam

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
--	----------------------	----------	-------	-------------------

	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I know the reasons for the Class VI year-end assessment	19	3.9	68	14.1	266	55.1	130	26.9

Relevancy

Table 1. Students view on relevancy of the year-end assessment

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Class VI year-end assessment is relevant for my learning needs	6	1.2	18	3.7	209	43.2	251	51.9
Class VI year-end assessment is suitable for my age	13	2.7	41	8.5	234	48.4	195	40.4

Table 2. Feedback on the learning outcomes

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I am aware of the learning outcomes	24	5.0	58	12.1	246	51.4	151	31.5
I am taught as per the learning outcomes	20	4.1	50	10.4	203	42.0	210	43.5

Table 3. Feedback on conceptual learning gap

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I found that it much difficult to learn in Class IV than in Class III	65	13.6	135	28.3	189	39.6	88	18.4
I found that it much difficult to learn in Class VI than in Class V	60	12.4	137	28.4	191	39.5	95	19.7

General Perception

Table 1. Year-end assessment as board examination

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	n	%	n	%
I view the year-end assessment as board examination	16	3.3	33	6.8	176	36.4	259	53.5
My parents view the year-end assessment as board examination	13	2.7	57	11.8	195	40.2	220	45.4
My teachers view the year-end assessment as board examination	14	2.9	23	4.8	154	32.0	291	60.4

Table 2. Feedback on the worry and student pressure

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	n	%	n	%
I am worried about the year-end assessment	17	3.5	46	9.5	186	38.4	235	48.6
I am under pressure to prepare for year-end assessment	34	7.0	95	19.5	196	40.3	161	33.1

Table 3. Feedback on Teaching and Learning for the Examination

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	n	%	n	%
My teachers teach for the year-end assessments	31	6.4	52	10.8	178	36.9	222	46.0
I take tuition to prepare for my year-end assessment	176	36.2	122	25.1	119	24.5	69	14.2
My school provides remedial classes	41	8.5	60	12.4	153	31.7	229	47.4

Syllabus Coverage

Table 1. Feedback on subject-wise syllabus coverage

	Not Sure		No		Yes	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
My teacher covers English syllabus on time	87	17.9	27	5.6	372	76.5
My teacher covers Dzongkha syllabus on time	32	6.6	13	2.7	441	90.7
My teacher covers Mathematics syllabus on time	66	13.7	18	3.7	399	82.6
My teacher covers Science syllabus on time	75	15.5	18	3.7	391	80.8
My teacher covers Social Studies syllabus on time	43	8.9	24	5.0	415	86.1

Table 2. Feedback on homework

	Not Sure		No		Yes	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
My teachers assign a lot of homework to do	111	23.4	233	49.1	131	27.6
I get a lot of pressure with Home work	64	13.3	308	63.8	111	23.0
I get a lot of pressure with Class work	55	11.4	319	65.9	110	22.7
I get a lot of pressure with Project work	85	17.7	215	44.8	180	37.5
I get a lot of pressure with Test	54	11.3	186	38.8	240	50.0

Assessment

Table 1. Feedback on assessment

	Never		Sometimes		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
My teacher corrects my home-work fairly	4	.8	183	37.7	298	61.4
My teacher corrects my class-work fairly	8	1.7	164	33.9	312	64.5
My teacher corrects my project-work fairly	12	2.5	127	26.2	346	71.3
My teacher corrects my test paper fairly	3	.6	81	16.9	396	82.5

Record Keeping

Table 1. Feedback on record keeping by teachers

	Never		Sometimes		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
My teacher keeps proper record of my continuous assessment marks	2	.4	73	15.1	410	84.5
My teacher keeps proper record of my participation in debates, quizzes, games and sports etc.	16	3.3	161	33.1	309	63.6
Lessons taught in my class is useful to me in real life	5	1.0	40	8.2	440	90.7

Practicality of lesson taught in class

Table 1. Usefulness of classes taught

	Never		Sometimes		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Lessons taught in my class is useful to me in real life	5	1.0	40	8.2	440	90.7

