

Indian Education System: More the Boards, More the Confusion

Neha Parekh: Research Scholar, Department of Management, Shri J.J.T University, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India.

Abstract

Education is a reflection of civilization. Education is not only about studying and getting good marks but it is really a means to discover new things which we don't know about and which help increase our knowledge.

Education is very important and the current population of the country has realized this. Education ensures that each citizen of the nation is knowledgeable and independent. It removes the blanket of ignorance and helps people to know their fundamental rights. Our country's youth has brain, which is appreciated across the globe for their intelligence, and it has been in our blood and only education can help groom it.

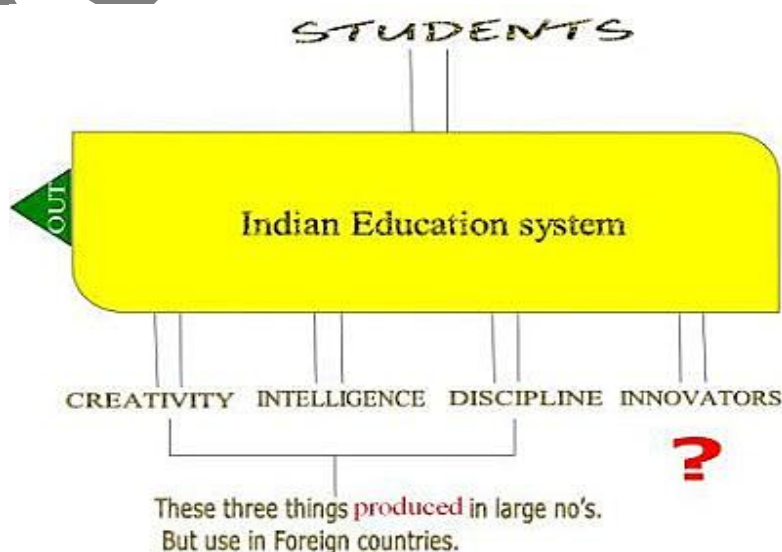
While the parents of our country have realized so much, they have all the more got concerned about their child's future. This has given rise to curiosity amongst them about our country's present education system. The parents are aware of the various boards but they are perplexed about which board to put their child into and how that will precisely boost their child's growth and mold him into an ideal individual.

India has primarily 4 boards being offered for school education, viz. CBSE, ICSE, State boards and IB. The article brings forth the definition, salient features and comparison of each of these boards and perception of stakeholders.

Introduction

Education is a reflection of civilization. Human civilization has developed by innovation in education since periods. Education is not only about studying and getting good marks but it is really a means to discover new things which we don't know about and which help increase our knowledge.

An educated person has the ability to differentiate between right and wrong or good and evil. It is the principal responsibility of a society to educate its citizens. Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another. It spreads awareness in society about how we can be a good social being and help others in our daily life. A person becomes perfect with education, as he is not only procuring something from it, but also contributing to the economic development of the nation.



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Education, if looked at beyond its conventional boundaries, forms the very essence of all the actions. How the individual behaves or reacts is because of what one knows and has learned, either through instructions or through observation and assimilation. The mind definitely holds the potential to learn more, however, it is up to us whether to stop oneself from expanding the horizons of knowledge with self-doubt or other social, emotional, or economic constraints. While most feel that education is a prerequisite, they tend to use it as a tool for reaching a specific target or personal mark, after which there is no added need to seek greater education. Nonetheless, the significance of education in society is indispensable and adhering, which is why society and knowledge cannot be ever separated into two distinct entities.

Purpose of Education in Society

Education is Self-Empowerment:

Receiving a good education helps empower individual, thus making him strong enough to look after himself in any given situation. It keeps one aware of his given surrounding as well as the rules and regulations of the society they're living in. It's only through knowledge that you can be able to question authority for its negligence or discrepancies. Education helps to understand oneself better, it helps to realize the potential and qualities as a human being and also tap into latent talent, so that one may be able to sharpen his skills.

Financial Stability and Dignity of Life

Another importance of education is that it helps to gain sufficient academic qualification so one is able to attain suitable employment at a later stage. Employment would be combined with hard-earned remuneration or salary, which will help look after personal expenses making one free and independent from being dependent on others.

Growth in Personal Aspiration

Academic qualification is very essential as the individual attains safe passage and promotions, which ultimately after a point of time are individual's aspirations and expectations.

