



Nature of value added courses in secondary school curriculum of West Bengal and CBSE board of PurbaBardhaman district in West Bengal

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Abstract: *A comparative analysis of the CBSE and State Boards can be effectively understood by examining key aspects such as teaching methodologies, curriculum structure, evaluation systems, and preparation for entrance examinations. Gaining insight into these differences assists students in selecting the board that best aligns with their academic aspirations. Each board follows a distinct curriculum framework. The CBSE places greater emphasis on core subjects such as Mathematics and Science, whereas State Boards focus more on regional languages, local context, and state-specific topics. The CBSE syllabus is generally regarded as more systematic and easier to comprehend compared to that of State Boards. Furthermore, it incorporates an extensive range of practice questions and exercises that help students assess their conceptual understanding. The CBSE curriculum is also strategically designed to support students in preparing for competitive and higher-level entrance examinations.*

Keyword: *CBSE, WBBSE, Contrast, Education Board, State Education Board, Comparison.*

Introduction: A student's learning approach may involve either rote memorization or the development of a strong conceptual foundation. The CBSE board emphasizes conceptual clarity by promoting in-depth learning, analytical thinking, and practical application of knowledge. It also integrates interactive and activity-based learning methods that enhance student engagement and support meaningful understanding of concepts.

In contrast, State Boards often place greater emphasis on memorization and extensive syllabus coverage, sometimes at the expense of thorough conceptual understanding. Within the CBSE framework, academic success depends largely on a student's command over subject fundamentals, as examination questions are not always limited to textbook statements. Many questions are application-oriented and based on NCERT concepts, encouraging students to refer to supplementary learning resources to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding.

Method of the study:

This article presents descriptive information derived from relevant academic sources

Objective of the study:

This study aims to analyze the teaching methodologies followed by CBSE and WBBSE.

Importance of the study: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is one of the most prominent educational boards in India. Schools affiliated with CBSE are widely regarded for their organized curriculum, uniform national-level assessment system, rigorous quality standards, global recognition, and emphasis on experiential and application-oriented learning. The CBSE academic structure also equips students with a strong conceptual base that supports preparation for competitive examinations such as JEE, NEET, and AIIMS. The West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) is an autonomous statutory body functioning under the Government of West Bengal. It is responsible for conducting the secondary-level examination, popularly known as the Madhyamik Pariksha. The board is committed to the promotion and development of secondary education within the state by addressing the academic requirements and aspirations of learners. In addition, WBBSE serves as an advisory body to the state government, contributing to the planned and scientific advancement of secondary education in accordance with national educational goals.

The present study seeks to compare the teaching methodologies followed by CBSE and WBBSE, emphasizing the importance of understanding their distinct instructional approaches.

About Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal: Bardhaman was formerly a district in the state of West Bengal and was officially divided on 7 April 2017 into two separate districts, namely Purba Bardhaman and Paschim Bardhaman. Bardhaman town functioned as the district headquarters, and the undivided district included prominent industrial cities such as Asansol and Durgapur. The region is also historically significant for being associated with several eminent personalities. Indian freedom fighter Rash Behari Bose was born in the village of Subaldaha, while noted Bengali poet Kumud Ranjan Mullick was born in Kogram. Additionally, the national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was born in Churulia, all of which were part of the erstwhile Bardhaman district.

At the time of its division, Bardhaman was among the 640 districts of India. As per the Census of 2011, Purba Bardhaman had a total population of 4,835,532. Of this, males constituted 2,469,310 (approximately 51 percent), while females accounted for 2,366,222 (around 49 percent). The population of children below six years of age was 507,855. Urban residents numbered 726,345, representing 15.02 percent of the total population. Scheduled Castes comprised 1,487,151 individuals (30.75 percent), whereas Scheduled Tribes constituted 327,501 individuals (6.77 percent).

There are two widely accepted interpretations regarding the origin of the name “Bardhaman.” One view associates the name with the 24th Jain Tirthankara, as the Jain text *Kalpasutra* mentions that Lord Mahavira spent a part of his life in Astikagraha, the earlier name of Bardhaman. The alternative interpretation suggests that the term “Bardhaman” signifies growth or prosperity. During the Aryan expansion from the Upper Ganga Valley, this frontier region came to be identified as Bardhaman, reflecting economic development and progress.

The distribution of schools in the Purba Bardhaman district is presented in Table 1.

Table – 1: Number in school in the Purba Bardhaman District.

Types of School	Numbers of School
Primary School	3001
Upper Primary School	127
High School	373
Higher Secondary School	245

General College	19
Professional / Technical Institution	60
Institution for Non-Formal Education	7571
University	1

Source: Purba Bardhaman District, At a Glance, Deptt. of Education.

