

Exam Season: A Time for Support, Not Pressure

Examinations have always been an integral part of school life. Yet today, the stress of exams is not confined to children alone—it has become a matter of pride, pressure, and competition for parents as well.

Parents strive to give their children the best of everything: good schools, modern facilities, air-conditioned classrooms, i-Phones, and endless varieties of stationery. However, once exams approach, the atmosphere changes completely. Suddenly, the focus shifts to percentages and ranks. A common thought echoes in households: *“How can my child score less than 95 percent?”*

Timetables are rewritten overnight. Children are expected to cut down on play, conversations, and even rest, devoting nearly all their hours to study. What should have been a healthy learning journey often turns into a race—a race that every parent feels compelled to join. Sadly, this race leaves many children feeling pressured and discouraged, especially when they are constantly compared to others.

The truth is, exam pressure affects everyone—toppers, average students, and those who struggle academically. The nature of this pressure may differ, and so may their coping mechanisms, but none escape its weight. Ironically, despite having faced examinations ourselves, as adults we often forget the importance of being supportive. Instead, we become fixated on numbers.

I recall a personal experience that shaped my understanding of this issue. During my school years, my cousin was a consistent topper. Comparisons between us were common in the family. One summer, while chatting casually, she laughed and said, *“My friends ask me to donate some of my marks.”*

At the time, I ignored her words—comparison had become routine for me. But years later, when I stood on stage receiving a gold medal for topping my Master’s in Psychology before a crowd of 500, those words echoed in my ears: *“Please donate some marks.”* Tears welled in my eyes even as I smiled for the medal. That moment reminded me that comments which pinch us in childhood often remain in our subconscious, resurfacing at significant milestones.

Every child is unique. Each has different abilities, capacities, and a distinct pace of learning. Our role as parents and guardians is not to measure them against others but to walk beside them, offering support and encouragement. Education is indeed important, but it need not come at the cost of comparison and criticism.

Children require both discipline and love. They must be corrected when they go wrong, but they must also feel cared for and understood. If children hesitate to share their struggles with their

parents and instead seek help outside, alone, then it is worth questioning: how strong is the bond between us and our children?

True parenting lies in being a companion—in studies, in play, in mischief, and in everyday life. When children feel secure, loved, and supported, they flourish. Exams should be a stepping stone in their journey of growth, not a burden that crushes their spirit.

VAISHALI GOEL

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGIST