



Analysis of Education Boards Options in India

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ABSTRACT

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) are two significant educational boards in India. Furthermore, it is worth noting that every state has its own autonomous State Board of Education. In the recent times, IB Board and Cambridge Board are also introduced in many schools of metropolitan cities of the country.

This research paper aims to compare and comprehend the major educational boards in India, specifically the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), the International Baccalaureate (IB), and the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). The research seeks to elucidate the disparities and resemblances among these boards. This study report aims to provide students, parents, and educators with a comprehensive understanding of the notable distinctions and similarities across the education boards options available in India so they can make a smart choice according to the need and requirements of their children and their future.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In India, the Central Government and State Governments collaborate on educational affairs, with each level of government having certain duties and responsibilities. In 1992, the 69th Amendment was introduced, which included education in the Concurrent List. This amendment granted both levels of government the authority to make laws regarding education.

The Central Government formulates National Education Policies, establishes educational benchmarks, and provides financial support for education, particularly in regions with inadequate resources. The government establishes educational institutions such as central schools, universities, and higher learning institutes, which include prestigious institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), and the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). In addition, the Central Government implements educational initiatives such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan to enhance educational access and literacy throughout the country. The government has implemented several programmes, including the Right to schooling Act (RTE), which seeks to ensure that all children between the ages of 6 and 14 get free and mandatory schooling.

State Governments have the main responsibility for overseeing the management of the primary and secondary education system. This includes tasks such as running schools and setting regulations for the curriculum. Each state has its own State Education Boards that create unique education policies, curricula, and examination patterns. Examples include the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education and the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education. State Governments oversee the management of State Universities and institutions that get funding from the state. The collaboration between the Central and State Governments for educational matters involves the exchange of information, coordination in implementing policies, and requesting guidance from central authorities to enhance the educational systems at the state level.

The primary objective of both the Central and State Governments is to ensure that every citizen has access to high-quality education, while simultaneously striving to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the field of education. This includes a strong emphasis on ensuring that education is accessible, affordable, and of a high standard.

2. COUNCIL OF BOARDS OF SCHOOL EDUCATION (COBSE)

To promote and spread school education while respecting the genuine spirit of the Indian government's "right to education," COBSE coordinates with various boards, states of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Human Resources Development, and the Government of India. The Government of India Act formed and incorporated COBSE as a legal entity. COBSE is an independent, non-profit organisation that serves all Indian education boards and councils. The primary role of the Board is to serve as a consortium of all Indian school education boards, universities, and educational councils across all Indian states. COBSE seeks to provide quality control assistance to all Indian school boards.

COBSE has 71 recognised Educational boards/Councils which are established under the act of Government of India/State. 9 Boards are Associate Members of COBSE which include- National Examination Board, Nepal; Mauritius Examination Syndicate; Bhutan Council For School Examination & Assessment; The Aga Khan University Examination Board, Pakistan; Inter Board Committee of Chairman (IBCC), Pakistan; Cambridge International Examination, UK; EDEXCEL, UK; International Baccalaureate, Singapore; North West Accreditation Commission (NWAC), USA.

3. MAJOR EDUCATION BOARDS IN INDIA

India has multiple education boards that regulate the school education system. Some notable options:

a) The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is a National Board of India under the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India under the act Resolution No. F-115-R/28 Dated 01.07.1929 published in the Gazette Notification No. 659-R Dated 11.11.1929-Last amended vide Notification No. F.55-21/61-SE-2(B) Dated 27.02.1962. It is the most prevalent board in India.

CBSE provides an extensive selection of subjects for the Class 10 and Class 12 examinations. Typical subjects encompass Mathematics, Science, Social Science, English, Hindi, and others. In addition, CBSE provides vocational subjects to enhance skill development. It has 24000 affiliated schools PAN India (Data Source: CBSE).

b) The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) is a Private National Board in India. It is privately-run, non-governmental organisation responsible for conducting Class 10 and Class 12 examinations in India. The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) has been mentioned in Delhi School Education Act 1973 as a body conducting Public Examination in NCT of Delhi. For functioning out of NCT of Delhi, CISCE has taken / has to take approval / NOC from the concerned State/UT Government for

functioning in their jurisdiction. CISCE is renowned for its rigorous assessment and comprehensive curriculum.

CISCE offers a diverse range of subjects for the Class 10 The Indian Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (ICSE) and Class 12 The Indian School Certificate Examination (ISC) examinations. Typical disciplines encompass Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Political Science, English Literature, and others. CISCE provides elective studies in multiple disciplines such as Commerce, Science, and Humanities.

c) State Boards: Every state in India has its own autonomous state board of education, such as the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (MSBSHSE), Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board (KSEEB), and so on.

d) The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) is a National Board of India under the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India under the act Resolution No.F.5-24/90-Sch.3 Dated 14.09.1990 published in the Gazette of India on 20.10.1990. It is responsible for remote education in India. It has 7400 study centres all over India and abroad.

e) The International Baccalaureate (IB) Recognised by Ministry of Education, Government of India, Notification no. F.15-17/94-TS. (IV) dated 13th march 1995. It provides educational programmes and credentials for students between the ages of 3 and 19 on a global scale, namely the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-Related Programme (CP). The International Baccalaureate (IB) programme is well acknowledged and esteemed for its rigorous academic criteria.

