

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS



Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi-Disciplinary
Peer Reviewed

www.ijlra.com

DISCLAIMER

No part of this publication may be reproduced or copied in any form by any means without prior written permission of Managing Editor of IJLRA. The views expressed in this publication are purely personal opinions of the authors and do not reflect the views of the Editorial Team of IJLRA.

Though every effort has been made to ensure that the information in Volume II Issue 7 is accurate and appropriately cited/referenced, neither the Editorial Board nor IJLRA shall be held liable or responsible in any manner whatsoever for any consequences for any action taken by anyone on the basis of information in the Journal.

Copyright © International Journal for Legal Research & Analysis

EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITORS

Dr. Samrat Datta

Dr. Samrat Datta Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Dr. Samrat Datta is currently associated with Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Dr. Datta has completed his graduation i.e., B.A.LL.B. from Law College Dehradun, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Srinagar, Uttarakhand. He is an alumnus of KIIT University, Bhubaneswar where he pursued his post-graduation (LL.M.) in Criminal Law and subsequently completed his Ph.D. in Police Law and Information Technology from the Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University, Udaipur in 2020. His area of interest and research is Criminal and Police Law. Dr. Datta has a teaching experience of 7 years in various law schools across North India and has held administrative positions like Academic Coordinator, Centre Superintendent for Examinations, Deputy Controller of Examinations, Member of the Proctorial Board



Dr. Namita Jain



Head & Associate Professor

School of Law, JECRC University, Jaipur Ph.D. (Commercial Law) LL.M., UGC -NET Post Graduation Diploma in Taxation law and Practice, Bachelor of Commerce.

Teaching Experience: 12 years, AWARDS AND RECOGNITION of Dr. Namita Jain are - ICF Global Excellence Award 2020 in the category of educationalist by I Can Foundation, India. India Women Empowerment Award in the category of "Emerging Excellence in Academics by Prime Time & Utkrisht Bharat Foundation, New Delhi.(2020). Conferred in FL Book of Top 21 Record Holders in the category of education by Fashion Lifestyle Magazine, New Delhi. (2020). Certificate of Appreciation for organizing and managing the Professional Development Training Program on IPR in Collaboration with Trade Innovations Services, Jaipur on March 14th, 2019

Mrs.S.Kalpana

Assistant professor of Law

Mrs.S.Kalpana, presently Assistant professor of Law, VelTech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R & D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi. Formerly Assistant professor of Law, Vels University in the year 2019 to 2020, Worked as Guest Faculty, Chennai Dr.Ambedkar Law College, Pudupakkam. Published one book. Published 8Articles in various reputed Law Journals. Conducted IMoot court competition and participated in nearly 80 National and International seminars and webinars conducted on various subjects of Law. Did ML in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Administration. 10 paper presentations in various National and International seminars. Attended more than 10 FDP programs. Ph.D. in Law pursuing.



Avinash Kumar



Avinash Kumar has completed his Ph.D. in International Investment Law from the Dept. of Law & Governance, Central University of South Bihar. His research work is on "International Investment Agreement and State's right to regulate Foreign Investment." He qualified UGC-NET and has been selected for the prestigious ICSSR Doctoral Fellowship. He is an alumnus of the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. Formerly he has been elected as Students Union President of Law Centre-1, University of Delhi. Moreover, he completed his LL.M. from the University of Delhi (2014-16), dissertation on "Cross-border Merger & Acquisition"; LL.B. from the University of Delhi (2011-14), and B.A. (Hons.) from Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. He has also obtained P.G. Diploma in IPR from the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. He has qualified UGC – NET examination and has been awarded ICSSR – Doctoral Fellowship. He has published six-plus articles and presented 9 plus papers in national and international seminars/conferences. He participated in several workshops on research methodology and teaching and learning.

