

**Research Note :****CHEATING BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS DURING EXAMINATIONS****O.P. Mishra<sup>1</sup> & C. P. Joshi<sup>2</sup>**

Students' life is becoming more competitive unceasingly, and cheating appears as a short cut to achieve success in examinations. In every evaluation systems students find scope for cheating. In the present study cheating behaviour of under graduate agricultural students has been studied. It was found that 55.70 per cent of the students had cheated in examinations at least once in life. Surprisingly female students, students from English medium background and urban background were found more inclined towards cheating. Students had justified cheating by elucidating several reasons. A number of methods of cheating had been reported by the students, of which some are innovative. It proves the students' creativity and expertise but on a wrong track. An improved evaluation system can be evolved by adopting methods to prevent cheating suggested by the students.

Examinations are the integral part of student life. But there are some hard facts behind examinations and one of them is cheating. Where there is examination, there is cheating, only the degree and intensity of it varies. Perfection has no limits and this applies to examinations also. Efforts have been made to minimize cheating by setting questions based on reasoning, by arranging some sitting pattern in examinations, by observation in examination halls, by punishing cheaters, etc. Even some consider cheating up to certain extent as getting into mischief. Punishment for cheating then becomes a subject of debate i.e. what should be the proper punishment for a cheater, so that he can be corrected rather than he becomes a criminal. In some cases students becomes scapegoat while many other factors are responsible for this very act.

Every system has some limitations. Our educational system in general and examination system in particular is no exception to this. Keeping this backdrop in mind, the present study was conducted to know about the various facets of cheating behaviour of students during examinations.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted in an Agricultural university, which is situated in North India. All the final year students of B.Sc.Ag. programme were selected as the respondents. The information needed for the study was such that generally students might hesitate to provide true response. However, the study was designed in such a fashion that reliable information could be obtained. Only final year students of B.Sc.Ag. programme were selected as respondents. As they were outgoing students, so it was expected from them that they will provide true and frank responses. Moreover, they were asked not to mention their names on the questionnaire given to them. It ensured students that the intensions of the investigators were not to catch the cheaters out of them. One of the authors is also a student so students responded without any hesitation.

For collection of the responses, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to all the students of final year B. Sc. (Ag) programme. Filled questionnaires were collected. Thus a total of 79 students acted as respondents for the study.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**(A) Profile of the students**—It can be inferred from the table 1 that majority (69.62%) of the respondents belonged to 22—24 years age group. About 63 per cent of the students were male, while female students comprised of 37 per cent. Majority

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(55.70%) of the respondents was educated from state boards of education and 44.30 per cent were from Centre-Board (CBSE / ICSE). More than half (51.9%) of the respondents were educated through English medium at school level, 46.84 per cent through Hindi medium and rest 1.26 per cent through Banlga medium. 53.16 per cent of the respondents belonged to urban areas and rest 46.84 per cent to the rural areas.

**Table 1. Profile of the students (n=79)**

S No.	Particulars	Frequency	%
1.	Age (in years)		
	19 -21	24	30.38
	22 - 24	55	69.62
2.	Gender		
	Male	50	63.29
	Female	29	36.71
3.	Board of schooling		
	Centre board	35	44.30
	State board	44	55.70
4.	Medium of instruction at school level		
	Hindi	37	46.84
	English	41	51.90
	Banlga	1	01.26
5.	Background		
	Rural	37	46.84
	Urban	42	53.16

**(B) Cheating in examinations**—Table 2 illustrates that 55.7 per cent of the students have cheated in examinations, while rest 44.3 per cent have never cheated in examinations.

**Table 2. Distribution of cheaters and non cheaters**

Particulars	Frequency (n =79)	Percentage
Cheaters	44	55.7
Non cheaters	35	44.3

Profile wise distribution of cheaters and non-cheaters is presented in table 3. It can be concluded from table 3 that percentage of cheaters among female students (58.6%) was slightly higher than that of male students (54.0%). Those who were from the Centre board of schooling cheated more (68.6%) than those who were from state boards (45.5%). About medium of instruction, it was found that those who had their schooling through English medium had cheated more (65.9%) than those who were from Hindi medium schooling background. Percentage of cheaters from urban background (61.9%) was more than that of from rural background (48.6%).

