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***Abstract***

*Since we Indians place great importance on education and learning, the day a child is born the dilemma of choosing an education board becomes a prime concern for the parents. With multiple choices available nowadays, this becomes very confusing. The IB board and the ICSE board are very different, and severely differ in terms of methods of study, facilities, faculty, fees, etc. Thus parents need to do an in depth analysis taking into consideration the pros and cons of both systems, weighing them equally and then making the right choice for their ward.*

***Key words:*** education, children, choice, decisions.

**Introduction**

India is on the high growth trajectory in recent times and children today have so many more choices in education than they did a few years ago. Thus, for parents picking a particular curriculum nowadays, several factors have to be taken into consideration. India has several boards ranging from the International Baccalaureate (IB), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), SSC (Secondary School Certificate or the Maharashtra board), Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), etc. There has been a significant growth in the number of IB schools over the last decade. This study focuses on the struggle and debate of picking a board between the IB and the ICSE board.

**Research Methodology**

This study relies only on first-hand primary data and a structured questionnaire was constructed having a sum total of 15 questions. The questionnaire was survey then circulated to 100 parents of school going children,

be it pre-primary, primary or even secondary school. To record their thoughts on their preferences, what they think of the different curriculums, what factors they took into consideration before picking an education system for their child etc. The majority of the respondents have one child (37%) or two children (48%), and only a small percentage have more than two children. It is noted that this survey was mostly filled by parents whose children are in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade (49.5%), and parents whose children go to the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade (41.6%).

In addition, secondary matter has also been used in the form of newspaper articles, journal articles and interviews with a few school Principals.

**Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are stated below:

1. To examine the various factors that are considered, compared and evaluated by the parents of to determine which board their child will be studying in.



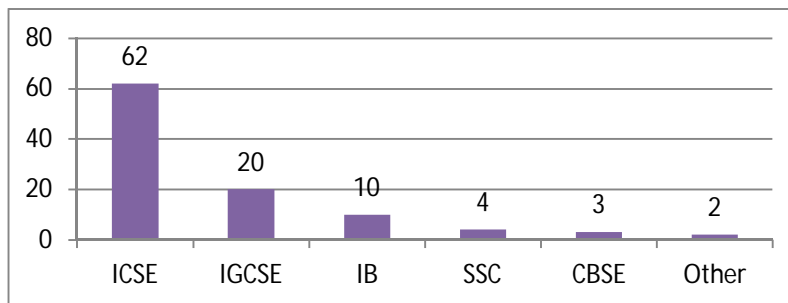
2. To throw light on what are the drawbacks and the advantages of the two boards whilst comparing them, and in what way one board is preferred over the other.
3. To find out whose opinions parents take into consideration before considering a board, and who all play a significant role in influencing parents' decisions.
4. To understand if parents are happy or unhappy with their choice of board, and the reasons
5. To inspect why parents switch boards their child is studying in, and how this change might affect a child's growth, development and academic performance.
6. To thoroughly compare the differences between the two boards, and through this comparative analysis, make the task of choosing a board for a parent simpler and easier.
7. To inspect the fees structure and affordability factor

#### Limitations of the study

○ The size of the sample is very small and limited to 100 parents. This may not be an accurate representation of society and it cannot be assumed that these reflect society's beliefs. The respondents views of were taken from only a certain strata of society mainly the upper middle class and the upper class of society The lower class and low middle class have not been surveyed. The survey focuses solely on the urban areas, and neglects the opinion of the rural population. Furthermore, the study concentrates only on people living in Mumbai and cannot be generalized for the whole of India. Lastly, it has been assumed that all parents have given their honest and sincere thoughts, which may not necessarily be true.