ABOUT US

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS
ISSN

2582-6433 is an Online Journal is Monthly, Peer Review, Academic Journal, Published online, that seeks to provide an interactive platform for the publication of Short Articles, Long Articles, Book Review, Case Comments, Research Papers, Essay in the field of Law & Multidisciplinary issue. Our aim is to upgrade the level of interaction and discourse about contemporary issues of law. We are eager to become a highly cited academic publication, through quality contributions from students, academics, professionals from the industry, the bar and the bench. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS ISSN 2582-6433 welcomes contributions from all legal branches, as long as the work is original, unpublished and is in consonance with the submission guidelines.

“COMBATTING EXAMINATION PAPER LEAKS: STRATEGIES FOR THE INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM”

AUTHORED BY - SEHAR PARVEEN*

Abstract

This study examines the complex problem of paper leaks in competitive and educational exams for the past ten years, concentrating on the technological and economic aspects of these leaks. We start by looking at the financial effects of paper leaks, emphasizing the damages that governments, schools, and students have to bear. These disclosures compromise the reliability of testing protocols, necessitating expensive reassessments and test retakes. The contribution of technology to paper leaks is then examined, showing how developments in digital communication and encryption techniques have been advantageous and disadvantageous, respectively, providing both the means to enable leaks and possible means of preventing them.

A comparative study of paper leaks between India and other nations is provided, highlighting variations in the frequency and management of these occurrences. There is discussion of notable examples, such as the NEET UG Paper breach Scam 2024 and the UGC-NET 2024 breach, which caused prospective students to lose faith. In order to highlight the recurrent nature and extensive consequences of these breaches, the 2023 SSC and HSC exam paper leaks as well as the 2016 UPPSC Provincial Civil Service (PCS) test cancellation are also investigated.

In order to shed light on the ongoing difficulties in protecting examination processes, this study attempts to provide an extensive review of major paper leak instances and their consequences. Additionally, it aims to suggest technology and policy-based remedies to lessen similar incidents in the future, thereby reviving confidence in the educational.

*Disha Law College, Pt. Ravishankar University, Raipur

Introduction

The growing number of paper leaks in recent years has raised questions about the validity of educational exams. Standardized testing is a major component of education, which is the foundation of both individual and societal growth. It is used to assess students' performance and competency. But the phenomenon of paper leaks calls into question the validity of these evaluations, resulting in unfair advantages, weakened exam integrity, and a general decline in public confidence in the educational system.

Paper leaks can happen on a variety of platforms, from competitive university entrance exams to high school exams. They have an effect on students who study hard for these tests, but they also present a big obstacle for educational authorities that work hard to uphold transparency and equity. The repercussions of such breaches are far-reaching, affecting not just individual impacting not only scholastic achievements on an individual basis but also the standing of educational establishments and the larger educational system.

Paper leaks necessitate a multipronged response that includes increased security, technological advancements, and ethical teaching. Stakeholders can strive to provide a more safe and equitable learning environment that preserves the values of equality and integrity by comprehending the causes and effects of paper leaks.

The problem of paper leak

Exam paper leakage and cheating in states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar has been a major problem among young voters aged 18-25 years. An investigation by The Indian Express¹ ("The big all India exam leak", February 6) proves it, with 41 paper leaks in 15 states over the past five years affecting 1.4 billion job seekers who applied for more than a million jobs. Why this has become angst and frustration among young voters needs to be understood, especially as exams continue to be canceled and recruitments to state-level posts are delayed.

Standardized testing is commonly viewed as a dependable method in the educational system for conducting comprehensive assessments. Internationally, the model's reputation lies in its ability to streamline test administration and save time using standard evaluation criteria for

¹ Is an English language Indian daily newspaper founded in 1932 by Ramnath Goenka

admission to colleges and universities. The SAT² and ACT³, both widely recognized exams, are criticized for assessing individuals based on a narrow curriculum and memorization of facts.

