



Confederation of Indian Industry

Comparative Study of **SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEMS:**

India, Australia, China, Indonesia,
Sweden, Thailand, UK and USA



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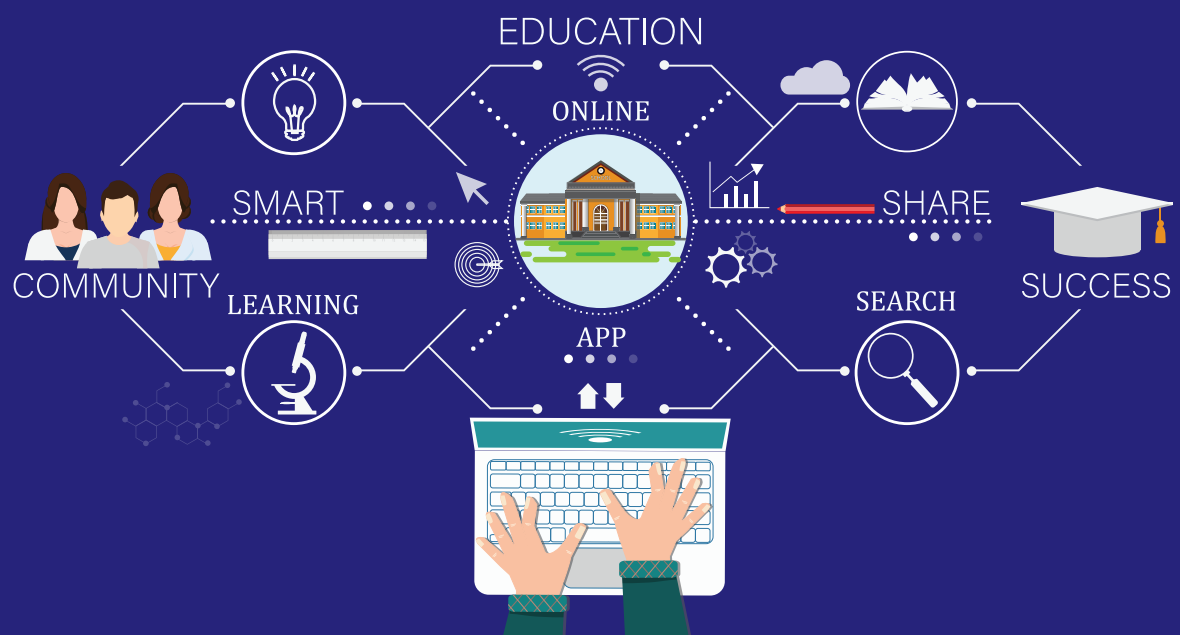
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List of Abbreviations

NEP 2020	National Education Policy 2020
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act 2015
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act 2001
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy
PM eVIDYA	Pradhan Mantri eVIDYA (Digital Education Initiative)
SWAYAM	Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds
DIKSHA	Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing
NSQF	National Skills Qualification Framework
SMC	School Management Committee
RTE	Right to Education Act
TGAT	Thai General Aptitude Test
TPAT	Thai Professional Aptitude Test
O-NET	Ordinary National Educational Test (Thailand)
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CISCE	Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations
UDISE+	Unified District Information System for Education Plus
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
PM POSHAN	Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (formerly Mid-Day Meal Scheme)

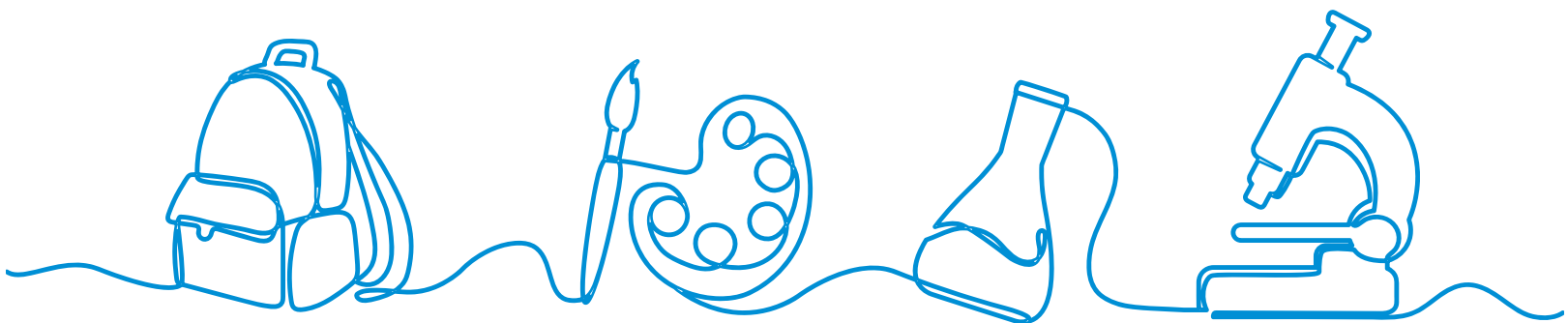
Executive Summary



This report provides a comparative analysis of school education systems across eight countries: India, USA, UK, China, Sweden, Australia, Indonesia and Thailand. It examines their structures, methodologies, funding, assessments, and equity measures. While developed nations emphasize inclusivity and skill-based learning, developing countries face challenges in infrastructure, dropout rates, and equitable access. India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emerges as a transformative framework aligning global practices with local needs but requires robust implementation.

Globally, education systems reflect common elements like structured progression from foundational to secondary stages and growing recognition of early childhood education. However, the approaches vary significantly—Sweden prioritizes well-being, while the USA's decentralized model allows state-level customization. Vocational education is a critical focus, with countries like Sweden integrating apprenticeships. Assessment methods are shifting towards continuous evaluation, with developed nations reducing exam-centric systems. India's NEP aligns with these trends, emphasizing experiential learning, skill-based education, and holistic assessments.

Challenges include disparities in access and funding, particularly in India, Indonesia, and Thailand. Developed nations face different issues such as immigration-driven diversity and socio-economic achievement gaps of GDP remains lower than global standards. Key recommendations include increasing investments, expanding rural access, bridging digital divides, and fostering industry-education partnerships. India's NEP 2020 presents a unique opportunity to drive systemic transformation, but success depends on effective execution, teacher training, and stakeholder collaboration.



Background



Education is the cornerstone of nation-building, playing a vital role in shaping a skilled workforce, fostering innovation, and driving economic growth. A robust education system equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to contribute meaningfully to society. Beyond personal empowerment, education has far-reaching impacts on employment generation, poverty reduction, and overall national development. As the world evolves into a knowledge-based economy, the quality and accessibility of education are more critical than ever.

In this context, understanding and analysing global education systems is essential to identify effective strategies and best practices. Vocational education has emerged as a key component of modern learning systems. It bridges the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills, addressing workforce needs and enhancing employability. As nations compete in a rapidly evolving global economy, vocational training ensures that education remains relevant, equipping students with competencies aligned to industry demands.

This report examines education systems across a diverse range of countries to uncover strengths, challenges, and opportunities. By analysing these systems, especially their approaches to vocational education, policymakers and educators can identify actionable strategies to improve educational outcomes. Such insights are crucial for fostering a workforce ready to meet the demands of the 21st-century economy.