3. Summary of the findings of the FGDs

11.1 With Teachers

1. PURPOSE OF YEAR END EXAMINATION

The survey conducted with the teachers as focused group in 70 schools show a positive feedback on the purpose of the conduct of the year-end assessment in grades III and VI. Most teachers expressed the purpose as to maintain standard of student learning across schools with the common tool for assessment used uniformly. The examination not only facilitates the promotion of students to the next higher grade but also familiarizes students with competency-based items as preliminary approach to the high stake examination in future. Such examination also provides platforms for comparison of performance by subject, schools or dzongkhags to relevant stakeholders. In both the levels, the external assessment increases the teacher and learner accountability making them more geared towards academic works. The respondents also expressed the purpose of the assessment as is being used, as a key tool in school ranking across schools and a medium that supports the analysis of curriculum relevancy. Both the level assessment serves as the benchmark to assess the standard of education at each key stage, the lower primary and the primary level. It imparts writing skills and assess the cognitive development in children.

2. Overall impression of the year-end exam

(Grade III)

There were 380 respondents teaching grade III who had positive impression on the conduct and system of class III year-end assessment. Only 18% of the respondents had excellent remark on the impression, as this group were of the view that students take pride in appearing the external examination and such practice commended as appropriate, as it helps to maintain quality across schools. Since 53% of the respondents **rated** the overall impression as good, views like external assessment items being better than dzongkhag/school level questions and quality skill based items from BCSEA tests learning outcomes, were expressed. They also appreciated the review of maximum marks from 10 to 50 as practical approach.

While 11% respondents were satisfactory with the overall practice of the class III examination, only 2% marked it as poor. Their views ranged from, standard of items being high, existence of manipulation of both formative and summative assessment marks, external examination not extended to learning difficulty candidates to candidates need moral grooming rather than stressful examination system at a young stage of grade III.

(Grade VI)

98 respondents out of 437 grade VI teachers marked the overall impression as excellent. They viewed the examination system as good practice with appropriately set items that motivate students to learn. Most teachers find it convenient when an external body sets the items. It tests the competency of the learners and even parents involvement in the child's education is confirmed. 26 respondents expressed it as satisfactory with remarks like out of context questions in some subjects affect the students' performance. One respondent marked the

impression as poor with the view that school based evaluation allows room for manipulation of marks.

Both group of teachers raised concerns on the examination marks being used by the Ministry of Education as impractical approach to school ranking, as it defeats the purpose of assessment.

3. Do you consider the year-end assessments as a high stake?

Since BCSEA sets the year-end question papers for grades III and VI across the country, most teachers consider it as a high stake. Besides setting question papers, the results are also sent back to BCSEA for analysis. Most of them said that the year-end assessment helps in determining the learning standards of students as well as in checking the standard of schools across the country. The items set by BCSEA are found to be standard and competency based unlike the items used in the home examinations. Most importantly, they said that it serves as a check point in between grades in the primary level. However, there are few teachers who do not consider the year-end assessment as high stake. The reasons being lack of standard practices that are a part of high stake examination (central evaluation, student recognition, student index number, andz disqualified). According to few of them, it is considered as a semi-board since BCSEA only sets questions and does not conduct central evaluation.

4. Are students under pressure?

Grade VI

Most teachers expressed that the students are under pressure to prepare for the year-end assessment. They said that for some students, any kind of examination puts them under pressure. Almost all teachers expressed that due to constant pressure like coverage of vast syllabus and school ranking, they have to make students work hard by giving home works, project works, extra classes and remedial classes. They go to the extent of downloading the past papers and let students practice over and again. Thus, such initiatives from their side somehow instill fear and anxiety in the students. According to the teachers, students mostly worry thinking about the type of questions that would be asked in the exam and whether the questions would be from the prescribed syllabus. Few teachers feel that some of the items used in the BCSEA question papers are high level and do not cater to the cognitive level of the students. Another factor that causes pressure in students is their promotion being based on the year-end assessment result. Most of them worry for the fact that the duration of writing examination is very less compared to the number of items to be attempted.

Meanwhile there are few teachers who said that the students are not under pressure. They justified saying that the students are made familiarized with the BCSEA question pattern by giving enough practice of the past papers and by giving the same question pattern in their mid-term examination. They said that they also try explaining to students about the weightage in each subject to make them feel relaxed about the year-end assessment.