Causes of paper leak in India

Exam paper leaks have a number of underlying causes, some of which are as follows:

i. **Corruption:**

Exam paper leaks are largely caused by corruption in the educational system. People who have access to private documents could be bought off to reveal them in exchange for money or other benefits.

ii. **Insufficient Security Steps:**

Educational institutions that don't have enough security measures in place are more susceptible to leaks. Unauthorized access and manipulation of question papers may be possible if there is insufficient control over their production, storage, and delivery.

iii. **Technological Advancements:**

The advent of technology has brought both advantages and disadvantages to the education system. While it has improved accessibility and learning opportunities, it has also provided new avenues for paper leaks. Hackers⁴ can exploit weak IT infrastructure, digital storage, and online platforms to gain unauthorized access to examination papers.

iv. **Insider Threats:**
The involvement of insiders, such as teachers, administrative staff, or students, in exam paper leaks cannot be overlooked. Factors such as discontent, personal gain, or pressure from external entities can tempt insiders to leak the papers.

Solutions to Address Paper Leaks

➤ **Technological Approaches**

Digital tests: Converting from conventional paper-based tests to digital ones can greatly lower the possibility of leakage. Security can be improved with online tests that have encrypted question banks and real-time monitoring.

² Scholastic Assessment Test

³ American College Testing

⁴ A person who uses computers to gain unauthorized access to data

- **Blockchain Technology:** By using blockchain technology to generate and distribute question papers, a tamper-proof system⁵ can be established. Transparency and security are ensured by the blockchain's ability to record and prevent alterations to individual transactions.
- **Biometric Verification:** By requiring candidates to undergo biometric verification⁶, you can guard against impersonation and make sure that only those who are permitted can access the test materials.

➤ **Administrative Actions**

Strict monitoring: It is possible to identify and prevent such leaks by strengthening monitoring during the printing, transit, and storage of exam papers. This entails putting in CCTV⁷ cameras and conducting more thorough background checks on all employees engaged in the procedure.

- **Frequent Audits:** By conducting routine audits of the examination procedure, security protocol compliance may be ensured and vulnerabilities can be found.
- **Strict sanctions:** Strict sanctions can serve as a deterrent for individuals who leak papers, such as officials, parents, and students. Public awareness of the consequences and legal measures is necessary to deter such behavior.

➤ **Interventions in Society**

- **Ethical Education:** Integrating morality and ethics into the curriculum can support students in developing a culture of accountability and honesty.
- **Awareness initiatives:** Organizing initiatives to draw attention to the detrimental effects that paper leaks have over time

Paper Leaks' Effect in India

i. Undermining the integrity of education

Leaks of confidential information seriously compromise the integrity of the school system. Exam papers that students have access to ahead of time distort the results of the evaluation process, which should be based on their knowledge and skills. This undermines the merit-based system and deters principled, industrious students from

⁵ Is a methodology used to hinder or detect unauthorized access to a device or circumvention of a security system

⁶ Includes fingerprints, hand and earlobe geometries, retina patterns voice prints and written signatures ⁷ Closed circuit television

following the rules.

ii. Decline in Public Confidence

The public's confidence in the educational system is damaged by the regularity of document leaks. A general feeling of disappointment results when stakeholders—students, parents, educators, and employers—lose faith in the validity and fairness of exams. This suspicion can spread to other government agencies.

iii. Students' Psychological Stress

Students' already elevated levels of stress and worry are exacerbated by paper leakage. Students' preparation and mental health are negatively impacted by the unpredictability and commotion that accompany a leak, including the possibility of exam cancellations and rescheduling. Serious psychological impacts including anxiety, despair, and exhaustion can result from this added pressure.

iv. Financial Expenses

Exams that must be redone because of paper leaks come at a high financial expense. These expenses cover the cost of new paper printing, administrative work, and logistical planning. Indirect costs also exist, such as the financial burden on families who may have to pay more for extra coaching and time spent preparing their kids.

