

# A Comparative Study on System of General Education in China and India

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**Abstract** - Education systems in India and China are among the first three largest systems of the world. The paper describes the education systems of these two countries in a nut shell. The structure of general education system is discussed by taking into account of the levels of education. This paper aims to give an overview of the key features of general education system of India and China in brief and tries to make a comparison. The method employed for present investigation is document-based comparative analysis. The comparative analysis of various levels of education system in both the countries has been highlighted in special reference to pre-school, elementary, secondary and higher education stages. Both the countries follow a general pattern regarding the previously mentioned stages of education and types of institutions providing education. On the other hand, these two countries differ a lot regarding the overall structure of education, duration of different stages at school system, access to higher education, affiliation of institutions and so on. The researcher highlights such similarities as well as differences and tries to accentuate areas where India may take ideas from Chinese education system.

**Key words:** General education system, Pre-school education, Elementary education.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Peoples' republic of China is the largest country in Asia and most populous country in the world. China is now a substantial economic power that took its present shape in 1949 with the establishment of the republic. Like economic and political system of china Chinese education system is shaped and controlled by the government. Though there are several private institutions, public institutions play a major role in the overall education system. The State Council is the topmost authority in China. Under the state council, Ministry of education makes all the policy frameworks, and acts as an administrative authority. In China local and municipal governments also share responsibilities for supervision and administration of educational institutions.

India, the largest democracy in the world is a country with diverse culture. India has a growing economy though our country could not get rid from poverty, unemployment, corruption and many other problems. Education in India has taken its current shape by several reforms as recommended by different significant education commissions deputed by the Government of India. The constitution of India set the guiding principle for education. Education is under the concurrent list in the constitution by making education a shared responsibility of centre and state.

In India Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) was established on September 26, 1985 to look after the overall education system. It has two departments- the department of school education and literacy to control

elementary education, secondary education and adult education; the department of higher education is meant for tertiary level like university education and technical education.

This paper is an attempt to focus on the key characteristics of education systems in the perspectives of pre-school, elementary, secondary and higher education stages prevalent presently in India and China and to make a comparative analysis.

## II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The education system of China is crafted and managed by the Ministry of Education. In 1985, a significant reform of the educational structure took place as the responsibility of administration of basic education was given to local governments. The Law on nine-year compulsory education was enacted on July 1 1986, containing guidelines that aim to achieve universal education at elementary level. Responsibilities are distributed among state level, provincial level and local level authorities. State level authorities distribute fund, supervise education where provincial level authorities plan and administer different levels of school education. Like school education an administrative reform of higher education has taken place in 1986, which aimed at restructuring administration, distribution of responsibilities, management. The higher education system in China is gradually expanding as another reform has taken place in 1998 for increasing enrolment in universities.

Indian education system has a rich history as the country is the home ground for affluent cultures. The prevailing system was largely modelled on the British system of education. After independence major commissions were deputed by the government at various times to look after different sectors of education. In India education is the joint responsibility of central and state governments as education has been included in the concurrent list by an amendment of constitution in 1976. The states bare major part of the expenditure for elementary and secondary education though there are centrally funded schemes like mid-day-meal. The structure of education currently prevailing is commonly known as 10+2+3 structure which was recommended by Kothari commission. In 1948, a commission was deputed to estimate the condition of higher education in India. As a result, University Grants Commission (UGC) was came into being as an apex body in the domain of higher education to look after quality and standard, to set up rules and regulation, provide fund to colleges and universities, accelerate research and innovation. In this tertiary level of education, a major emphasis is placed on science and technological field.

### III. OBJECTIVES

The major objectives of the paper are:

- To investigate the structure of general education system of China and India and to make a comparative study
- To analyse the key features of different stages of education i.e. pre-school education, secondary education and higher education of China and India and to make a comparative evaluation.

### IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the prevailing pattern of general education in China and India?
- Whether the key features of various stages of education, namely pre-school education, secondary education and higher education of China and India bear the same characteristics?