#### Data Interpretation:

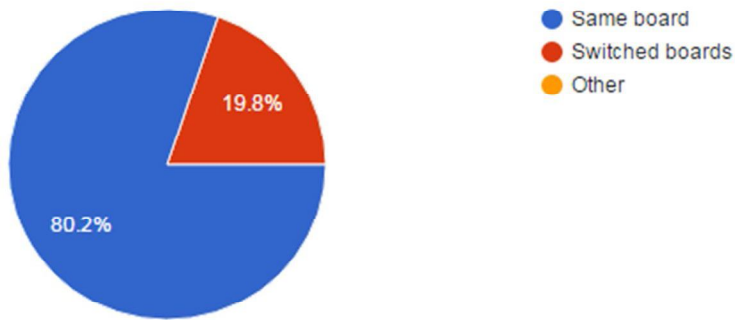
Table 1- Choice of Board



Thus, it is observed that majority of the children study in the ICSE board (61.4%), and the others study in the IGCSE and IB board (30%). A very small percentage of children study in SSC, CBSE and other boards.

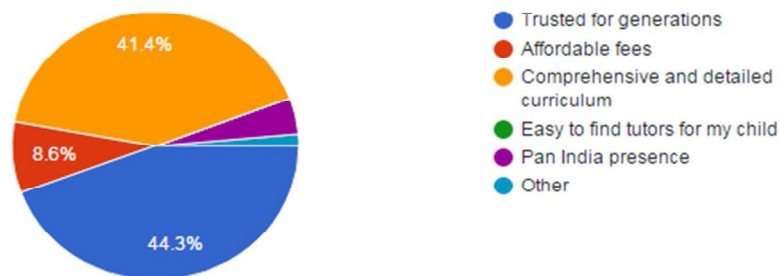


Table 2- Whether the child has always been in the same board or there was a switch



It is observed that a vast majority of kids have been in the same board (80%), while only a small part has changed their boards (20%).

Table 3- Single most important factor in favour of the ICSE Board.



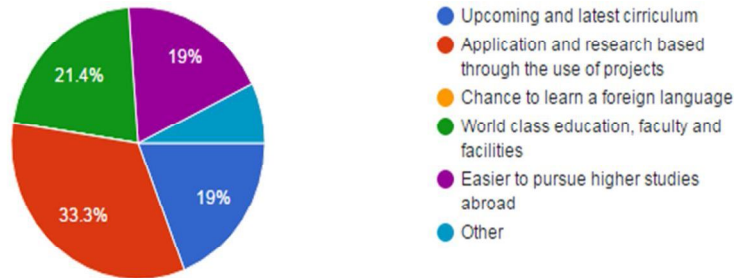
Of the 100 parents that filled the survey in, 71 have at least one child who studies in the ICSE board, and the "comprehensive and detailed curriculum" (41%), and the fact that is "trusted for generations" (44%) is the reason why most parents opted to put their ward to study under this board.

Students who wish to pursue careers in management and humanities find the curriculum very fruitful as well as challenging and interesting. It is accepted and recognized all over the country, in several states across India.

The affordability factor (9%) does not seem to sway the decision in its favour.



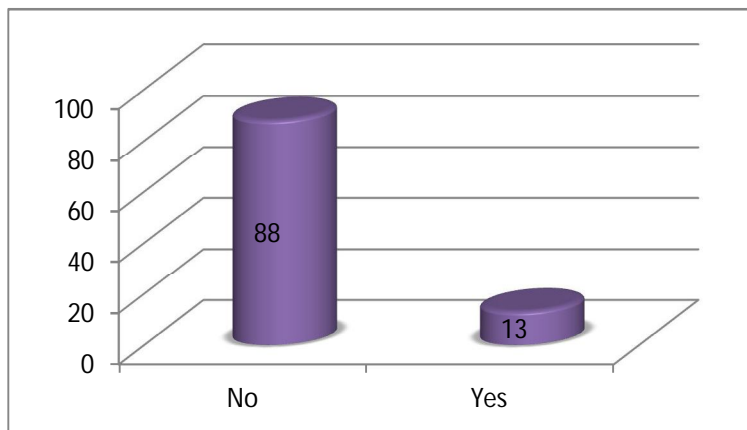
Table 4- Singlemost factor influencing choice of the IB board



Out of the 100 parents, 42 have at least one child studying in the IB board. These parents have picked the IB board for a variety of reasons, such as upcoming and latest curriculum (19%), ease of pursuing high studies abroad, (19%) world class facilities (21%), but the most dominant factor is because of the application and research based projects (33%). It is popular all over the world and is a globally accepted board.