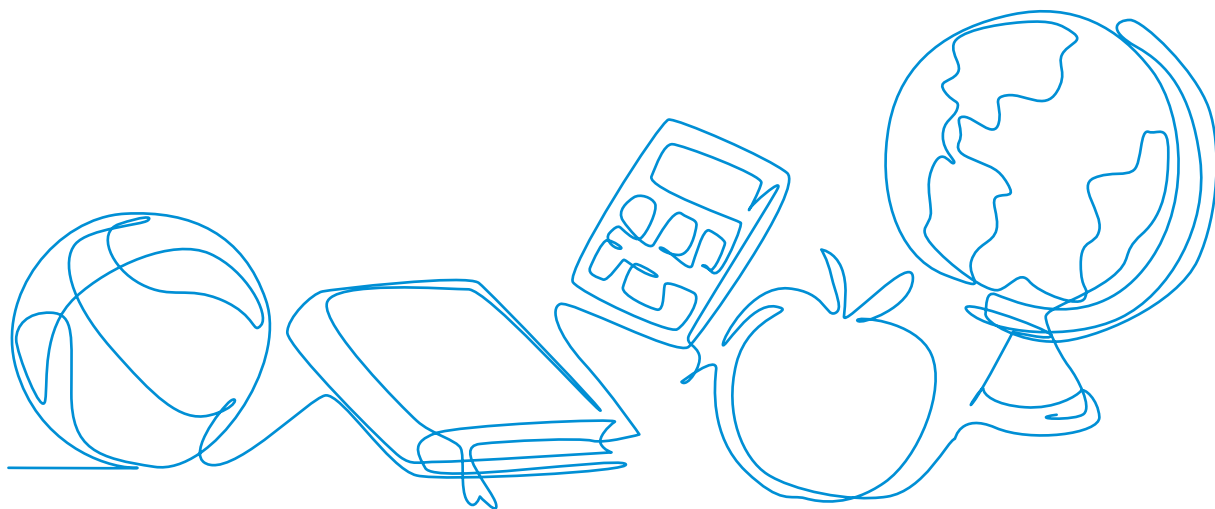
Research Methodology



This study uses a Strategic Sampling Approach to examine the education systems of eight countries (which includes both developed and emerging economies)—India, USA, UK, China, Sweden, Australia, Indonesia and Thailand. These nations were chosen to represent a range of educational performance, from medium to high achievers, offering diverse perspectives across economic, cultural, and developmental contexts. The selection ensures a balanced representation of systems with unique strengths and challenges.

The research relies entirely on secondary data from reliable sources such as government reports, international studies (e.g., by OECD, UNESCO), and academic publications. It combines quantitative data (enrolment rates, dropout statistics, and budgets) with qualitative insights (policies, teaching methods, and equity measures) for a well-rounded analysis. Data collection was followed by careful comparison across key areas like educational structure, funding, curriculum, equity, and vocational training. This dual focus on numbers and narratives helps reveal trends and best practices.

The findings are presented through thematic analysis, emphasizing clear insights for educators and policymakers. This methodology ensures that the study is grounded in credible evidence, offering meaningful comparisons and actionable recommendations to improve education system in India.



Structure and Stages of Education



Status

Country	Details
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary (Grades 1-5), Upper Primary (6-8), Secondary (9-10), Higher Secondary (11-12). NEP 2020 proposes 4 stages: 5(foundational) +3(preparatory) +3(middle) +4(Secondary) classification, starts at age 3
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nine years compulsory: Primary (Grades 1-6) and Lower Secondary (7-9). Starts at age 6/7
UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Stages based on age. Compulsory from 5 to 16 years. Key Stages: Early Years (3-4), KS1 (5-7), KS2 (7-11), KS3 (11-14), KS4 (14-16) with GCSE exams.
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralized system, mandatory till 16+ (varies by state). Elementary (Grades K-5), Middle (6-8), High School (9-12).
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory 10 years schooling (ages 6-15). Preschool (ages 1-5), Grundskola (ages 6-15), Upper Secondary (ages 16-19). Focus on well-being, inclusivity.
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary (ages 5-18). Compulsory till 17 years.
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Childhood Education (optional, ages 3-6); primary/Elementary School (Grades 1-6), Ages 6-12; Junior Secondary School (Grades 7-9), Ages 13-15; Senior Secondary School (Grades 10-12), Ages 16-18. 12 years of compulsory education, includes basic education (Grades 1-9)
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A structured school education system comprising: Early Childhood Education (optional); Primary Education (Grades 1-6), Ages 6-12; Lower Secondary Education (Grades 7-9), Ages 13-15; Upper Secondary Education (Grades 10-12), Ages 16-18. Education is free for 15 years and mandatory up to Grade 9.

Analysis

Most countries follow a structured progression from early childhood through secondary education, typically spanning 12-15 years of schooling.

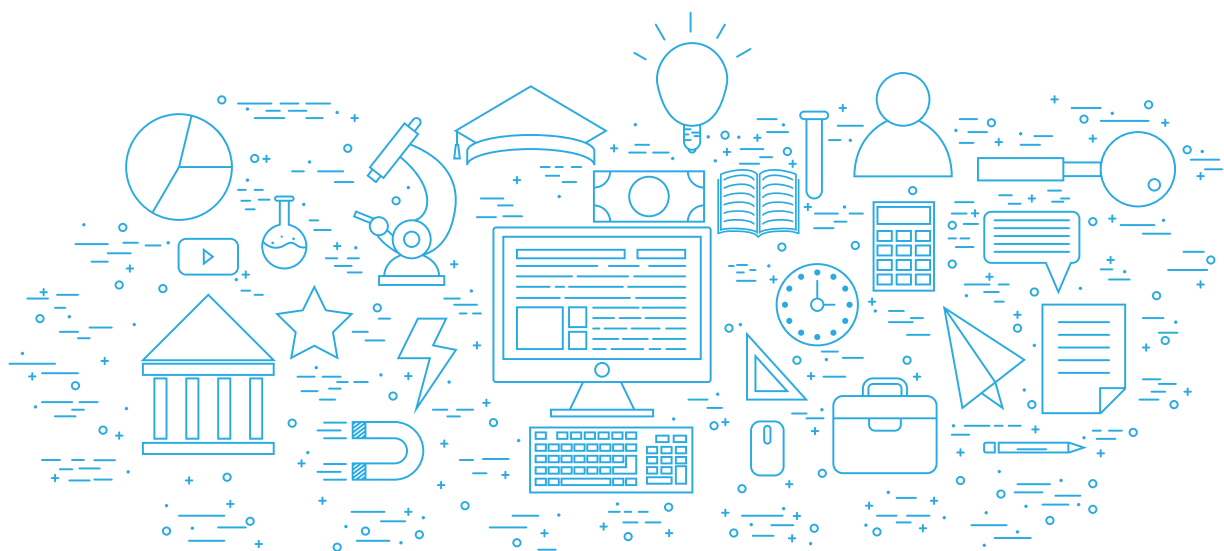
Compulsory education ages range from 5 to 16 years, with most countries mandating schooling for 9-10 years. Interestingly, the entry age varies slightly, with most systems starting formal education between ages 5-7. Countries such as the UK use key stages based on age groups, providing a more standardized national framework. The United States stands out with its decentralized system, where educational mandates can vary by state. The overall structure generally breaks down into foundational, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary stages.

Some notable variations emerge in national approaches. India's recent National Education Policy 2020 introduces an innovative 5+3+3+4 classification, reflecting a more nuanced approach to educational stages.

Conclusion

Across these diverse systems, a common thread is the increasing recognition of early childhood education as a crucial developmental stage, with many countries offering optional but recommended pre-school programs.

India's New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a strategic reimagining of the educational landscape, closely aligning with global trends while addressing unique national developmental needs. The proposed 5+3+3+4 structure demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of learning progression, emphasizing foundational skills, holistic development, and flexible learning pathways.



Curriculum and Standardization



Status

Country	Details
India	National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023, Specific Curriculum set by National & State Level Boards
China	The Chinese National Curriculum
UK	The National Curriculum: schools have significant autonomy in teaching
USA	Decentralized curriculum, varies by state, most adhere to Common Core Standards
Sweden	National curriculum came into force in 2011; teachers have considerable autonomy in curriculum delivery, focusing on student well-being and inclusivity
Australia	The Australian Curriculum; Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA): responsible for the development of a national curriculum.
Indonesia	The National Curriculum is regulated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (MoECRT). The most recent curriculum, known as the Independent Curriculum (Merdeka Curriculum), was officially declared as the National Curriculum through Ministerial Regulation No. 12 of 2024
Thailand	A nationally standardized curriculum that focuses on Thai language, science, mathematics, governed by the Ministry of Education

Analysis

Global curriculum frameworks demonstrate a nuanced balance between national standardization and local educational autonomy. While most countries maintain a centralized national curriculum, the approach to implementation varies significantly. Nations such as the UK and Sweden emphasize teacher autonomy, allowing flexibility in curriculum delivery. In contrast, countries such as China and Thailand maintain more structured, centralized approaches. The United States represents a decentralized model with Common Core Standards, enabling state-level customization.