The high school level IB Diploma Programme (DP) provides a comprehensive curriculum consisting of six topic groups. Students select a single subject from each of the six categories: Studies in Language and Literature, Language Acquisition, Individuals and Societies, Sciences, Mathematics, and the Arts. In addition to these six disciplines, students are also involved in the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, Extended Essay, and Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) requirements. It has 245 affiliated schools in India (Data Source: <https://www.ibo.org>)

f) Cambridge Board The Cambridge IGCSE is an internationally recognised credential that holds the same value as the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in the United Kingdom. The curriculum is provided by the International Examinations section of the University of Cambridge. The name "Cambridge board" pertains to the educational programme developed by Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE), which is globally recognised for offering instruction to

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pupils between the ages of 5 and 19. Universities, employers, and education systems worldwide largely acknowledge this fact. It has 692 affiliated schools in India. (Data Source: <https://connectedtot.com/find-a-cambridge-school/>)

4. RISE OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN INDIA

India international schools market has shown 8% growth in schools, 25% growth in students, 25% in staff and 36% in fee income from year July 2019- July2024 (Source: ISC Report 2024 <https://iscresearch.com/reports/india/>)

In India, the number of international schools has almost doubled since 2014. Currently, there are over 900 schools serving over 416,000 students, and the industry is growing at an unstoppable rate. In an economy that is expected to rank third in the world by 2027 (Forbes 2024), new international schools are emerging every year as parents seek to provide their kids with a top-notch education. The future of

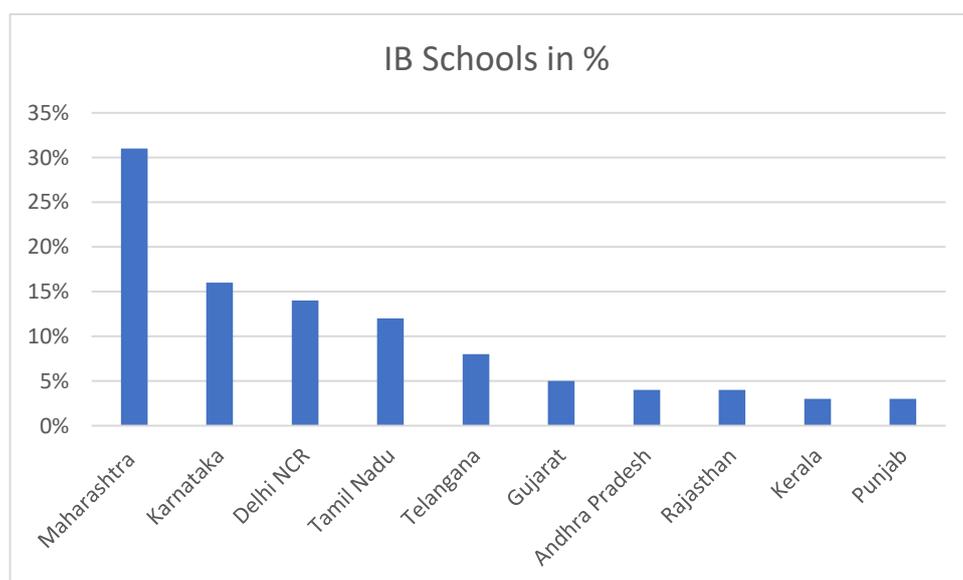
international schools in India is bright due to the country's economic expansion, shifting governmental regulations, and rising demand for international curricula.

Many Indian parents believe that the best way to fulfil their dream of sending their kids to college abroad is through international education. Choosing an international school that offers relevant curricula is quite appealing, especially when parents are aiming for universities in the US, UK, and Canada. Although Cambridge is now the most popular foreign curriculum offered in India, the IB curriculum has seen tremendous development, especially at the diploma program level. In recent years, the Indian government has also taken the initiative to incorporate elements of other curricula into its own. The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) in Delhi has improved its standing both domestically and nationally as a result of successful experiments.