West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE): The West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) was established in 1951 as an autonomous examining authority under the Government of West Bengal for the conduct of the secondary (Class 10) examination. It was constituted under the West Bengal Secondary Education Act, 1950, and was initially known as the Board of Secondary Education. Sri Apurba Kumar Chanda was appointed as the first Chairman of the Board. Subsequently, with the enactment of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education Act, 1963, the Board was renamed the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education in 1964. The present organizational structure came into force in January 1964 under the leadership of Dr. J. C. Sengupta. At present, the Board is headed by Professor Dr. KalyanmoyGanguly as President, with Sri SubrataGhosh serving as Secretary.

The Board commenced its academic operations in 1951 with 1,270 high schools transferred from the University of Calcutta. By the end of 1963, this number had increased to 2,312 institutions. Currently, WBBSE supervises nearly 11,000 junior high and high schools across the state. Alongside the expansion of recognized institutions, there has been a substantial increase in student participation in the secondary examination. While approximately 42,000 candidates appeared in the first examination conducted in 1952, the number rose significantly to about 10,66,000 candidates by 2019. The Board has also played an important role in promoting girls' education, as evident in the 2020 Madhyamik Examination, where female candidates accounted for 56.70 percent of the total examinees, compared to 43.30 percent male candidates.

The Board publishes a periodical titled *ParshadBarta*, which serves as a medium for disseminating official information, ideas, and academic discussions. First published in December 1974, the journal includes government notifications, circulars, and guidelines to help schools stay informed about changes in rules and regulations. Teachers and students from across the state are encouraged to contribute scholarly and informative articles to the publication. In addition to its academic functions, the Board has gradually expanded its responsibilities to include administrative roles. It now functions as the appointing authority for headmasters, secondary-level teaching staff, and non-teaching personnel, including librarians.

Contrast in teaching approaches of CBSE and WBBSE: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) are two well-established educational boards in India, each operating with different administrative structures and areas of responsibility. CBSE functions as a national-level board, conducting examinations for affiliated schools across India as well as for select institutions outside the country. In contrast, WBBSE operates at the state level and is responsible for administering examinations for schools within West Bengal. While CBSE follows a standardized curriculum developed at the national level, WBBSE implements a syllabus designed to address the educational requirements and regional context of the state. In addition, CBSE plays an extended role by facilitating national-level entrance and competitive examinations such as JEE Main, NEET, and AIIMS, whereas WBBSE does not conduct or manage such examinations.

Nature of Value added courses: Value-added courses, also referred to as skill-enhancement or supplementary courses, are educational programs designed to provide learners with additional skills and knowledge beyond the core curriculum of a specific discipline. These courses play an important role in improving employability and practical competence. The key characteristics of value-added courses are outlined below:

i) **Skill Development** – Value-added courses focus on building specific skills relevant to various industries and professions. These may include communication abilities, data analysis, digital marketing, graphic design, project management, and other job-oriented competencies.

ii) **Support to Academic Programs** – These courses are intended to complement formal academic programs by offering practical knowledge and skills that may not be extensively covered in the regular syllabus. They help bridge the gap between theoretical learning and real-world application.

iii) **Flexibility and Customization** – Value-added courses are generally flexible in duration and structure, ranging from short-term workshops and seminars to long-term certificate programs. Students can select courses based on their interests and career objectives, allowing for a personalized learning experience.

iv) **Industry Relevance** – Such courses are designed to meet current industry requirements and are often developed in collaboration with industry professionals. This ensures that the content remains updated and aligned with prevailing industry trends and practices.

v) **Improved Employability** – By equipping learners with practical and industry-oriented skills, value-added courses significantly enhance employability. These additional qualifications provide an advantage during job interviews and help candidates stand out in a competitive employment market.

vi) **Promotion of Lifelong Learning** – Value-added courses are beneficial not only for students but also for working professionals seeking to upgrade their skills or explore new fields. Continuous learning through such courses helps individuals remain adaptable and relevant in an evolving job environment.

vii) **Online Accessibility** – Many value-added courses are now available through online platforms, making them accessible to a broader audience. Online learning offers convenience, flexibility, and self-paced study, allowing learners to access materials, participate in discussions, and complete assignments remotely.

viii) **Certification and Credentials** – Upon successful completion, many value-added courses offer certificates or credentials. These certifications enhance a learner's resume and serve as evidence of acquired skills and competencies.

ix) **Continuous Enhancement** – Institutions offering value-added courses regularly seek feedback from students and industry partners to improve course content and delivery methods. This ongoing refinement ensures that the courses remain effective, relevant, and responsive to the changing needs of learners and industries.

Conclusion: Knowledge serves as a fundamental force in helping individuals achieve excellence and develop the ability to contribute positively to societal progress. Education extends beyond the acquisition of intellectual skills, as it also fosters moral and ethical values that shape an individual's personality and character. Consequently, it is important to examine the methods through which education is delivered and received. The present study emphasizes that significant differences exist between the teaching methodologies followed by the CBSE and WBBSE boards.

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