Grade III

Most of the teachers expressed that the students at this level are not under pressure and not at all worried about the year-end assessment. They have neither fear nor tension so the teachers are required to remind them frequently. They said that in fact there are students who are excited and curious about writing examinations.

5. TEACHER WORRY/UNDER PRESSURE

Most teachers viewed the year-end assessment with a difference as 75% of the 516 respondents perceived it to be worrisome. Some concerns shared by this group of teachers were, too high standard questions asked to the students, pressure of syllabus completion and the students' performance being directly proportional to individual's professional rating and school ranking. Some teachers expressed their worry as the evaluated papers of high and low achievers are submitted to the BCSEA, and it adds to teachers' accountability too. Parents concern about their child's performance also adds to the teachers worry. Some respondents teaching both the levels expressed that the concern is more for class III as they are too young to understand the questions.

25% of the respondents in both the groups did not consider the external examination as worrisome as the papers are evaluated at school level and the questions are relevantly connected to the syllabus.

6. Is the weightage appropriate for Class III?

Most teachers expressed that it is appropriate as it considers the importance of formative assessment. They are given more importance on the three strands (speaking, listening and reading) across all subjects. So not much of a writing is taught in pre-primary level. Thus, formative assessments conducted at the school level is seen to be doing justice in evaluating different abilities/potentials of the students.

However, they said that it would have been much better had the weightage been uniform across the subjects. The advantage being said to help individual teachers to compare the performance of students in each subject. Few teachers stated that even the progress report card does not look good with different marks in each subject. Students seem to take more interest only in those subjects that have high weightage which later might result in discrimination of subjects from the primary level. However, there are few teachers who felt the weightage inappropriate. Had the year-end weightage been more than the CA, they said that they could have detained the low achievers. With the existing weightage, no student is seemed to be performing badly which is actually not true. As a result there is a conceptual learning gap when they reach grade IV. Compared to other subjects, English and Dzongkha have the least weightage (10%) thus they fear that students might skip year-end assessment as they could easily get through their CA (90%).

Grade VI

Almost all teachers expressed that the year-end weightage across the subjects for Class VI is appropriate. However, there are few of them who said that the weightage for Science and Social Studies is inappropriate.

7. SHOULD BCSEA CONTINUE CLASS III EXAMINATION?

281 respondent out of 390 grade III teachers were in favour of BCSEA continuing year-end assessment. Most viewed it as important as it helped in preparing students for future high stake examination and added parent, teachers and learners accountability for academic works. The change in maximum marks from 10 to 50 was also viewed positively and stated as reason for the continuity of examination. Teachers also expressed that this examination helps to meet the conceptual gap between grade III and IV, as it prepares students for the purpose. Some respondents also expressed the inefficiency of the teachers in setting competency-based questions and proposed for the continuity of centrally set papers.

71 respondents were of the view that BCSEA should not continue setting items for grade III due to age inappropriateness. Examination pressure to the school and the learners and mismatch of item standard and learner aptitude were views shared by the respondents in this group.

8. ALTERNATIVE FOR CLASS III

In an event of BCSEA discontinuing setting items for grade III, 93% respondents s showed their readiness through alternatives like school or dzongkhag based item development and conduct. While some sceptics on the experience of the item setters and the work quality were expressed, most felt it would be eased with guidance from relevant agencies like BCSEA. Some even recommended the central moderation of the set items. 96% respondents showed their confidence and awareness in item development and few in this group shared the success of dzongkhag level examination.

While 69% respondents expressed strengthening National Education Assessment (NEA) or large-scale assessment as an alternative to grade III year-end assessment, 30 % of them viewed it otherwise with justifications that, NEA is ideal for assessing the standard at large scale and not appropriate for promotion and assessing the competency of the learners.

9. Should BCSEA continue to set the question paper for Class VI?

Majority of the teachers said that BCSEA should continue with the year-end assessment for class VI. They view it as a yardstick to measure the standard of schools across the country. Besides the quality in terms of the paper and the question items used, it helps check the teaching learning at school level and prepares students for future board examinations. Teachers become more concern and work hard to compete in the school ranking. They try to cover syllabus on time and help improve the performance of students by giving remedial classes and extra classes. Most of them feel that the only strategy to look at the learning standard of the students in the country is by letting students sit for the BCSEA year-end assessment. Few teachers expressed that there are some students who are excited, curious and feel proud to sit for the BCSEA examination. The concerned stakeholder can easily judge the standard of primary

education across the country by simply looking at the performance of each school in BCSEA examination. However, they said that the school ranking across the country being based on this examination is not justifiable. They stated that, had there been central evaluation like the BCSE and BHSEC or at Dzongkhag level then the school ranking would be fair. The current practice of conducting the evaluation at school level does not assure uniformity and fairness. Few teachers said that in case BCSEA discontinues with the setting of question papers for Class VI, teachers might compromise with the coverage of syllabus and the standard of primary education in the country might be at stake.

Meanwhile, there are few teachers who said that the year-end assessment should be decentralized. They feel that teachers in field are competent enough to set questions for the students and that they actually know the performance of the students in their subjects. This would help avoid fear and anxiety in students if the examination is decentralized. They said that they would also become more accountable. However, school ranking across the country won't be fair. They mentioned that every school across the country will have a set of their own question paper and might have different criteria in awarding marks in the answer scripts.

10. If BCSEA discontinues with Class VI, what should be the alternative in place?

Most of the teachers proposed for Dzongkhag/Thromde level common examination if at all BCSEA discontinues with the year-end assessment. But they feel it would be biased again on the part of the concerned stakeholder to rank schools based on the examination. They said that the setting of question papers and the criteria for marking would be very different from one school to another. Otherwise they said that it would be fine. There are few teachers who suggested National Education Assessment (NEA) as an alternative. However, majority of the teachers felt BCSEA won't be able to get the true picture of the education standard if NEA is chosen as an alternative. They stated that NEA is conducted only in sample schools and it won't be fair for these schools to represent the schools in the country. Moreover, it is conducted periodically and many of the students do not take NEA seriously. The other alternative suggested by few teachers was to send question papers in soft copy from BCSEA. But again there are few of them who did not agree with this idea of sending in soft copy considering the question of integrity and availability of resources in schools.

11. SOFT COPY

69% of the respondents expressed the schools' readiness to receive questions in soft copies. The group shared their confidence with views like experience of receiving ICT literacy paper (Chiphel Rigphel) in soft copies and it was successful. Most respondents in this group were of the view that school has the strength of all logistics arrangements like printing and photocopying. Suggestions like routing the issue through DEO's office was also shared.

30% of the respondents who disagreed to this arrangement expressed their sceptics as logistic challenges like budget constraints, erratic power and internet connectivity.

If BCSEA were to continue, what suggestions would you have for improvement?

Central evaluation:

Most teachers suggested central evaluation as a resort to manipulation of marks in school level evaluation. Schools swapping answer scripts for evaluation (within dzongkhag) was also strongly recommended.

Test Development Workshop

As item development is a key phase of examination, respondents recommended uniform inclusion of teachers from remote and urban schools and provide capacity development to schools to help construct quality items. Refer the learning outcome closely for item development. Involving relevant curriculum officials would address the issue of framing questions out of context. Suggestions on providing error free model answers and increasing the writing duration were also highly recommended.

The following subject wise suggestions were shared for review and follow up:

Dzongkha Paper:

- Too many questions are asked from Part A and writing time allotted is not sufficient.
- Font size needs to be increased.
- Need to include more stories in text book (CI VI).
- Instructions on the selection of sets are confusing in class VI.
- Include Lekshay in Class VI. Should include seen stories for class III.
- Split the paper into I and II (language and literature).
- Expository essay writing is not in the learning outcome but asked in examination.
- Should use lower case letters in Dzo and EVS.
- There is conceptual gap in EVS and Dzongkha.
- Poem should be seen text for Class III
- Some questions are not as per learning outcomes.
- Decrease essay mark and add to grammar part.
- Writing *Tsangmo* is challenging in class III level.
- Spelling errors in both text book and teachers manual needs to be rectified.

English:

- Instructions on the selection of sets are confusing in class VI
- Vocabulary used is too strong for grade III.
- For grade III, unseen text is not recommended.
- Split the paper into I and II (language and literature).
- Marking criteria for spelling not required.

- Teachers to set questions for LD and special students.
- Poetry is included in examination questions though not reflected in *Reader*.
- Grammar and parts of speech are not included clearly in the syllabus.
- 13 stories in text is burdensome for smooth academic progress.

