

## SIGNPOST

## Syllabus wise

These are confusing times for parents in India, considering the wide range of syllabi on offer. **Dr Sitara Vickram** talks about the facts parents need to know before choosing a syllabus



## 1. What is syllabus and what is curriculum?

The syllabus outlines what needs to be taught. The curriculum defines the how. For example, the syllabus says "Gravity". The curriculum will detail how we can teach gravity to the student.

For example, take an apple to the class and drop it. Then show children a video of Isaac Newton etc.

Therefore, the syllabus is the content, the list of topics/concepts to be taught, whereas the curriculum is a consideration of the methods chosen to achieve those objectives.

The most important element is the curriculum. With the same syllabus, schools often produce dramatically varying results in the learning of their students. This is because of the way they teach it - not because of the syllabus per se.

## 2. What are the different types of syllabi available?

There are three broad types of syllabi available:

1. At the state level, there are the state level syllabi - e.g. the new common Samacheer Kalvi syllabus in Tamil Nadu
2. At the national level, there is the CBSE and the ICSE.
3. At the International level, there is the IB (International Baccalaureate) and the Cambridge Syllabus, frequently called IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education at the IX and X level).

Watch this space every alternate week for information on various aspects of education.

## 3. What syllabus to choose?

For those wishing to go abroad for under graduation, the Cambridge or IB diploma is good. Also, if you wish to transfer abroad during

your child's education, the study pattern will continue to remain the same and hence possibly make for an easier transition for your child.

For those wanting to continue to remain in India for under graduation, the CBSE offers one of the best options. Entrance examinations to the most reputed colleges in India are typically based on the CBSE syllabus (like the IITs, BITS Pilani, etc.). In addition, the syllabus and assessment methods are more progressive and encourage thinking instead of rote learning.

If getting into a state college is the primary area of focus, then the new common Samacheer Kalvi syllabus is an option.

While the above three groups are presented as three distinct options, it is possible to move between them. For example, children going to a CBSE school can move into a Samacheer school for standards XI and XII or to an international stream. Parents need to think about teaching methodologies and the quality of academics delivered at the school rather than being focused only on the syllabus.

## 4. Last word...

Choosing a syllabus and a school that delivers it is a parent's personal choice. Regardless of the syllabus, the ultimate proof of the quality

of a school is in the way education is delivered and how concepts are taught in class. Great schools are great because of the management

capability and the teachers behind these institutions - not because of the syllabi they choose to follow.

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