Conclusion

India's National Curriculum Framework 2023 presents an opportunity to learn from global educational approaches. The data suggests that while maintaining national standards is crucial, providing teachers with autonomy can enhance educational outcomes. India should focus on creating a flexible curriculum that balances national educational goals with regional needs and teacher creativity. The Swedish model of prioritizing student well-being and the Australian approach of centralized curriculum development offer valuable insights. Implementing a balanced framework that allows for local adaptation while maintaining core educational standards could significantly improve the quality and relevance of education across diverse Indian contexts.



Learning Methodology



Status

Country	Details
India	Focus on theoretical knowledge and rote learning; teacher-centered approach. Reforms under NEP 2020 are shifting towards experiential learning and skill development.
China	Structured & examination-oriented system; emphasis on discipline, rote-learning, and intensive practice; lecture-based format with large student groups. Recent reforms: “suzhi jiaoyu” (quality education) approach, incorporates creative thinking and skills
UK	Student-centred approach; emphasis on critical thinking and practical application; continuous assessment through coursework and examinations
USA	Active learning, group discussions, and project-based instruction; emphasis on creativity, critical thinking, and individual expression
Sweden	Swedish education emphasizes the “förskoleklass” system, focusing on play-based learning in early years. Problem-based learning and group work are central, with minimal homework until later years.
Australia	Emphasizes inquiry-based learning, encouraging students to explore topics deeply and independently. Project-based learning is popular
Indonesia	Traditionally reliant on rote learning, but increasingly shifting toward project-based and interactive learning approaches
Thailand	Teaching relies on traditional methods, with a gradual shift toward interactive and student-centered approaches.

Analysis

Educational approaches range from traditional rote learning in India and China to more progressive, student-centred methods in the UK, USA, and Australia. There’s a global trend towards experiential learning, critical thinking, and skill development, moving away from lecture-based, examination-oriented systems.

Conclusion

The analysis reveals a critical transition point for Indian education. While historically focused on theoretical knowledge and rote learning, the National Education Policy 2020 signals a transformative shift. India can draw inspiration from global models: Sweden's play-based early learning, Australia's inquiry-based approaches, and the USA's emphasis on creativity. The key is to balance structured learning with interactive, skill-development methodologies. Implementing project-based learning, encouraging critical thinking, and reducing excessive examination pressure could help India develop a more holistic educational ecosystem that prepares students not just academically, but for real-world challenges and innovative thinking.



Assessment and Evaluation Methods



Status

Country	Details
India	Focus on Continuous & Comprehensive Evaluation; Periodic tests, activities, and exams in primary schools (variations exist, depending upon school, board, & state); periodic exams and project works in classes 6-9; board exams in classes 10th & 12th. NEP Proposes to do away with exams in primary classes
China	Exam centred; Gaokao exam taken by students in their final year of senior high school (Grade 12), the Zhongkao, which is taken at the end of junior high school.
UK	Standardized exams with formative evaluations. Students take key exams at ages 16 (GCSEs) and 18 (A-Levels), focusing on academic and vocational paths
USA	Statewide exams like New York Regents Examinations, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and the Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) or the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)
Sweden	Emphasizes formative assessments. National Tests conducted in Grades 3, 6, and 9; Upper Secondary Certificate, at Grade 11 & 12, students are assessed through coursework, projects, and final school-level exams, students are assessed through coursework, projects, and final school-level exams.
Australia	Emphasis on continuous and formative evaluations. NAPLAN*, Taken in Grades 3, 5, 7, and 9; Senior Secondary Certificate Exams, taken in the final years of high school (Grades 11 and 12)
Indonesia	Ujian Nasional (UN) for secondary education, abolished in 2021, replaced by Asesmen Nasional, focusing on literacy, numeracy, and character development.
Thailand	National standardized tests like TGAT, TPAT, and A-Levels. O-NET for primary and secondary levels. Active learning and formative assessments are emphasized.

Analysis

Global assessment methodologies demonstrate a significant shift from traditional, high-stakes examination systems to more comprehensive, holistic evaluation approaches. While China maintains a strongly exam-centred model, many nations are progressively adopting continuous and formative assessment strategies.

Developed educational systems in Sweden, Australia, and the UK emphasize ongoing evaluation, combining standardized national tests with project-based assessments. These approaches aim to measure not just academic knowledge, but also critical thinking, practical skills, and overall student development. Emerging economies are similarly transitioning, with Indonesia moving away from purely summative examinations to more nuanced assessment frameworks.

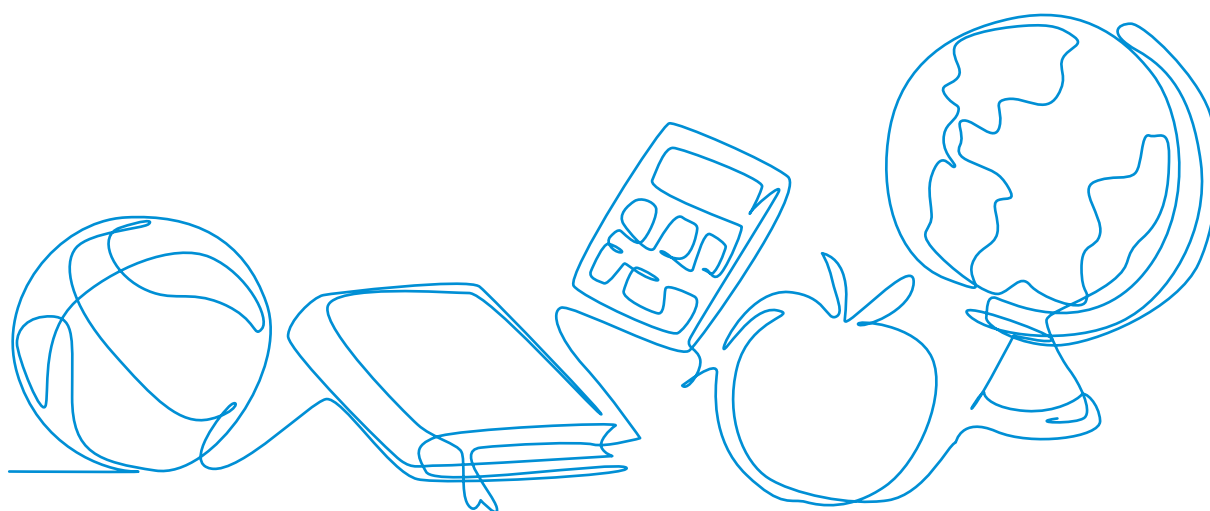
The trend reveals a global movement towards assessment models that capture comprehensive student potential, moving beyond rote memory testing to evaluating critical thinking, creativity, and practical application of knowledge.

Conclusion

The assessment data reveals a global shift towards more nuanced evaluation methods. India's existing system of Continuous & Comprehensive Evaluation, coupled with board exams, reflects an evolving approach. The NEP's proposal to eliminate primary-level exams aligns with international trends toward formative assessments. The comparative data highlights a growing recognition that assessment should be a developmental tool rather than just a measurement mechanism. The emerging global educational assessment philosophy emphasizes understanding student progress holistically, balancing standardized testing with ongoing, comprehensive evaluation strategies.

Key strategic insights include:

- Eliminating board exams in primary classes
- Developing comprehensive assessment frameworks
- Focusing on formative and continuous evaluation
- Creating multiple assessment touchpoints
- Integrating skill-based and character development metrics



Indicators



Status

Country	GER Ratio
India	Primary: 103.4%, Upper Primary: 94.7%, Secondary: 79.6%
China	99.7% in primary, 92% in secondary
UK	100% across primary and secondary
USA	100% in primary, 98% in secondary
Sweden	100% at primary and secondary levels
Australia	99% in primary, 90% in secondary.
Indonesia	Primary: Approx 95%, Secondary: Approx 82%
Thailand	Primary: 90%, Secondary: 80%

Note: Datasets from UDISE+ 2021-22., Economic Survey 2022-23., Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2022, National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES), 2022, Statistics Sweden, 2022, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023, OECD Reports 2022,23, World Bank Data 2019-2024, UNESCO Institute of Statistics: Bulk data 2019-2024

Analysis

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) data reveals high educational participation across these countries. Most nations achieve near-universal enrolment in primary education, with slight variations in secondary education. India shows slightly lower secondary enrolment compared to other developed nations, indicating potential areas for educational expansion.