The curriculum focuses more on application of knowledge than rote learning and enhances analytical and research skills. There is a very wide range of subjects, and a student has the freedom to study subjects from different streams at the same time. The choice of foreign languages is very vast, and there is great focus given to learning a foreign language from a young age.

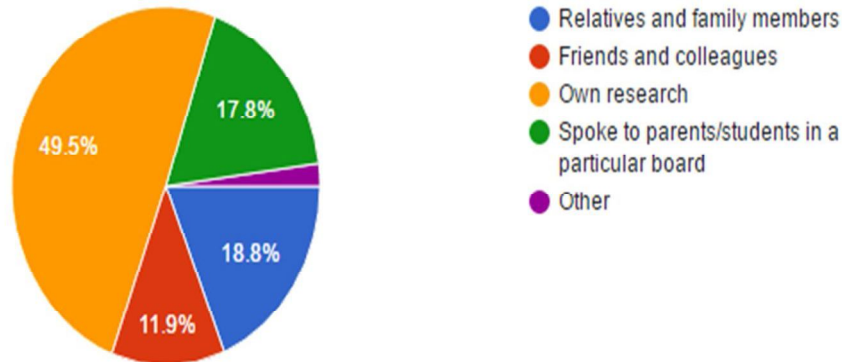
Table 5- Whether the respondents have one child studying in the ICSE board and another under the IB board





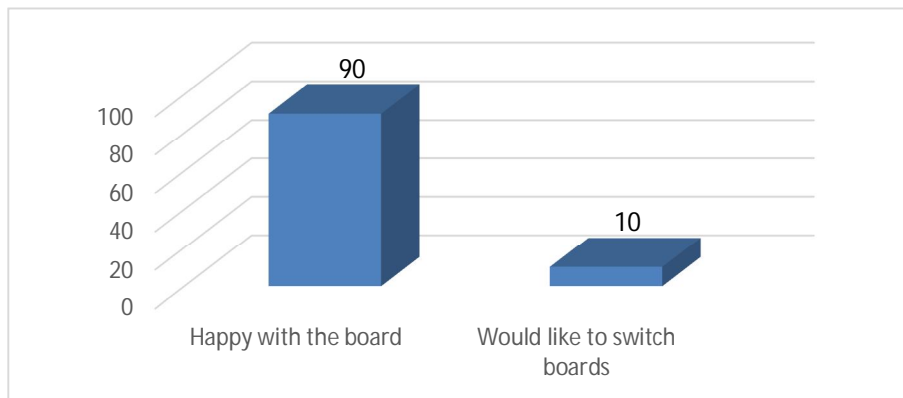
It is noted that majority of parents have their child studying in the same board (87%), and only a small fraction (13%) have children in two different boards.

Table 6-Consultation before choosing a board



Majority of the parents did their own intensive research (50%) while a few spoke to students/parents (18%), family members (19%), while a very small section considered the opinions of their friends and colleagues (12%).

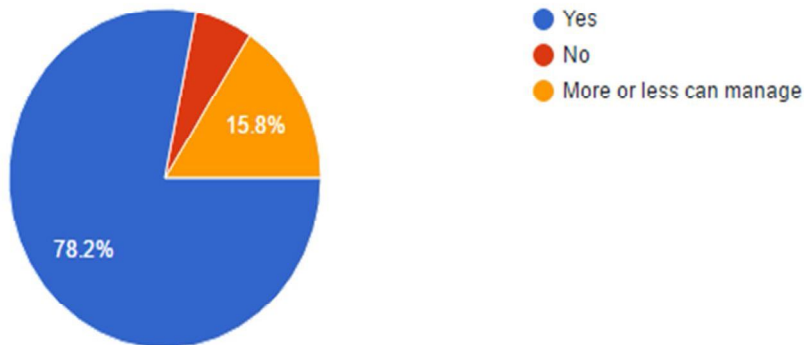
Table 7 - Whether the parents are happy with the choice of board



The vast majority of parents seem to be happy with their choice of board (90%), and very few (10%) are unhappy and would like to change the board their child is studying in.