On the Job Efficiency

College education is very important after high school and must not be taken for granted, as when faced with the option of choosing between a highly qualified candidate and a not so educated applicant, the employers will undoubtedly go in for the qualified person. The motive being that, a qualified entrant will not require much investment of the employer's time and money. The company need not teach him or her tricks of the trade, or the diverse ways of functioning and performing the tasks of the workplace. On the contrary, an amateur applicant would need to be taught everything from scratch, which many employers are usually not willing to do.

Helps Plan Ahead

Those who have amassed adequate education, navigates the path of development and progress for their country. It is these individuals who go ahead to become teachers, scientists, inventors, welfare activists, soldiers, and politicians who work collectively

to form the very backbone of the society. Without this pool of intelligent individuals, the economic and social structure would crumple and collapse, paving its way for anarchism, degradation, and violence.

An Idle Mind is the Devil's Workshop

Education and studying regularly, gives individuals of all age groups something substantial and thought provoking to do. It helps them ponder and use their idle hours, doing something constructive and worthwhile. Education need not be only academic and may include reading for leisure or as a passion for literature, philosophy, art, politics, economics, or for scientific research. There is no limit, to all that one can teach oneself, only if one takes interest to learn and grow as an individual. Education plays its continuous role in all spheres of life. The cause being, that if we are aware of the drawbacks of a decision and we know about the possible contingencies and the collateral damage, our subsequent actions would be wiser, that would help us to keep danger at bay at all times.

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ICSE Board:

ICSE board commonly used misnomer. There is nothing like an ICSE board. Rather, the CBSE equals the Council of Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE). It is a private body that was founded in year 1956 to set and adapt University of Cambridge's examination system to India. This body now conducts 3 examinations, viz.

- ICSE (Indian certificate secondary education) exam for class 10
- ISC (Indian school certificate) exam for class 12
- CVE (Certificate for vocational education) exam for class 12

The CISCE board has equal focus on languages, science and art and inspires students to choose across diverse topics / subjects for their Class-12 exam.

Main benefits of CISCE are

- Wide acknowledgment of board results across colleges in India and even abroad
- Equal focus – language, art and science
- More choice and independence to students in deciding final subjects
- Reasonably prevalent across India

CBSE board:

Central board of secondary education (CBSE) is the most popular school board in India with over 9000 CBSE affiliated schools in the country and presence in 21 nations across the globe. The emphasis in this board is on application of Science and Maths related subjects.

Main advantages of opting for a CBSE affiliated school are

- Easy to find new schools in any area, even abroad, due to wide presence of the board
- Wide recognition of board results across all colleges in India, as compared to various other boards

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- Recent overhaul of teaching methodology and curriculum has made the content relevant
- Easy to find tutors, books and activities for all classes
- More attention is given to Science and Maths as well as application based subjects

State boards:

As the name suggests, each state has its own board of education that conducts certificate examination for class 10 and class 12. Selected state boards, such as Rajasthan board also conduct exams in class 8.

The benefits are

- Reasonably prevalent within the state
- Topics and content of local significance
- Usually cheaper schools

IB:

International Baccalaureate (IB) is a non-profit educational foundation that was founded in 1968 in Geneva, Switzerland and now works with over 3200+ schools in 141 countries. The board is acquiring prevalence in high-end new schools in India. Presently limited to the metro and large Tier-I cities (Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Hyderabad, etc) in India (84 schools that are much less than CBSE and ICSE schools). As per them, their vision is on all round development of the student into an inquiring, caring and well-informed young individual. IB proposes innovative learning program and teaching approaches to achieve its stated objective.

IB Programs:

Over 960000 students aged 3 to 19 years are studying in schools affiliated to IB programs. It offers 3 educational programs:

PYP or Primary year program for KG to Class 5

MYP or Middle year program for Class 6 to Class 10

DP or Diploma program for Class 11 and Class 12

The main benefits of this are

- Innovative curriculum
- Varied and stress free teaching methods
- Focus on overall development rather than pure academic performance
- Wide acceptance across the world

This is just a basic difference but the parents need to also understand the comparisons and reasons before choosing a particular board that will be apt for their child.

Reasons why parents are running away from state boards

Quality of text books in the state boards is poor:

Due to more prominence of ICSE and CBSE boards more publishers and writers write books for those boards generating competition and hence text books have better contents, quality of illustrations than the state board books.