Conclusion

The GER analysis reveals a nuanced educational participation landscape in India. The high primary enrolment of 103.4% suggests strong initial educational access, while the secondary enrolment of 79.6% indicates a significant transition challenge. This gap reflects the complex socioeconomic dynamics influencing educational continuation. The data points to inherent systemic differences between primary and secondary educational participation, potentially linked to economic, social, and structural factors unique to India's educational ecosystem.

Key insights include the necessity of:

- Targeted support for students from economically vulnerable backgrounds
- Improving educational infrastructure and accessibility
- Creating more engaging and relevant curriculum
- Implementing robust financial support mechanisms
- Developing vocational and skill-based learning pathways
- Improving quality of education which establishes perceived value of education



Education Budget and Funding Allocation



Ownership/Funding of Schools

Country	Funding
India	68.5% government-managed schools, 31.5% private institutions
China	Mostly public funded (Approx 66% govt funded/managed schools)
UK	Mostly public funded (Approx 93% govt funded/managed schools)
USA	Public funding through State, federal, and local funding. Privately funded schools do exist. (Approx 87% govt funded/managed schools)
Sweden	Predominantly Public (Approx 85% govt funded/managed schools)
Australia	Primarily public in nature. (Approx 69% govt funded/managed schools)
Indonesia	Predominantly Public (Approximately 85% govt funded/managed)
Thailand	Predominantly Public (Over 75% govt funded/managed)

Note: Datasets from UDISE+ 2021-22., Economic Survey 2022-23., Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2022, National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES), 2022, Statistics Sweden, 2022, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023, OECD Reports 2022,23, World Bank Data 2019-2024, UNESCO Institute of Statistics: Bulk data 2019-2024

Education Sector Spending: India

As per Economic Survey 2023-24, Chapter 7: Social Sector: Benefits That Empower

Trends in social services expenditure by general Government (Combined Centre and States) (In Crores of Rupees)

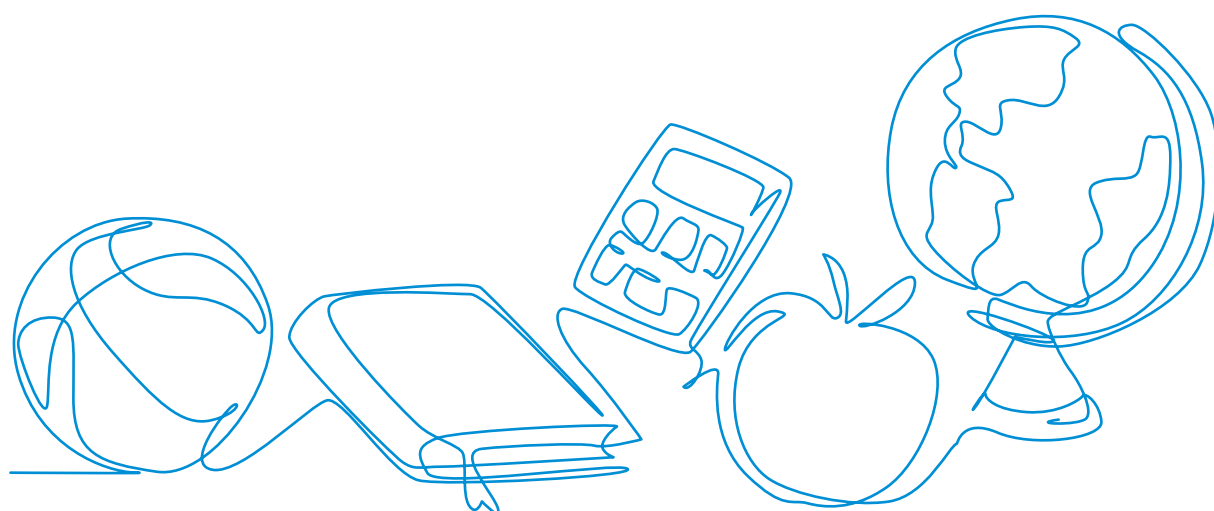
Items	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 (RE)	2023-24 (BE)
Expenditure on Social Services	12,78,124	13,64,906	14,79,389	17,87,019	21,49,346	23,50,584

Of Which, allocation to the Education sector has been listed below (year wise)

Items	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 (RE)	2023-24 (BE)
Education	5,26,481	5,79,575	5,75,834	6,39,436	7,68,946	8,28,747
Expenditure on Social Services (as a percentage of GDP)	6.8	6.8	7.5	7.6	8.0	7.8

Of Which the spending on Education Sector has been listed below (year wise)

Education (as a percentage of GDP)	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.7
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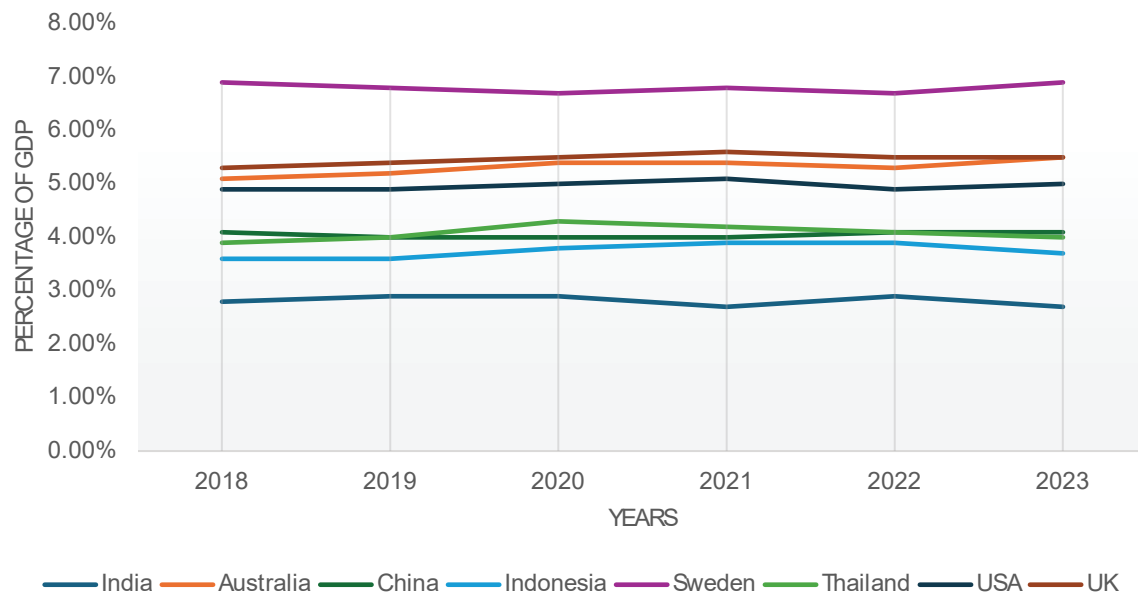
Education Sector Spending: India & Other countries