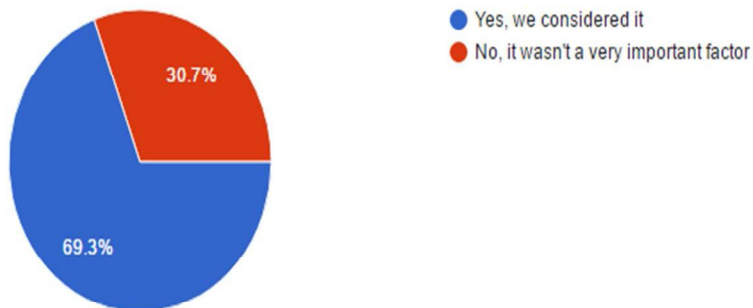


Table 8- Whether the child can cope with the Board the parents have selected



Almost 80% of students can manage and cope with the board. However, 15% can more or less manage, while a very minute segment (6%) cannot cope up. It is popular all over the world and is a globally accepted board. Some of the parents having children under the IB board complained that they found it very difficult to find tutors if their child needed extra coaching.

Table 9- Whether the fee structure is a crucial factor in choosing a board

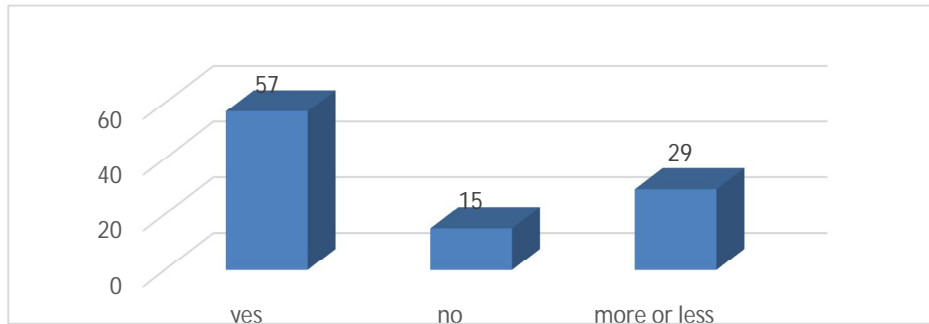


It has come to light that almost 70% of parents considered the fees of a particular board as an important factor whereas only 30% did not think it was a very important factor in deciding a board.

The fees of the IB board are very high, and are over Rs. 1-2 lakhs a year and thus only the crème de la crème of society can afford it.

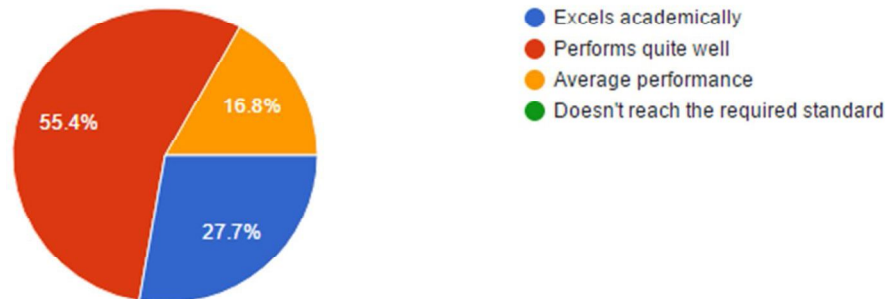


Table 10- Whether it is easy to score under the particular board



56% of parents feel that their board is scoring, 29% feel it is more or less scoring whereas 15% feel that it is difficult to get good scores

Table 11 - Whether the child is academically performing well



It can be inferred that 55% of children perform quite well, 28% excel academically and 17% have an average performance. From the 100 parents surveyed it seems none of them feel their ward is not doing well at all.