Social studies:

- 50 marks for MCQ provides no room for item variety.
- Scrap book to be introduced as an assessment tool.
- Typo error seen in some questions.

Mathematics:

- Mismatch between the number of items and writing time.
- Writing time needs to be increased.
- More of word problem is asked.
- A particular method in solving a problem limits child's practical skills.
- Decrease weightage in section A and increase in B
- No manual issued to schools.

General

- Furnish rubrics to schools for them to practice.
- No consistency in question pattern is observed.
- Develop TRCBA books for all levels.
- Written marks for Class III needs to be increased.
- Decrease the weightage of the formative assessment marks.
- BCSEA to continue in sending questions in hard copy.
- Provide space for writing answers in question booklet.
- make principals and teachers accountable for handling soft copy.
- changes related to questions be shared timely.
- online correction of answer script can be explored by BCSEA.
- provide table of specification for questions for use in schools.
- make the item setting selection transparent.
- BCSEA needs to upload model answers in the website.
- Introduce long answer questions at class III

EMD

The feedback for EMSSD is not to use grade III and VI assessment marks for professional ranking of the teachers and school ranking. Only the summative assessment marks may be used for school ranking for fair practice.

4. Summary of the findings of the One-on-One Interviews

12.1 With DEO

1. IMPRESSION

11 respondents out of 16 expressed that it is important to have year-end assessment for grade III and VI as it serves as a benchmark to measure the student achievement. Most commended the practice as a means to record the school performance and correlate their own performance in the high stake examination in higher grades.

Five respondents who did not approve of the year-end assessment system raised the concern that the model-marking scheme provided, is uniformly followed across schools. The group also shared the concern of school level evaluation giving in way for manipulation of marks for raising scores in PMS score cards.

2. SHOULD BCSEA CONTINUE CLASS III EXAMINATION?

44% of the respondents were in favour of BCSEA continuing grade III year-end assessment. They expressed that the examination helped to maintain the uniformity in terms of items and to test education standard.

Some respondents shared that BCSEA questions helps as sample for item development and teaching learning purpose.

25% respondents were of the view that BCSEA should not continue setting items for grade III due to age inappropriateness. Most respondents in this group also expressed that below the age of twelve, students should not be taxed with examination and written assessment but adopt other assessment tools. Some even expressed school readiness to conduct school level examination and save on the government financing on such activities.

3. ALTERNATIVE FOR CLASS III

14 respondents out of 15 supported the conduct of NEA as an alternative to year-end assessment. Most respondents suggested school or dzongkhag based item development and conduct as an alternative to year-end assessment.

Recommendations shared by respondents were conduct of aptitude test, NEA on census and refresher course for test development to be explored by BCSEA, as an alternative.

4. Should BCSEA continue to set question paper for Class VI?

Since the year-end assessment ascertains the standard of Class VI across the country, everyone feels that BCSEA should continue setting the question paper. They said that Class VI can be a check point for any concerned stakeholder if at all they want to find out the standard of primary education across the country. BCSEA helps maintain quality and uniformity unlike the home examinations. The year-end assessment also help teachers to check whether students are ready for the next level (Class IV) where they are introduced to few more new subjects (Social

Studies and Science). The impact of having year-end assessment is that it makes teachers and students work hard all round the year and does not need to remind them about their duties.

However, they are also skeptic about using the year-end results in measuring the standard of primary education and also in ranking the schools across the country. They are very much aware of the manipulation of CA marks at the school level. Thus, they feel that BCSEA should conduct central marking for Classes III and VI like the BCSE and BHSEC.

Few of the respondents said that it's wrong to call it as 'year-end assessment' if it is to assess the standard of education. They suggested it to be called 'year-end assessment' so that it won't have much bearing on schools. They also said that schools should not be ranked based on the year-end results because they have the feeling that it's unfair.

5. If BCSEA discontinues Class VI, what should be the alternative in place?

Most of the respondents feel that the Class VI year-end assessment should be decentralized to the schools if BCSEA discontinues. They said that it would empower teachers in developing and designing variety of items and make them more accountable. They said that it would be even better if BCSEA could provide some guidelines and criteria on conduct of examination.