Year wise education spending as a percentage of GDP

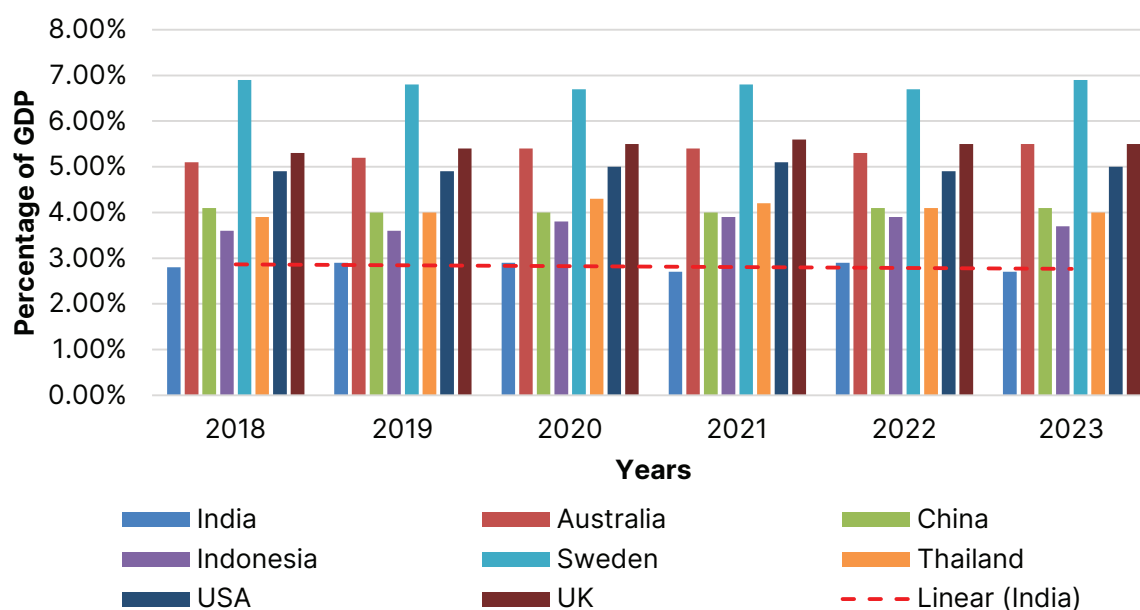
Countries	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
India	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	2.70%	2.90%	2.70%
Australia	5.10%	5.20%	5.40%	5.40%	5.30%	5.50%
China	4.10%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.10%	4.10%
Indonesia	3.60%	3.60%	3.80%	3.90%	3.90%	3.70%
Sweden	6.90%	6.80%	6.70%	6.80%	6.70%	6.90%
Thailand	3.90%	4.00%	4.30%	4.20%	4.10%	4.00%
USA	4.90%	4.90%	5.00%	5.10%	4.90%	5.00%
UK	5.30%	5.40%	5.50%	5.60%	5.50%	5.50%

Figure: Trend Analysis of %GDP allocation to the Education Sector in 8 countries

Education Spending as a percentage of GDP



Education spending as a percentage of GDP with trendline



Note 1: Data compiled from the following sources-- Office for National Statistics (ONS), National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES), Statistics Sweden, Australian Bureau of Statistics, OECD Reports, World Bank Data, UNESCO Institute of Statistics, National Statistical Office of Thailand, BPS Indonesia

Note 2: These percentages may vary based on data publication dates and the scope of spending included. Figures are approximate and may include slight variations depending on specific accounting methods.

Analysis

The data reveals distinctive patterns in education spending across different countries during 2018-2023.

The table highlights India's stagnant allocation between 2.7% and 2.9%. This contrasts sharply with developed nations like Sweden (6.7%-6.9%) and the UK (5.3%-5.6%), and even developing nations like Indonesia (3.7%-4.3%) and Thailand (4.0%-4.3%). While Australia recorded an 8% increase, and China a modest 2.4% growth, India's spending showed no percentage growth over six years. Meanwhile, Indonesia and Sweden saw marginal changes, with Indonesia declining 2.8% and Sweden returning to its baseline. India's low allocation underscores an urgent need to elevate spending to at least 6% of GDP..

Conclusion

India's education spending trajectory reveals a critical imperative for strategic national investment. The consistent 2.7-2.9% GDP allocation represents a significant underinvestment compared to global benchmarks, particularly among developed economies spending 5-7% of GDP on education.

Key strategic insights include:

- Gradually increasing education budget allocations to 6% of GDP
- Creating more robust public funding mechanisms
- Developing targeted investment strategies
- Aligning spending with National Education Policy 2020 objectives

Teacher Training and Qualifications



Status

Country	Details
India	B.Ed. and subject degree for middle and high schools, Diploma in Education/Elementary Education for primary schools, Diploma in ECCE or pre-school education for pre-primary
China	Preschool: bachelor's degree or diploma in early childhood education; Primary: Primary Education degree; Middle & High Schools: Bachelor's degree, Master's degree preferred, Subject-specific teaching certification
UK	Early Years (Ages 3-5): Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS), early childhood degree; Primary School (Ages 5-11): QTS (Qualified Teacher Status), Primary Education degree; Secondary (11-16): Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education or relevant subject area, QTS
USA	Preschool & Elementary: Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education/Elementary Education, state specific License/certification; Middle& High: Bachelor's degree in specific subject, often requires a Master's for higher roles, state specific license/certification
Sweden	Preschool: Preschool Teacher Exam, early childhood education degree; Primary School: Primary School Teacher Exam, Subject-specific teaching qualifications; Secondary School: Subject Teacher Exam, Master's level subject and pedagogical training
Australia	Primary level: Bachelor of Education (Primary) or equivalent; Secondary level: Bachelor's degree with secondary teaching qualification, Subject-specific specialization. state registration required for both
Indonesia	Minimum qualification: A bachelor's degree in education with mandatory pedagogical training. Teachers are encouraged to participate in ongoing professional development programs.
Thailand	Teachers must hold a bachelor's degree in education and undergo teacher training programs. Continuous training and regular evaluations are integral to professional development.

Analysis

Global teacher qualification frameworks reveal a sophisticated, multi-tiered approach to professional preparation across educational levels. Most countries mandate specialized degrees aligned with specific teaching stages: early childhood, primary, and secondary education.

Developed nations such as the UK, USA, and Sweden emphasize comprehensive teacher education, requiring not just subject expertise but also specialized pedagogical training. Typically, this involves a combination of subject-specific bachelor's degrees, dedicated teaching certifications, and ongoing professional development..

Conclusion

The comparative data highlights India's teacher qualification structure as part of a global trend toward professional standardization. The multi-tiered certification approach—B.Ed., subject degrees, and specialized diplomas—reflects the complexity of preparing educators for different educational stages. The system recognizes the distinct skills required for teaching at pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels. The qualifications framework demonstrates an understanding that effective teaching demands not just subject knowledge, but specialized pedagogical training tailored to specific age groups and educational contexts.



Technological Integration in Education



Status

Country	Details
India	The PM eVIDYA program; SWAYAM (online courses); Initiatives like SMART classrooms; DIKSHA (an e-learning portal for students); NISHTHA (an e-learning portal for teachers)
China	Education Informatization 2.0 Action Plan; aims to build “smart classrooms” with AI, big data, and cloud computing.
UK	Policies like the EdTech Strategy 2019; Initiatives like the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) enhance computing skills from primary to secondary levels.
USA	Programs such as ConnectED enhance internet access in schools, 1:1 device initiative ensure every student has a digital device
Sweden	National Digitalization Strategy for the School System; policy emphasizes digital literacy from early education, integrating coding, data handling, and digital ethics across curricula.
Australia	Programs such as the Digital Technologies curriculum introduce coding, robotics, and data analysis from early years, preparing students for a digital economy.
Indonesia	Efforts to integrate technology include: E-learning platforms, particularly expanded during the pandemic. Challenges persist due to urban-rural digital divides.
Thailand	The government promotes digital education initiatives, including providing digital tools and online platforms. Challenges persist in infrastructure and teacher readiness, particularly in rural areas.

Analysis

Global educational technology integration reveals a strategic shift towards digital learning ecosystems. Developed nations are proactively embedding technology across educational frameworks, focusing on digital literacy, computational skills, and technology-enhanced learning environments.

Countries such as Sweden and Australia demonstrate advanced approaches, integrating digital skills from early education stages. They emphasize not just technological access, but comprehensive digital competency, including coding, data analysis, and digital ethics. Emerging economies of Indonesia and Thailand are rapidly adapting, leveraging technology to overcome traditional educational barriers.

Conclusion

India's digital education initiatives such as PM eVIDYA and SWAYAM represent promising steps towards technological integration. The National Education Policy 2020 provides a robust framework for comprehensive digital transformation. Learning from Sweden and Australia, integrating digital ethics and coding into early curricula can prepare students for a tech-driven future while strengthening infrastructure ensures inclusive access to digital learning.



Policy Framework, Governance and Recent Reforms



Status

Country	Details
India	Guided by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Samagra Shiksha, and the RTE Act 2009
China	Guided by the Education Law (1994) and the Compulsory Education Law (1986). The Education Modernization 2035 plan focuses on equitable access and quality improvements in both urban and rural schools
UK	Guided by the Education Act 2011 and the Academies Act 2010
USA	Guided by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), 2015. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), supporting inclusive education, and Title I funding, which aids disadvantaged schools
Sweden	The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for education and research policies. The National Agency for Education (Skolverket) administers public funding and grants.
Australia	Follows the National School Reform Agreement. The Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) oversees national standards in core subjects, while states manage implementation.
Indonesia	National Education System Law (No. 20 of 2003); Constitution of Indonesia (1945, amended), Article 31 declares that every citizen has the right to education and that the government must allocate at least 20% of the national budget to education; Compulsory Education Program (Wajib Belajar). Introduced in 1994, formalized under the 2003 National Education System Law. It expanded the free education mandate to include both primary and junior secondary levels, with ongoing plans to extend coverage to senior secondary education
Thailand	National Education Act (1999, amended in 2002); Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (2017), Article 54 mandates the government to provide free education for at least 12 years, including 3 years of pre-primary education.