v. Inequitable Advantage in the Market

A level playing field is produced by paper leaks, giving certain students unfair advantages over others. Long-term effects of this unfair competition may arise, particularly in competitive exams for government employment or prestigious universities where a mere advantage might dictate career paths. Fairness and equity in educational possibilities are compromised by this.

vi. Graduates of Lower Quality

The caliber of graduates declines when students use dishonest methods to pass exams. These people could not possess the knowledge and abilities that would be expected of them given their qualifications, which could lead to decreased competency and productivity in the workplace. This in turn has an impact on the nation's human resource base's general quality and competitiveness.

vii. The Legal and Criminal Consequences

Criminal actions like bribery, corruption, and unlawful access to exam materials are frequently involved in paper leaks. Legal action and sanctions may result from these activities for all those engaged, including students, teachers, and administrative staff. Wide-ranging legal ramifications may have an impact on people's and organizations'

reputations and future opportunities.

viii. Harmful Effect on Institutional Standing

The prestige of educational institutions is harmed, particularly those that are regularly the target of paper leaks. Decreased enrollment, loss of accreditation⁷, and less financing prospects can result from this reputational damage. Long-term effects include diminished quality and reputation as the school struggles to draw in bright teachers and students.

Major Paper Leaks In India

UGC -NET 2024

Over 9 lakh candidates thought that the UGC-NET 2024 would be a turning point in their academic careers, but when the exam, which was supposed to take place on June 19, was postponed, their hopes were crushed. Because it was purported to have been exposed on the dark web, the 317-city dump constituted a serious security violation. The government's commitment to upholding the strict criteria of the recently passed anti-paper leak legislation was demonstrated by the exam's prompt cancellation. In order to ensure the legitimacy of these national-level exams and prevent future intrusions, the occurrence has prompted an urgent review of examination processes and security measures.

NEET UG Paper Leak Scam 2024

On June 4, 2024, ten days ahead of schedule and in line with the results of the general election, the National Testing Agency (NTA) suddenly revealed the NEET UG 2024 results. The announcement of 67 all-India rank 1 holders, which was unprecedented, and the lack of openness around the distribution of grace marks caused this approach to be met with criticism. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) held a protest outside MP and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's home today, June 19. In addition, the Congress Party is worried about the purported irregularities in the NEET UG 2024 and has called for a nationwide protest.

From 2012 to 2020, there were legal challenges challenging the validity of NEET; nonetheless, the use of NEET for medical admissions was affirmed by the Supreme Court. But in 2024, there were motions to invalidate the exam because of purported leaks and inconsistencies, raising questions about its impartiality. Approximately 1.09 lakh MBBS seats were up for grabs

⁷ The recognition from an accrediting agency that an institution maintains a certain level of educational awards

in 2024, with over 23 lakh applicants vying for over 55,000 spots in government colleges and the remaining seats in private universities. The Medical Council of India (MCI) offers seat allocation counselling after results are announced.

Exams for the SSC and HSC 2023

SSC⁸ and HSC⁹ test papers were leaked during the 2023 academic year in a number of states, including Telangana, Maharashtra, Assam, and Rajasthan. Thousands of young kids' lives were impacted by these tragedies, which also sparked a reform movement across the country. The systematic weaknesses that had permitted such security breaches were found as a result of the leaks, which set off a series of investigations. Since then, there has been pressure on the education industry to modernize its testing procedures and introduce safer exam-taking strategies in order to protect students' rights and preserve educational standards.

Paper leak in Rajasthan hiring tests

Exam paper leaks are a well-documented problem in Rajasthan; between 2015 and 2023, over 14 occurrences damaged the state's reputation. The most serious of these was the December 2022 leak of the general knowledge paper meant to be used in the hiring process for senior government school instructors. The public was incensed by this episode, which resulted in the examination being canceled. The recurrent violations have highlighted the need for a thorough revision of the hiring and testing procedures and questioned the efficacy of the state's efforts to stop these wrongdoings.

Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) was abolished due to claims of a paper leak. In this instance, the Economic Offences Unit (EoU) made 226 arrests, one of which was the mastermind.

Five educators were taken into custody by the Odisha police after the Mother India Language (MIL) exam paper for the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) got popular on social media prior to the exam. The state board exam's class 10 math paper was leaked in Bihar that same year.

⁸ Staff selection commission

⁹ Higher secondary certificate

Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) Assistant Engineer examination, the West Bengal D.El.Ed (Diploma in Elementary Education) examination, and the Uttarakhand Subordinate Service Selection Commission (UKSSSC) examination were allegedly leaked in the same year. Following confirmation by the police that the exam had been leaked, the Odisha Staff Selection Commission (OSSC) also decided to cancel the main written exam for junior engineers (JE) in civil engineering.

RRB 2019

Following the alleged leak of the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) computer-based test (CBT) paper and the social media sharing of screenshots, police allegedly intervened and booked one contender along with his companions.

UPPSC 2016

Additionally, the 2016 UPPSC Provincial Civil Service (PCS) test was canceled. The examination paper was canceled as a result of the distribution of the second shift exam paper in a first shift center.

AIPMT 2015

A variety of tests were administered throughout India prior to the establishment of NEET for applicants to medical programs. The All India-Pre Medical Test, or AIPMT, was one such exam administered by the CBSE that sparked a lot of controversy in 2015. The AIPMT test was canceled by the Supreme Court because exam papers had been leaked in ten Indian states. Upon closer examination, it was discovered that the test questions and solution were already in use.

An estimated 90 answer keys were traded for between Rs 1.5 and Rs 2 million. Two doctors and an MBBS student were among the seven people whom the Rohtak police had detained at the time.

The Effect of Paper Leaks on the Economy

➤ Direct Expenses

- **Administrative Costs:** One of the first things to do in the event of a paper leak is to reexamine. The expense of setting up re-examinations is high since it involves paying

invigilators and other staff members, printing fresh question papers, and finding testing locations. The expenses for extensive examinations may reach the multimillion dollar range.

- **Investigation and Legal Expenses:** In order to determine the perpetrators and comprehend the breach, responding to a document leak frequently necessitates extensive investigations. Law enforcement organizations, forensic specialists, and court cases are all involved in this procedure, which adds significantly to costs.
- **Enhanced Security Measures:** Educational institutions and testing boards may need to make investments in cutting-edge security technologies, like biometric systems, encryption software, and secure exam paper transportation, in order to stop future leaks. These investments are quite expensive, even if they are vital.

➤ **Long-Term Impacts on Human Capital**

- **Deterioration of Credibility and Trust:** Regular disclosure of leaked papers undermines confidence in the educational system and the validity of test findings. The employability and earning potential of graduates from affected universities may be negatively impacted by employers' skepticism about their qualifications.
- **Higher Dropout Rates:** Students may become discouraged as a result of repeated instances of document leaks, which might raise dropout rates. Potential human capital is lost when students decide not to pursue further education because they no longer believe that the test system is fair.
- **Decreased Educational Outcomes:** Students' performance may suffer as a result of the stress and uncertainty brought on by paper leaks. Lower academic achievement may result from this, which may have an impact on their future employment opportunities and financial contributions.

➤ **Broader effects on society**

- **Productivity Loss:** Students' time and resources wasted on tests they end up not needing to take constitute a large productivity loss. Retaking examinations causes students to fall behind in their coursework and delay their entry into the workforce, which lowers economic production as a whole.
- **Economic Inequality:** Leaks of confidential information may make matters worse. Richer students could have easier access to leaked papers and other materials than their

less fortunate counterparts, giving them an unfair advantage. This restricts social mobility and feeds the cycle of inequality.

- **Effect on Public Funds:** The majority of the financial losses related to paper leaks are borne by examination boards and universities that get funding from the government. This affects the economy as a whole by taking public monies away from other important areas like social welfare, healthcare, and infrastructure development.