Percentage of IB Schools by State (Top 10 States of India)

STATE	Percentage of IB Schools (%)
Maharashtra	31 %
Karnataka	16 %
Delhi NCR	14%
Tamil Nadu	12%
Telangana	8 %
Gujarat	5 %
Andhra Pradesh	4 %
Rajasthan	4 %
Kerala	3 %
Punjab	3 %

Source- <https://erocon.in/scope-of-setting-up-an-ib-school-in-india/>



5. COMPARISON OF EDUCATION BOARDS IN INDIA

Education Boards	Governing Body	Curriculum	Assessment	Recognition
CBSE- Central Board of Secondary education	National Board of India. Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India	CBSE follows a centralized curriculum set by the Central Government of India. It is widely recognized and prepares students for national entrance exams. CBSE focuses on a structured and exam-oriented approach to education.	CBSE conducts board exams at the end of Class 10 and Class 12. It follows a more traditional examination system.	CBSE is recognized nationally and is the most common board in India.
CISCE – Council for the Indian School certificate Examinations	National Private Board	CISCE offers a more flexible and comprehensive curriculum. It focuses on holistic education and encourages a balanced development of students. CISCE emphasizes a more holistic and student-centred approach to learning.	CISCE also conducts board exams at the end of Class 10 (ICSE) and Class 12 (ISC). It includes practical exams and emphasizes continuous assessment.	CISCE is recognized for its rigorous evaluation and comprehensive curriculum.
IB Board- International Baccalaureate	Independent Non-Profit Educational foundation, Operates independently	IB follows an international curriculum with a global perspective. It emphasizes critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and a well-rounded education. IB promotes inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and international-mindedness.	The IB assessment includes internal assessments, examinations, Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge (TOK), and Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) requirements. It emphasizes a mix of coursework and exams.	The IB is globally recognized and accepted by universities and institutions worldwide. It is highly regarded for its rigorous academic standards and holistic approach to education.
Cambridge Board	Cambridge Assessment International Education, university of Cambridge	The curriculum is known for its subject depth and academic rigor, aligning with British education standards.	Cambridge assessments are primarily exam-based, with some subjects including coursework components like practical assessments or projects. The grading system is based on performance in exams.	Cambridge qualifications are also widely recognized internationally and hold a strong reputation for academic excellence. They are accepted by universities in many countries.

6. INCLINATION TOWARDS IB & CAMBRIDGE BOARD

The International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, based in Switzerland, is becoming a more and more popular substitute

for the CBSE, ICSE, and even Cambridge Board in India. Wealthy families frequently opt for the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Cambridge Assessment International Education boards instead of the Central Board of Secondary

Education (CBSE) and Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) due to various factors:

- a) **International Acclaim:** IB and Cambridge qualifications enjoy global recognition and are highly esteemed by universities and institutions across the globe. Wealthy families may choose international education boards to ensure their children receive qualifications that are recognised worldwide.
- b) **Comprehensive Curriculum:** Both the IB and Cambridge curriculum provide a comprehensive and inquiry-based approach that emphasises critical thinking, creativity, and a global perspective. Wealthy households place great importance on a comprehensive education that extends beyond conventional academic instruction, which is in line with the principles upheld by these governing bodies.
- c) The IB and Cambridge curricula are renowned for their **academic rigour** and profoundness. They encourage students to engage in critical thinking, conduct research, and cultivate a more profound comprehension of issues. Wealthy families frequently pursue intellectually demanding programmes for their children in order to equip them for competitive higher education settings.
- d) **Interdisciplinary Learning:** Both the IB and Cambridge curricula place a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary learning, which involves the integration of multiple courses and abilities to offer a full educational experience. This approach is attractive to families seeking a comprehensive education that surpasses the limitations of subject-specific divisions.
- e) **Global Exposure:** IB and Cambridge programmes frequently offer chances for international exchange programmes, cultural immersion, and a broadened understanding of global views. Wealthy families really appreciate the opportunities these programmes provide for their children to be exposed to diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives.
- f) **Career Opportunities:** Possessing IB and Cambridge qualifications can provide access to a diverse array of professional prospects on a worldwide scale. Wealthy families may opt for these boards to give their children a distinct advantage in the labour market, particularly in multinational corporations or industries with a global emphasis.

7. CONCLUSION

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is largely regarded as the preeminent and widely acknowledged education board in India. CBSE is a nationwide educational board that offers a uniform curriculum for both public and private schools throughout the country. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) administers board examinations for students in Class 10 and Class 12. The curriculum followed by CBSE is designed to be in sync with

the requirements of different admission tests for higher education.

The popularity of CBSE in India can be attributed to various aspects, such as its focus on ongoing assessment, alignment with national competitive tests like JEE and NEET, and broad recognition by universities and colleges for admissions. A significant number of parents and children favour CBSE schools due to its well-organized curriculum, comprehensive study resources, and all-encompassing approach to education. Although CBSE is renowned for its popularity, other educational boards such as the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) and several State Boards also possess their unique characteristics and enjoy a significant following in different regions of India. Nevertheless, CBSE continues to be one of the most recognised and most desired education boards in the country. In general, families belonging to the high-income segment tend to prefer IB and Cambridge boards over CBSE and CISCE because to their worldwide recognition, comprehensive educational approach, rigorous academic standards, multidisciplinary learning opportunities, international exposure, and potential professional benefits. As part of Arvind Kejriwal's educational reforms in Delhi, the Delhi Board of Secondary Education (DBSE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the IB to implement the IB programs in 30 government schools in Delhi in August 2021 to increase the affordability and accessibility of IB education across the country. In the future, more schools are expected to implement this curriculum.

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