Analysis

Global educational policy frameworks reflect a nuanced approach to systemic transformation, revealing how nations strategically navigate educational development. Each country's policy approach uniquely balances legislative mandates with long-term developmental goals, demonstrating remarkable complexity in addressing educational challenges.

The emerging global trend indicates a profound shift from traditional legislative frameworks to comprehensive educational transformation strategies. Governments increasingly view education as a critical national development tool, moving beyond mere access to creating holistic, adaptive learning ecosystems. Policies are progressively addressing interconnected dimensions like inclusive education, quality standardization, technological integration, and social equity.

Underlying these approaches is a fundamental recognition of education as a fundamental human right. Countries are crafting sophisticated policy mechanisms that balance national standards with regional flexibility, creating adaptive frameworks capable of responding to rapidly evolving global learning environments and socio-economic transformations.

Conclusion

The policy analysis reveals India's educational governance landscape as part of a global trend towards comprehensive legislative frameworks. The National Education Policy 2020 emerges as a strategic document aligning with international approaches to educational policymaking. The data highlights the critical role of legislative mechanisms in shaping educational ecosystems, demonstrating how national policies translate broader educational philosophies into actionable strategies. India's policy framework reflects a systemic approach to addressing educational challenges, positioning education as a fundamental right and a key driver of national development through structured, legally mandated educational interventions.

The policy's true potential lies in its ability to harmonize national objectives with regional diversities, creating a flexible governance model that can adapt to complex educational needs. Successful implementation requires viewing educational policy as a dynamic, living document capable of driving systemic change rather than a static regulatory instrument.

Access and Equity



Status

Country	Details
India	The Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009; The PM POSHAN scheme (formerly Mid-Day Meal Scheme)
China	Compulsory Education Law provides nine years of free education, targeted subsidies, teacher incentives for rural placements, and extensive boarding school programs.
UK	Full-time education is compulsory for all children aged 5 to 18, students must stay in a traditional school setting until the age of sixteen
USA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1990 (IDEA); All students with special needs are entitled to a free and appropriate public education
Sweden	Guided by the Education Act, 2011 guaranteeing free and equitable education. The government provides tailored support for students with disabilities, as outlined in the Disability Act.
Australia	Promotes equitable access through the National School Reform Agreement, with funding based on socio-economic needs
Indonesia	Free 12-year education for all. Programs for remote and underprivileged areas through ICT (e.g., KIP scholarships).
Thailand	Support for early childhood and special-needs education, Programs for dropouts

Analysis

The dataset highlights diverse approaches nations take to promote access and equity in education for marginalized groups. India emphasizes legal mandates like the Right to Education (RTE) Act and nutritional support through PM POSHAN to improve enrolment and retention among underprivileged children. China's targeted subsidies and teacher incentives focus on rural inclusion, coupled with boarding school programs to support remote learners. The UK and USA prioritize inclusive education, with the IDEA ensuring tailored education for students with disabilities.

Sweden and Australia champion equity through need-based funding and disability-specific support under robust legislation like the Swedish Disability Act. Indonesia and Thailand extend free education and scholarships, targeting rural and underprivileged populations, while also addressing early childhood and special-needs education.

These measures underline the global focus on bridging socio-economic and geographic gaps in education. For India, lessons lie in scaling rural-focused interventions and enhancing inclusive education frameworks for marginalized communities.

Conclusion

Globally, countries have implemented targeted strategies to address inequities in education, ensuring access for marginalized communities. Successful models like Sweden's robust disability-inclusive frameworks and Australia's need-based funding demonstrate the importance of sustained investment and legislation. China's focus on rural education through teacher incentives and boarding programs underscores the value of geographically targeted interventions. Similarly, Indonesia and Thailand highlight the effectiveness of scholarships and free education in improving enrolment and retention.

India can draw valuable lessons from these approaches to strengthen its existing frameworks. While the Right to Education (RTE) Act and PM POSHAN scheme are impactful, their reach must expand to tribal and remote areas. Introducing rural teacher incentives and infrastructure investments, as seen in China, could enhance access. Additionally, India should prioritize disability-inclusive education with clear policies, teacher training, and resource allocation. Establishing a dynamic, need-based funding model, akin to Australia, would ensure that socio-economic disparities do not hinder learning outcomes.



Vocational Education & Training



Status

Country	Details
India	Vocational education from Grade 6, under the Samagra Shiksha scheme. NSQF compliant vocational courses taught to the students from class 9th to 12th.
China	Vocational education implemented at the upper secondary level, Grades 10-12. Students choose academic or vocational tracks, focusing on technical skills and industrial needs-driven education reforms.
UK	Vocational education is available through GCSEs and BTECs from age 14 (Key Stage 4). BTECs are vocational qualifications available from age 14, offering practical, industry-focused learning alongside GCSEs.
USA	Vocational Education also known as Career and Technical Education (CTE), provided to high school students (age 14–18), starting in Grade 9.
Australia	Vocational education is offered through Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs, during the final years of secondary school (grades 11 and 12).
Sweden	Vocational education is available through upper secondary schools, starting at age 16. Upper secondary schools offer 18 programs, including 12 vocational, combining classroom learning, apprenticeships, and core subjects for workforce entry or higher education.
Indonesia	Vocational programs offered at secondary education levels. Partnerships with businesses for hands-on experience.
Thailand	Vocational tracks available at the upper secondary level. Collaboration with industries for practical training.

Analysis

The dataset highlights how nations implement vocational education to bridge skill gaps and enhance workforce readiness. India introduces vocational education early, from Grade 6 under Samagra Shiksha, with National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) compliance from Grade 9. In contrast, China, Sweden, and Thailand focus on upper secondary levels, offering industry-aligned technical skills and academic-vocational pathways. The UK’s GCSEs and BTECs provide a dual-focus approach starting at age 14, combining practical skills with academic rigor.

The USA's Career and Technical Education (CTE) integrates hands-on learning from Grade 9, targeting high school students. Australia and Sweden prioritize structured programs blending classroom education and apprenticeships, ensuring employability. Indonesia and Thailand emphasize partnerships with industries for practical experience, addressing regional employment needs. These models demonstrate the significance of aligning vocational education with market demands and involving private-sector collaborations for effectiveness.

Conclusion

Globally, vocational education succeeds by aligning with industry needs and introducing flexible pathways. Countries like Sweden and Australia blend academic learning with apprenticeship opportunities, enhancing workforce readiness. China and Thailand's industry partnerships underscore the importance of real-world training. The UK and USA integrate vocational education early in secondary school, ensuring that students develop skills alongside academic knowledge.

India's vocational education framework, starting from Grade 6, is progressive but requires deeper industry alignment and hands-on experience components. Drawing from Sweden's model, India should expand apprenticeship programs and foster industry-school collaborations. Introducing modular courses, as seen in the UK, can ensure flexibility and allow students to transition between academic and vocational tracks. Strengthening teacher training in vocational pedagogy and establishing a robust monitoring framework will enhance program delivery and outcomes.

To strengthen vocational education in India, partnerships with industries can align curricula with market needs, supported by apprenticeship programs for hands-on training. Modular courses, as seen in the UK, should enable flexible transitions between academic and vocational tracks. Upskilling vocational teachers through digital platforms like DIKSHA and offering certifications is vital. Technology-driven solutions, including virtual labs and mobile training units, can expand access in remote areas. Tailoring programs to regional industries and conducting labour market analyses will ensure relevance. Robust monitoring systems can track placements and outcomes, driving continuous improvement. These measures will create a skilled workforce and boost employability.