Quality of teachers / schools can be inferior:

The number of schools for state boards are less as compared to the other boards and plus the opportunities are less thus teachers prefer to build their skills and experience for CBSE and ICSE curriculum.

Exam papers frequently surrounded with controversies:

CBSE and State boards frequently suffer from controversies about the paper being difficult or questions being asked outside the curriculum but the CBSE board have tried to work on this and since past few years this has considerably reduced.

Exam dates are revised:

Every year the exam dates for the state board keep shifting due to various reasons like local elections, strike of local government school teachers etc.

Results are postponed with devastating effects for students:

There are some states, where every year the results are postponed resulting in problems with the student's admissions in universities which have early admission. The CBSE results at times also come late but since its on a nation level they can get the universities to shift the admission dates which is not possible with the state boards.

Difference between IB, CBSE and ICSE which helps parents to get a better picture of the two boards:

Spread or Prevalence:

CBSE board is more popular compared to the IB(84 schools) and ICSE (CISCE) (1000 schools) as 9000+ schools in India and abroad follow its curriculum making it easier to find schools when you move to a new place.

Schools outside India:

The CBSE takes over ICSE on this criterion as it is found in Middle East, South Africa and even in certain European countries, which allows people to migrate to countries without significant disruption for the child's education. IB is more recognized if the student wants to go abroad for studies for graduation as its grades are accepted everywhere.

Recognition by colleges in India:

Universities and colleges in India recognize both the boards. However some have started calibration of marks, which varies from year to year and generally, favours the board from which most number of applicants arrives. In India IB board students find it difficult to move to various other boards within the country though it is widely acceptable abroad.

Course content:

The CBSE focuses on science, maths and application of knowledge whereas ICSE has a balanced focus on language, arts and science. One needs to choose the board keeping this major difference in mind whether they want their child to go through a balanced curriculum or have a concentrated one giving importance to some subjects. The course content of IB board is completely new and very practical based on application and experimentation.

Teaching methodology:

Both CBSE and ICSE boards prescribe a certain teaching approach, which has undergone significant change over the past 10 years. Now the focus has increased on experimental and experiential learning rather than having one-way teaching. But one needs to realize that ultimately quality of instruction depends upon the school and less on the board. A child learns and retains up to 45 times more by the way of learning by doing. The IB teaching methodology is learning by doing, by collaborating and conjoining rather than competing. IB curriculum helps in the holistic development beyond a pure theoretical genius like other boards.

Freedom and flexibility:

CISCE (ICSE, ISC) is far better option than CBSE for this criteria as there are lot more subjects to choose from in class 12. At the same time there are options to take vocational courses based on interest rather than just pure academic courses for class 12. CBSE is improving on its subject choices that it offers but still has not been able to beat the CISCE.

Competition and Scholarship Exams:

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Talent search examinations and scholarship exams such as SSTSE, NSEB, NSEC etc conducted at local and national level base their content on CBSE syllabus just because it is more predominant, due to which the CBSE students get an edge over others.

Fee Structure:

IB board fee structure is very high compared to the ICSE and CBSE boards.

Teachers and Infrastructure

The teachers and infrastructure is top notch in IB boards. The libraries, labs, playgrounds and classrooms are top notch as compared to other boards. The teachers are the highest paid in the IB schools as compared to other board schools and they have the best training and enhancement workshops, which help develop their skills and knowledge.

Parents Views about why they chose A Specific Board:

When interviewed most of the parents don't have a clear answer or knowledge about the board they choose to put their kids in. Their answers varied from:

- Close to the house
- The board is more application based and so gives less stress to the children
- The parents want to send their children abroad and don't understand which board to choose.
- The parents get influenced by the societal pressures
- The fee structure also decides the board they choose for their children.
- The parents like a particular school and so without checking the board it offers enroll their children.
- The parents want their children to be all rounder's so they put them in school having co curricular activities without even checking if the faculty is good or no and how much attrition level happens.

Conclusion:

Education is not the learning of facts but the training of mind to think. It is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom. If one wants to succeed, go to college and get a degree. Study hard and make good grades that are the key. Nothing spells success like a good education. One can be a doctor or President of a corporation. If one wants to be a success, an education is what one will need. A person who is educated will be far more likely to succeed. Instead of thinking which board to choose and be confused about it one needs to look at the above factors and then decide which board will be best for their child and choose that. As education from any board will prepare an individual to become a leader its upon his potential and capabilities what he can achieve through that.

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