Few respondents said that in some countries there is no examination system till grade VIII. Likewise, they said that we can also do away with examination system till grade. They mentioned that the respective schools can come up with their own assessment tools for these levels in align with REC curriculum and remove the concept of examination from the mindset of children.

4.2 With Principal

12. IMPRESSION

44% respondents out of 118 expressed that it is important to have year-end assessment for grade III and VI as it serves as a yardstick to measure the student achievement and for promotion. Such practice was welcome as it sets foundation at the primary level to appear high stake examination. Some principals commended the items as catering to all abilities of the learners with room for evaluative and analytical skills, well aligned with the learning outcomes.

The respondents who did not approve of the year-end assessment expressed that in the 21st century education, assessing children through written examination in grade III is inappropriate. Views like rural based students failing to perform at par with urban students due to lack of parental guidance and school based evaluation being unfair were shared by this group of respondents.

For both the levels, the practice of ranking schools using the academic performance at these levels by EMSSD, MOE being unfair was also expressed.

13. SHOULD BCSEA CONTINUE CLASS III EXAMINATION?

73% of the respondents were in favour of BCSEA continuing grade III year-end assessment. Most viewed it as important as it avoided item variation and both teachers and students take the year-end assessment seriously. This examination provides room for receiving feedback on academic performance at different key stages, lower and upper primary. There is scope for

result analysis to compare the performance across the nation. Some respondents shared that BCSEA questions serves as guide to the teachers for teaching purpose.

26% respondents were of the view that BCSEA should not continue setting items for grade III due to age inappropriateness. Most respondents in this group also expressed that children are too young to understand the meaning of examination and do not take it seriously but it unnecessarily extended the pressure to the parents and teachers as the performance is related to their professional ranking/rating. Some recommended strengthening formative assessment in place of written examination.

14. ALTERNATIVE FOR CLASS III

In an event of BCSEA discontinuing setting items for grade III, 90% respondents showed their readiness through alternatives like school or dzongkhag based item development and conduct. While most respondents expressed their readiness and confidence in item development, some recommended conduct of refreshers training on item construction for preparing schools to independently handle examination.

No respondents suggested NEA in place of written examination rather suggested strengthening formative assessment for such grade level.

15. Should BCSEA continue to set the question paper for Class VI?

Almost all principals consider Class VI as the key stage for primary level education and they expressed that there should be some kind of assessment to check the learning standards of students at this level. Besides, they said that it would also help in checking the performance of schools across the country. They strongly feel BCSEA should continue with it, so to have uniformity in setting questions and distributing to the schools across the country.

Some of them said that it would also help serve as a benchmark for primary education in order to compete at the international level. However, they said that since there is no central evaluation for the examination, it does not do much justice in examining the standard of students/standard of schools across the country. Currently, due to school ranking and PMS ranking, every principal feels that there is manipulation happening at the school level especially with the CA marks. Thus, to avoid such cases, they feel that there should be central/dzongkhag/Thromde level evaluation. They also view the year-end assessment as a preparation for the students for future board examinations.

16. If BCSEA discontinues Class VI, what should be the alternative in place?

Most of the principals do not see any alternative in place. They simply want BCSEA to continue with the year-end assessment. Only few principals suggested Dzongkhag level common examination as an alternative. However, they were little apprehensive about the outcome. Since the question setting won't be uniform across the country, they said that there would be issues related to question items and fairness in evaluation. Few principals suggested decentralization to the schools but they said that there should not be school ranking based on the examination. Thus, there do not seem to be an alternative if BCSEA discontinues.

17. SOFT COPY(Principal/DEO/TEO)

76% of the respondents expressed the schools' readiness to receive questions in soft copies. The group shared their confidence with views that schools have the strength of all logistics arrangements like printing and photocopying. Respondents supported the idea as a cost sharing measure. Suggestions like routing the issue through DEO's office was also shared.

12% of the respondents who disagreed to this arrangement expressed their sceptics as logistic challenges like budget constraints, erratic power and internet connectivity. Some recommendations shared to overcome such challenges were using the dzongkhag resource center for printing facilities and advance budget planning required. Challenges in maintaining confidentiality was also shared as a big concern by this group of respondents.