Challenges and Opportunities



Status

Country	Details
India	Regional disparities, gender gaps, and challenges in rural access remain significant concerns. Persistent infrastructure deficits and stark rural-urban inequalities continue to hinder progress. High dropouts, and limited holistic education hinder equitable learning. Lack of 21st-century skills hampers employability.
China	A major concern in this system is the intense pressure placed on students to excel academically, which results in high levels of stress and mental health problems
UK	Financial constraints and teacher workload issues present challenges
USA	Funding disparities and socio-economic achievement gaps are major challenges
Sweden	Immigration-driven diversity is a challenge. Reducing population also presents challenge
Australia	Access to education continues to be a challenge for remote and Indigenous communities.
Indonesia	Despite progress, challenges remain in ensuring quality education for: Marginalized groups. Remote communities with limited infrastructure.
Thailand	Significant improvements in access, yet disparities exist in rural areas and among ethnic minorities.

Analysis & Conclusion

Education systems globally face unique challenges. India struggles with regional disparities, gender gaps, and inadequate rural access, compounded by infrastructure deficits and a lack of 21st-century skills. High dropout rates further hinder equitable learning. China's academically intense system fosters stress and mental health issues among students. The UK and USA grapple with financial and socio-economic disparities, affecting equitable resource distribution.

Australia and Indonesia share challenges in providing quality education to remote and marginalized communities. Sweden faces difficulties from immigration-driven diversity and a

Recommendations



- Implement the NEP 2020 through comprehensive teacher training, flexible curriculum design, and technology-enabled learning platforms to nurture skill-based education and foster innovative, future-ready young talents.
- Create dedicated task forces at state and national levels to oversee the implementation of NEP 2020 initiatives, ensuring effective integration of technology, vocational skills, and holistic learning.
- Create a dynamic, adaptive curriculum framework that empowers teachers, embraces regional diversity, and integrates skill-based learning to nurture innovative, contextually relevant educational experiences across India.
- Revolutionize education by transforming pedagogical approaches, empowering teachers with interactive methodologies, and creating dynamic learning environments that prioritize critical thinking and skill-based experiential education.
- Redesign student evaluation by replacing rigid exam structures with comprehensive, continuous assessment tools that measure holistic development, critical thinking, and individual learning potential.
- Implement comprehensive interventions combining targeted financial support, engaging curriculum, skill-based learning pathways, and infrastructure improvements to reduce dropout rates and enhance educational accessibility.
- Progressively increase education budget to 6% of GDP, strategically targeting skill development, infrastructure improvement, and innovative learning ecosystems to drive national human capital growth.
- Revolutionize teacher preparation through comprehensive, multi-stage training programs that integrate practical skills, continuous professional development, and align with the National Education Policy 2020's transformative educational vision.
- Accelerate digital education by bridging infrastructure gaps, developing localized content, enhancing teacher digital literacy, and creating inclusive technological platforms that democratize learning across diverse regions.

- Transform India's educational ecosystem by creating adaptive, flexible policy frameworks that balance national objectives with regional diversity, driving innovation and equitable access to quality learning.
- India should adapt global best practices by expanding targeted education interventions, focusing on rural teacher incentives, disability-inclusive policies, and need-based funding to bridge socio-economic learning gaps effectively.
- Revamp vocational education through strategic industry partnerships, modular course designs, technology-enabled training, and comprehensive monitoring to create a responsive, skill-oriented learning ecosystem aligned with market demands.
- Tackle educational inequities by prioritizing rural infrastructure, balanced curricula, inclusive policies, strategic teacher deployment, and targeted interventions that address regional, socio-economic, and skill development disparities.
- Allocate specific government funds for upgrading school infrastructure, focusing on basic facilities, sanitation, and digital resources. Create a joint central-state-local fund & empower LSGDs to oversee & implement them.
- Empower and enhance scope of DIETs/CRCs/BRCs & Implement ongoing professional development programs for teachers that focus on modern pedagogical techniques and technology integration to enhance teaching quality.
- Identify and fill teacher vacancies on priority (NITI Aayog SATH – E Report of 2023 highlights that one million teacher vacancies in India*), especially in underserved areas, within specified time frame; establish a standardised salary structure across states to ensure fair compensation and attract qualified professionals.
- Strengthen the role of School Management Committees (SMCs) by providing them with decision-making authority and resources to address local educational needs effectively.
- Create a national digital dashboard for real-time tracking of enrolment, attendance, learning outcomes, and school infrastructure.
- Consider creating a framework of ranking of states based on digital interventions made by the State Governments.
- Evaluate teacher performance based on student outcomes, both academic and holistic, and link incentives to measurable improvements in teaching quality.