### V. METHODOLOGY

Comparative research is directed towards the discovery of analogies and differences of the chosen phenomena across multiple social entities. Here China and India represent large social units whose key features of the general system of education are brought under comparison. The present study is comparative, interpretative, and analytical in nature. Major findings of the study will be made on the basis of document-based logical analysis. This study is essentially qualitative in nature.

## VI. SYSTEM OF GENERAL EDUCATION IN CHINA AND INDIA

### 6.1. China

#### 6.1.1. Pre-school education

In China pre-school education covers usually three to four years as children enters at the age of two or three. Pre-school education continues up to age of six, when a child enters elementary school. This stage of education is not compulsory. Local governments are mostly responsible for implementing pre-school education. A Three Year Pre-school Education Action Plan is drafted by the government to universalise pre-school education by 2020. There are bot state run and private schools. Local Government are responsible for quality of education, infrastructural facilities and management of these schools.

#### 6.1.2. Elementary Education

Compulsory Education law of the People's Republic of China (April 1986) states that elementary education in children must pursue nine- year compulsory education. Children are admitted to primary school at the age of 6 and 7 in some areas. This compulsory education program begins with primary school. Here the children studied grades 1 to 6. Six years of primary education is followed by Junior or lower secondary school, which covers grades 7 to 9. Primary school and junior secondary school are intended for children aged six to eleven and twelve to fourteen subsequently. They graduate from Middle school at the age of 15.

#### 6.1.3. Secondary Education

After the completion of compulsory education, students have to undertake entrance examination to take admission in senior secondary school. Senior secondary education is composed of different types of schools namely senior high school, polytechnic school, technical school, vocational senior high school. Senior high schools are meant for students wov is to pursue general education. This course of study prepares for the entrance examination at the national level for university education. There are also technical schools meant for specialized education and vocational schools for professional education.

#### 6.1.4. Higher Education

Like the secondary education higher education is also provided by different types of institutions like graduate school, university and college, junior college for professional training, sort term vocational college, higher technical school. There are general, vocational and technical universities that give affiliation to specialized colleges. But all technical and vocational colleges cannot award bachelor degrees, and graduates of those institutions are awarded diplomas. There are sort cycle courses having duration of two and three years. Bachelor's degree has the

duration of four years for both academic and technical colleges. Universities offer master's degree program and doctoral degrees are offered by both universities and institutions. Colleges and universities are accredited by the state council.

Though higher education in China is expanding; access to higher education in China is highly competitive. Provincial government plays a vital role in monitoring higher education in China beside the central government.

## 6.2. India

### 6.2.1 Pre-primary Education

As its name suggests, pre-primary education is the stage that makes children prepare to take primary education. But it is much more than a simple preparation of future learning. Early childhood care and education seek for the overall development of a child to ensure physical growth and nutrition, social development and cognitive development. Though schooling at this stage is not compulsory but tendency to admit children to schools at this stage is increasing. Various types of pre-primary schools are there in India meant for children of 2-5 years. There are play schools, Montessori schools under private ownership. Government of India also provides pre-school education through Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) mainly in rural areas to take care not only for education but also to provide health care and fight malnutrition.

### 6.2.2. Elementary Education

Elementary education in India is intended for children of age group 6-14 covering class I to class VIII. In India education is free and compulsory for all children of age group 6-14. Right to education act 2009 is an important milestone in implementing free and compulsory elementary education, making education a fundamental right for children. Government of India has implemented no detention policy till the end of elementary education.

Elementary education includes primary and upper primary education. In India elementary education is composed of two phases. The first phase is primary school that lasts four years. Children take admission in Class I in six years. Primary school ends in class IV. Then the learner moves to upper primary or junior high school to take admission in class five. In India class V is included in upper primary section though it is considered as primary education. Upper primary is intended for students from eleven to fourteen years of age. It covers class V to VIII. Elementary education aims to prepare student with a sound base for further education.

### 6.2.3. Secondary and Higher Secondary Education

Secondary education covers class IX and X, intended for learners from 14 to 16 years. At the end of this stage learners sit for first Board examination. At this stage

curriculum is more subjects oriented and the students have to study two languages, mathematics, science and social science. This stage is followed by class XI and XII covering learners from 16-18 years of age. Education from this stage is differentiated, as the learners select a specific subjects as well as vocations of his choice. This stage is followed by another board examination.