### Main Inferences and Observations

After a detailed analysis of the data obtained, the following observations can be made:

1. Majority of the parents have children studying in the ICSE Board.

Although the amount in the IB and IGCSE Boards is increasing, a greater percentage of children still study under the ICSE board, which is an accurate representation of the Indian population.

2. Parents who chose to send their children to the ICSE Board mainly chose it because it is a board that has been



there since years, and has been trusted by generations. Moreover, the comprehensive and detailed curriculum was the other major factor, showing that the affordability factor does not play an important role in making the decision.

3. On the other hand, parents have picked the IB Board for a variety of reasons. There is no dominant reason, but there's a total mix- such as the latest and upcoming curriculum, the application of concepts instead of rote learning, which is facilitated by research and projects, along with the world class education, facilities and faculty. A lot of parents with children studying between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade chose it because of the ease in pursuing higher studies abroad.

4. It is also noted that majority of parents prefer to stick to the same board over the child's course of education, rather than switching boards. Parents also wish for all their children to study in the same board, rather than having one child in one and another in another board.

5. It has been noticed that parents nowadays prefer to do their own research, as half of parents chose that option showing how people are becoming more independent and technologically advanced. However, they still speak to family members, friends and colleagues showing how they still influence the decision to a certain extent.

6. Fees is a very important factor for majority of parents, which means it was a crucial factor in picking a board, because there is a vast difference between the two boards, and the IB fees are almost 4-5 times the ICSE fees, and a major aspect to take into consideration.

7. When it comes to academic performance, most parents are happy with their choice of their board be it IB or ICSE, and their children excel or perform quite well. The performance depends on the child's ability, and the board just tests the child's ability. However, the ICSE parents feel their board is more scoring than the IB

### Conclusion

Thus, after a thorough analysis and study, we can come to the conclusion that the two boards ICSE and IB are very diverse in their own ways. They both have their strong factors, but at the same time have cons too.

The IB Board is an upcoming, new board that is very different from traditional Indian boards that focus more on the ability to learn, rather than the acquiring of knowledge. They do not stick to traditional blackboard and textbook means, but go beyond them with the use of technology, research projects, investigations, etc. It tests more of the application of knowledge and is thus challenging. However, not everyone can afford it due to the expensive fees, and it doesn't integrate completely into the Indian education system.

However, on the other hand the ICSE system which has been in our country since decades and still dominates due to its pan India presence. It is a trusted, safe system that generations of children have studied, and is easy on the pocket too. But its biggest drawback is that it involves too much rote learning and reproduction of material on paper.

The people who pick the ICSE board are primarily parents having transferrable jobs, who prefer some sort of continuity of the curriculum for their child. It also





highlighted how children who will opt for higher studies in India only, should pursue ICSE as the results for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade boards come after the Junior College admissions are over, hence the integration of the two systems becomes very difficult.

#### **Recommendations of the study**

The ICSE board is designed in our country, and hence it should slowly implement newer methods and techniques of study. The curriculum should be designed in a way that tests the thinking abilities, application and knowledge more than just the ability to reproduce. This way it can be on par with the rest of the world, and adopt the best practices from its foreign counterparts which can allow a child to grow better and thus prosper in life.

In addition, the parents of children are the people who benefit the most as they are the ones who make this decision for their children. Their social and economic status, their ideals and beliefs, their aspirations for their child are the ones that will ultimately affect their child's growth, development and careers too, so they should thoroughly analyze all boards, and not merely consider the opinions of others. A great deal of time, thought and reasoning should go into this process, to ultimately decide what is best for your child and what suits your child's abilities and capabilities.

Lastly, this research study has relevance to schools and their teachers, as they are the ones ultimately implementing a particular system, and the way they carry it out makes a drastic difference. Schools should be well equipped with well-trained faculty, proper infrastructure, regularly test a student's abilities, and should not completely neglect extra and co-

curricular activities. They should go beyond the curriculum too sometimes, and should also grade the students according to his/her performance. They shouldn't over burden the students and stress them out, but at the same time they shouldn't take examinations lightly and not dwell on their importance.

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