**Table 3. Profile wise distribution of cheaters and non-cheaters**

Particulars	Gender		School Board		Medium of instruction at school		Background	
	Male	Female	Centre	State	English	Hindi	Rural	Urban
Cheaters	27 (54.0)	17 (58.6)	24 (68.6)	20 (45.5)	27 (65.9)	17 (45.9)	18 (48.6)	26 (61.9)
Non - cheaters	23 (46.0)	12 (41.4)	11 (31.4)	24 (54.5)	14 (34.1)	20 (54.1)	19 (51.4)	16 (38.1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>

**Note:** Figures in parentheses are in percentage in the respective categories.

**(C) Other aspects related with cheating**—Table 4 reveals that 43.2 per cent of the respondents cheated during college education and similar percentage of them cheated during school and college both, while only 13.6 per cent respondents cheated only at school level. Majority of the students revealed that they cheated for getting good marks (59.1%) while the other reasons for cheating were : since the other students cheat (15.9%), in order to pass examination (13.6 %), and other reasons (11.4%). Majority (63.3%) of the respondents believed that cheaters do not get good

marks. Only a small percentage of the students (13.9%) justified cheating. The justifications provided by them have been listed under section D (justification for cheating). About the frequency of cheating 79.6 per cent students replied that they cheated one to five times a semester, 6.8 per cent cheated six to ten times in a semester and 13.6 per cent cheated more than ten times a semester. When asked about what they would have done if they were invigilator in examination, 45.6 per cent replied that they would have closely observed the students to minimize cheating (table 4.)



**Table 4. Distribution of respondents with other aspects of cheating.**

	Particular	Frequency	%
I.	Level of cheating		
	(a) School	6	13.6
	(b) College	19	43.2
	(c) School and College both	19	43.2
II.	Reason for cheating		
	(a) Getting good marks	26	59.1
	(b) Other students cheat	7	15.9
	(c) To pass the examination	6	13.6
	(d) Other	5	11.4
III.	Cheaters get good marks ?		
	(a) Yes	29	36.7
	(b) No.	50	63.3
IV.	Justify cheating		
	(a) Yes	11	13.9
	(b) No	68	86.1
V.	Frequency of cheating		
	(a) One to five times a semester	35	79.6
	(b) Six to ten times a semester	3	6.8
	(c) More than ten times a semester.	6	13.6
VI.	If you were an invigilator		
	(a) Allowed cheating	4	5.1
	(b) Minimize cheating by warning students	26	32.9
	(c) Closely observe the students so no one can cheat	36	45.6
	(d) Stop cheating by strictly punishing cheaters.	13	16.4

**(D) Justification for Cheating**—The main justifications for cheating as given by the students are listed below :

1. Some questions need a lot of data to cram, which has no utility in long term learning.
2. If teacher/investigator is not able to identify cheaters and stop cheating, then those who are not cheating lag behind in competition.
3. Cheaters feel happy after successful cheating.
4. There is no harm in asking to friends just for a clue.
5. Students have to perform a lot of activities and at the same time have to maintain good percentage, thus extra load compels for cheating.
6. Cheaters are more intelligent as their output is more with the same input.
7. Everything is fair in this competitive world.
8. Examinations are nothing but test of skills and cheating needs skills.

**(E) Methods followed for Cheating**—It is clear from table 5 that most common method used for

cheating was asking to the other students, which was followed by 84.1 per cent of the students who cheated in examinations. This method was followed by using sign language during examinations (e.g. raising one finger for 'true' and two fingers for 'false'), writing on palm, writing on desk and writing on paper chit, wall and copy from others' answer sheets (Table 5).

**Table 5. Methods followed by cheaters for cheating**

Methods	Frequency	Percentage
1. Asking to others	37	84.1
2. Sign language	17	38.6
3. Writing on palm	14	31.8
4. Writing on desk	12	27.3
5. Using paper chit	12	27.3
6. Writing on wall	11	25.0
7. Copying from other students' answer sheet	9	20.5

**Note:** Sum of percentage is more than 100 due to multiple response by a respondent.

**(F) Cheating methods known to students**—Students know a number of cheating methods. The following list summarizes the cheating methods known to the students :

1. Asking others.
2. Sign language.
3. Writing on palm, desk, paper chit, wall, clothes, handkerchief, shocks, etc.
4. Writing on inner side of the shirt, on the portion inside trousers.
5. Writing on hand and wearing full sleeves shirt.
6. Writing between fingers.
7. Girls write on pajama and under *kurta*.
8. Exchanging material in bathroom.
9. Writing in bathroom or keeping notebook there.
10. Writing on pen with the help of a needle. The needle scratches the surface of the pen. If light is not proper in room talcum powder taken in handkerchief can be rubbed on the scratched surface of pen, to read it clearly.
11. Use of digital diaries, mobile phones, calculators having memory are some of the latest methods.
12. Condensed photocopying is used for preparing small sized chits.
13. Paper chits can be kept under pen caps, under shocks, on a rubber band tied on hand or leg, etc.
14. Writing behind the chair in front of the student, who wants to cheat.

**(G) Methods to prevent cheating**—Students