### 6.2.4. Higher Education

India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world. University Grants Commission (UGC) is responsible for ensuring the quality of higher education in India. The functions of UGC are to disburse grants to colleges and universities, development of curriculum, promotion of excellence and research. NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) is responsible in determination and maintenance of standards of teaching learning under UGC. According to UGC Annual Report 2014-15 there are 46 Central Universities and 128 Deemed to be Universities present in India. Most colleges in India are affiliated to universities and provide undergraduate education. Some colleges also undertake post-graduate teaching and research. The affiliating universities are expected to oversee the standards of the affiliated colleges, hold examinations and award degrees to successful candidates.

There are many professional councils in India like All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), Nation Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Indian Nursing Council (INC), Pharmacy Council of India (PCI). All these councils are responsible for recognition of professional courses and establishment of professional institutions in India. They also provide grants to the institutions affiliated to them.

Technical education is a vital part in India which includes various courses and programmes in the fields of engineering, technology, management, architecture, Hotel management, tourism and others. Technical education in India is provided by three types of institutions- Institutions funded by central government like IITs and IIMs, Institutions funded by state government and private or self-financed institutions.

## VII. MAJOR FINDINGS

This comparative analysis throws light on the fundamental differences between Chinese and Indian education system.

In case of **pre-primary education**, the age and duration of schooling are almost similar. But China is one step ahead in implementing a law to make this stage of education compulsory. On the other hand, India has implemented Integrated Child Development Scheme to look after health and nutrition beside education.

**Elementary education** follows similar pattern in both the countries that reflects international mandate of Education for All programme. But in India there is no detention policy

due to the implementation of RTE2009. At the end of this stage a public board examination is conducted in China.

The **secondary education** is most differentiated between these two countries. In China the duration of secondary education is 3 years whereas in India duration of secondary education is 4 years. In India it is made of two years cycle w two major board examinations. There are different Boards both as national level and state level. In China there is one major examination.

In China the entry to **higher education** is highly competitive as the students have to clear the common entrance examination. In India there is no such public entrance examination, though some colleges and universities take entrance. In China government exercises direct control on the education system but in India under the MHRD different autonomous bodies and national organisations took the charge of administering, controlling and supervising different stages of education.

### VIII. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

	China	India
Pre-primary education	2/3 – 5 years Not compulsory	3-5 years Not compulsory
Elementary education	6-14 years Free and compulsory	6-14 years Free and compulsory No detention policy
Secondary education	14 – 17 years entrance examination taken General senior secondary, technical school, vocational and craft school Tree years cycle	14 – 18 years No entrance examination General secondary, higher secondary and vocational schools Two-years cycle, two board examinations
Higher education	17 years onwards Admission based on National College Entrance Examination Colleges and Universities are directly affiliated by Ministry of education	18 years onwards No entrance examination on general basis Colleges and Universities are affiliated by UGC and other professional councils

### IX. CONCLUSION

The education system of the Republic of China is immense in nature, being larger than India. But such a vast system is minutely coordinated at different levels and controlled by the state efficiently. Public run institutions are the heart of the system. Now-a-days China is gradually moving towards decentralization by conferring more power and responsibility to local authorities mainly in respect of

elementary and secondary education, but never at the cost of its unique nature. On the contrary, in India the system of education is diverse. Public and private institutions run almost parallel in there levels of education, primary secondary and tertiary. It is worthy to mention that pre-primary education in China stands on a firm footing than India. In India steps can be taken to make this stage compulsory like elementary education. In China the entry of students from lower level to subsequent levels is marked by entrance examination controlled by the state itself. But in India, mainly in the elementary level the implementation of no detention policy as undermined the role of examination system. In the tertiary level, China gives utmost priority to ‘quality’ whereas in India quality and quantity are both given importance. At the end it is clearly evident that the education policy of India may be modified in light of Chinese system in these specific areas to achieve more perfection and success.

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