Technology's Part in Paper Leaks

- Digital Vulnerabilities:** Question papers are frequently stored and transmitted digitally in modern exam systems. Malicious actors may use holes in these systems, like weak encryption or insufficient cybersecurity safeguards, to gain access to and divulge exam content. Inadequately secured networks can be breached by hackers, allowing for illegal access and dissemination.
- Social Media and Messaging Apps:** Rapidly spreading leaked materials has become easier with the growth of social media platforms and instant messaging apps. A compromised paper can be widely disseminated in a matter of minutes, reaching a sizable audience and greatly increasing the impact of the leak.
- Advanced Printing Technologies:** It is now simpler to create high-quality counterfeit papers that are identical to the real thing thanks to technological developments in printing. This makes it easier for bogus exam questions to be distributed, which confuses students and compromises the validity of the testing procedure.
- Collusion and Insider Threats:** Technology has the potential to facilitate collusion amongst those engaged in the examination process. Insiders possessing digital examination papers, for instance, can effortlessly duplicate and distribute them using personal gadgets, circumventing conventional security protocols.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning:** These two fields of study are able to keep an eye on digital systems for anomalous activity or patterns that could point to a security breach. Exam proctoring is another application for these technologies, which may identify dishonest practices and stop illegal access to test materials in real time.
- Safe Online Exam Platforms:** It is possible to stop leaks and cheating in digital exams by creating strong online exam platforms with built-in security features like browser lockdown, real-time monitoring, and AI-driven proctoring. These platforms have the potential to provide a regulated setting that reduces the likelihood of malpractice.

India's Paper Leak Compared to Other Countries

- Paper Leak instances

India: In recent years, there have been a number of high-profile paper leak instances in India that have affected tests administered by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), and several state-level exams. Many people are concerned and have lost faith in the testing process as a result of how frequently these instances occur.

Other Nations: Leaks of paper are not specific to India. South Korea, for example, has experienced comparable problems with its extremely competitive university entry tests.

There have been occurrences with SATs and other standardized tests in the US. Leaks in China's Gaokao tests, which are essential for admission to universities, have also been a problem.

- Reasons and Workings

India: Human factors and technical vulnerabilities frequently combine to produce paper leaks in India. Examinees' enormous stakes, insufficient security measures, and corruption all play major roles. There have been documented cases of cooperation between test administrators, printing personnel, and occasionally even students.

Other Nations: The intense pressure to do well on tests in South Korea has given rise to complex networks and disclosures of exam cheating. In the United States, breaches frequently result from lapses in digital security or unethical actions on the part of people who have access to the tests. Because of the intense pressure on students to get into universities, organized attempts to obtain an unfair edge are a common feature of difficulties in China.

- Solutions and Preventive Actions

India: India has put in place a number of steps to stop paper leaks, including the use of strong legal measures against offenders, the introduction of encrypted question papers, and increased surveillance at test facilities. Even with these efforts, it is difficult to apply these policies consistently due to the size and diversity of the educational system.

Other nations: To secure exam materials, nations like South Korea and China have embraced high-tech solutions including biometric verification, real-time surveillance, and complex

encryption techniques. Online proctoring and safe digital testing environments are becoming more and more important in the United States.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the integrity and fairness of educational assessments are seriously threatened by the problem of paper leaks. Because education is the cornerstone of both individual development and society progress, it is critical to protect the procedures used to assess students' knowledge and abilities. Paper leaks hurt the reputation of educational institutions and disadvantage hardworking students by undermining exam reliability and eroding public confidence in the educational system.

A comprehensive plan is needed to effectively fight this issue. This entails putting strong security measures in place, utilizing technology developments to secure exam materials, and encouraging an integrity-focused culture among all parties involved. The school system can guarantee that assessments stay fair and impartial by addressing the underlying reasons and bolstering preventive measures.