18. Suggestions for improvement (Principals/DEO/TEO)

- Error free in question papers and model answers
- Test developers and BCSEA officials should be technically sound

Soft copy

- Send directly to schools, appoint a committee and make them sign an undertaking letter
- Difficult for remote schools (resource constraints)
- Expensive for the schools
- Leakage issue if sent through DEO (pen drive and shared email id)
- Provide proper guidelines to schools
- Select few schools from dzongkhag and let them do the distribution of papers to other schools in their jurisdiction
- Hard copy for remote schools and soft copy for road head schools

Examination

- Invigilators should be from BCSEA/cluster wise (like BCSE and BHSEC)
- Central marking required (for fairness)
- BCSEA's objectives should not be defeated by EMD's objectives
- BCSEA should collect only WE raw marks for analysis
- It should not be called as an examination rather an assessment
- Schools should not be ranked based on the performance of Classes III and VI year-end results.
- The year-end test for the classes III and VI is just to assess the students not for ranking purposes
- Findings need to be presented to the schools as a follow up.
- There should be uniform weightage across the subjects
- The written examination marks need not be converted
- Teachers should be allowed to read and explain the instructions for the students
- The year-end assessment should be conducted at Class IV (to check if there is conceptual learning gap)
- BCSEA time table (is little earlier than the home examination)
- Collect sample questions papers from schools and develop papers accordingly
- Examination does not cater to special need children

Dzongkha:

Lengthy (students unable to write within the allotted time)

English:

Lengthy (students unable to write within the allotted time)

Curriculum

- Curriculum should be based on the development of child's brain

Workshops

All schools should get an opportunity to attend BCSEA's workshops

BCSEA to follow up on the low and high achievers performance and furnish to the schools.

5. Summary of the findings of the Oral interviews

13.1 With Class III students

1. Do you like coming to school?

Every student like coming to school because they get to learn and share so many things with their friends and teachers. Most of them said that they gain knowledge on how to read, write, draw, play and dance through interaction with their friends and teachers. Some of them said that they are able to learn good habits from their friends and they become well disciplined. Majority expressed that they would be able to get a good job in future and provide financial help to their parents and other siblings.

2. Who sets the year-end assessment question papers?

The mentoring and grooming on the academics at grade III was strongly noticed as most respondents were aware that the year-end questions were set externally. Most of the students said that the year-end question papers are prepared by the government in Thimphu. There were some students who said that it was prepared by the ministers, dashos, and teachers in Thimphu. However, there were few of them who said that it's prepared by the board but they do not know its BCSEA.

3. Are you worried about the year-end assessment?

Most of the students expressed that they are worried about the year-end assessment because the questions are set by the government in Thimphu and it's their first time sitting for an external examination. They feel that the questions would be very difficult for them to understand and may not be able to write properly. Some of them said they that worry a lot thinking they might fail and make their parents unhappy. Meanwhile, there are few of them who said that they are not worried. Their principals tell them not to worry and to take the year-

end exam like any other exam. They are being told that they will easily get through to the next level if they put in extra effort and leave no questions un-answered. They are also told that the questions would be from what they have studied in the class.

4. Do your parents remind about the year-end assessment?

Most respondents said that parents remind them for hard work and equally contribute with help like providing printed worksheets and past papers. Respondents also expressed the fear of failing as reminded to them by the parents. Though most parents did not know the agency that set questions but were aware that it was external and sent by some government agency. Few parents as expressed by the respondents did know the name of the agency as BCSEA. Parents' involvement and concern for their children was noted for students in the residential schools, as they said there was frequent reminders from parents for extra hard work as a preparation for board examination.

5. Do your teachers remind you about the year-end assessment?

Almost all the students said that their teachers keep reminding them about the year-end assessment. Most often they are reminded in the morning assembly and also in the classrooms that the year-end questions are not prepared by them and that they really need to work hard. Whenever their teachers see them playing around and not doing well in their studies, they would advise them to study hard. In some schools, students are made to prepare for the year-end assessment by going through the past papers.

6. Do you get a lot of homework? Which subject?

The practice of assigning homework is seen in all schools. Some respondents expressed that the homework is assigned as per the scheduled jointly developed by the subject teachers. Some students even shared that they could complete homework for some subjects in the school. Respondents also shared the view that they got homework mostly in Mathematics, followed by Environmental Science.