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Appendix



Illustration 1: Education in India

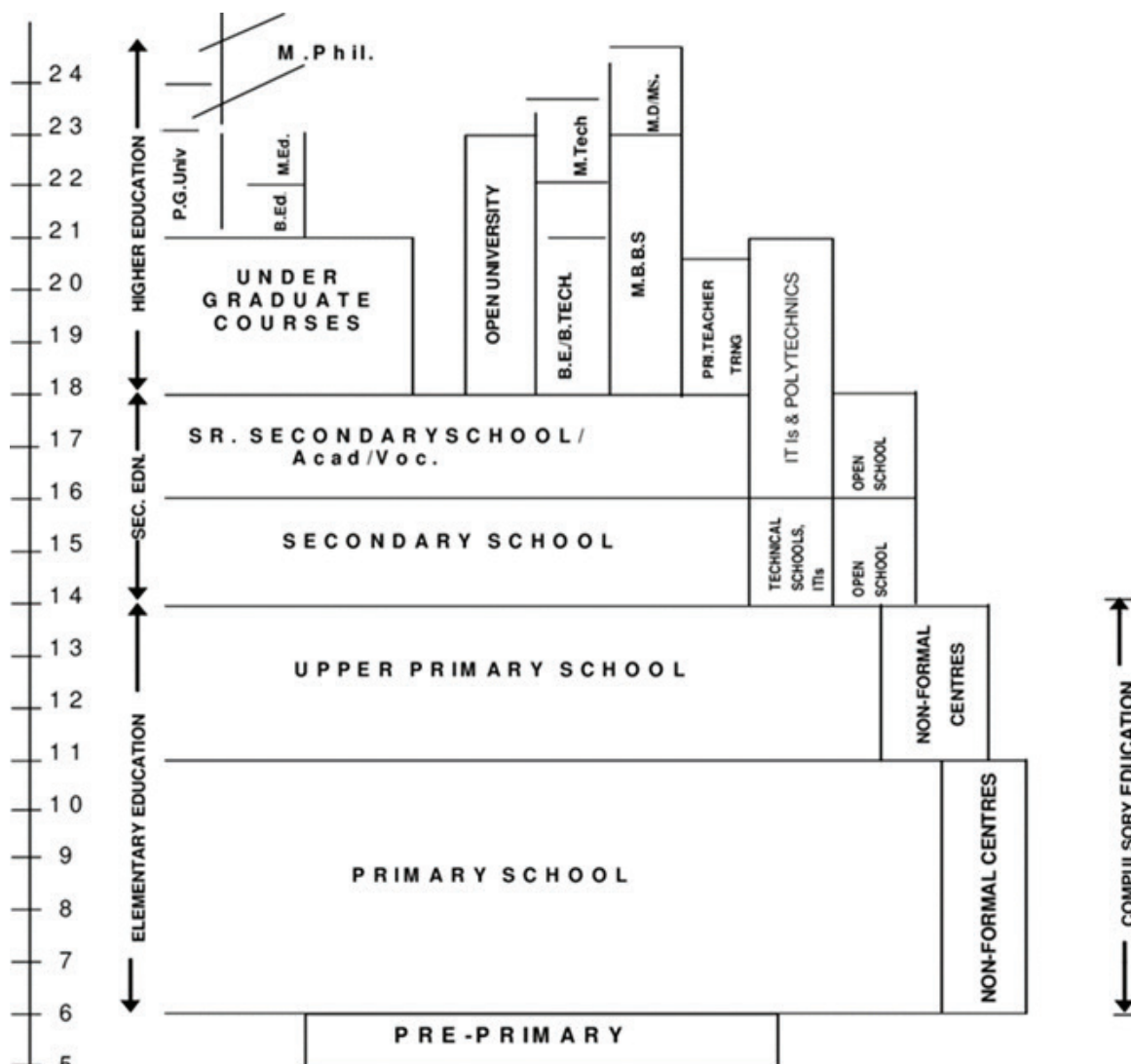


Illustration 2: Education in China

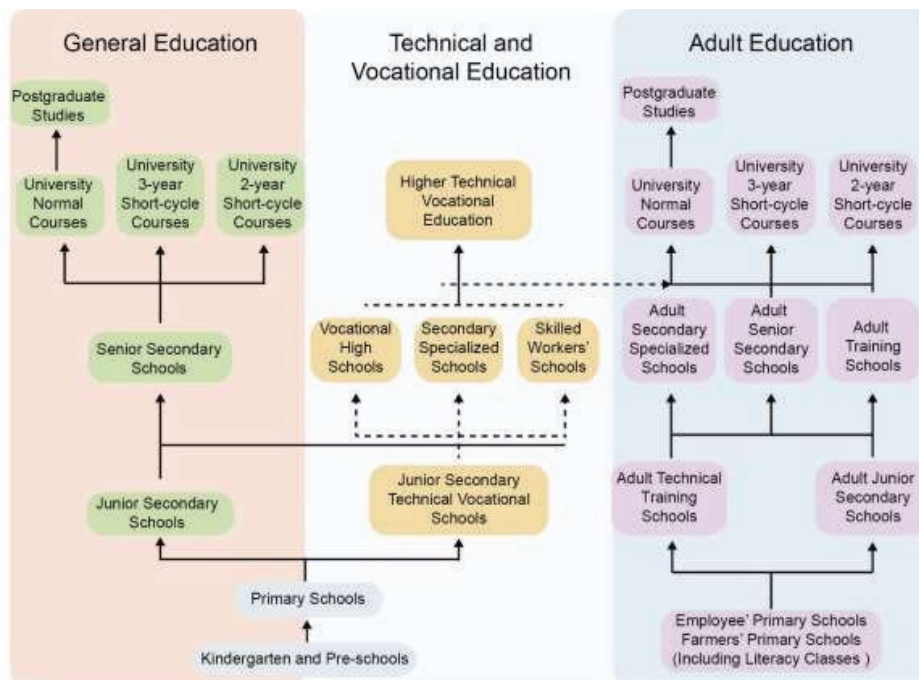
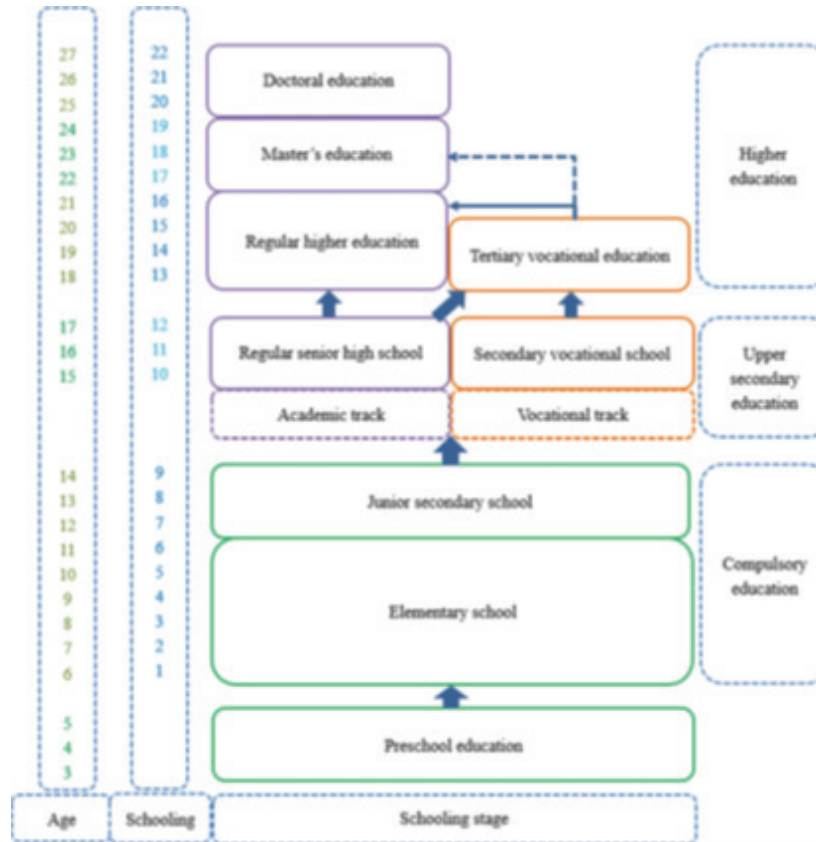


Illustration 3: Education in USA

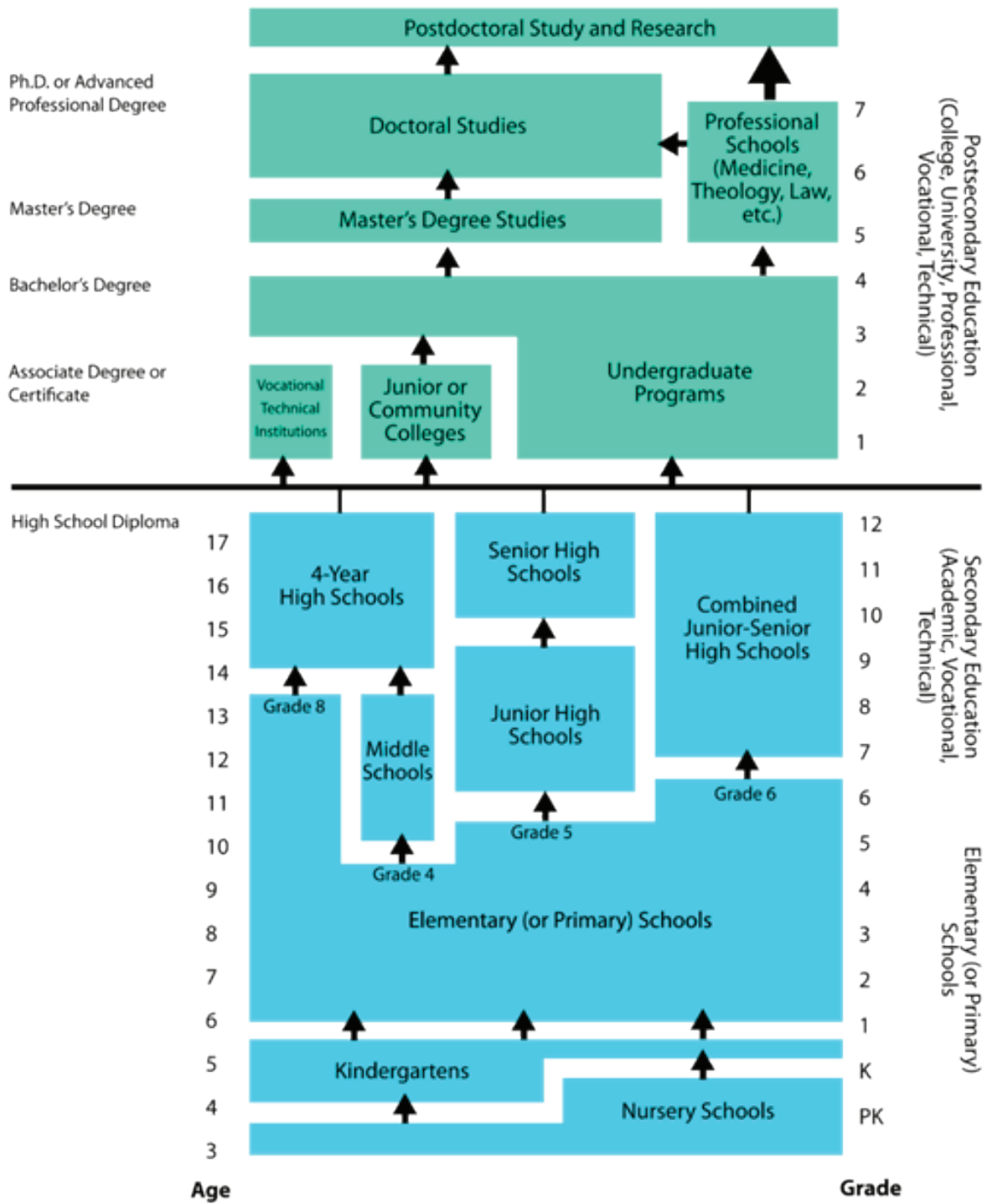
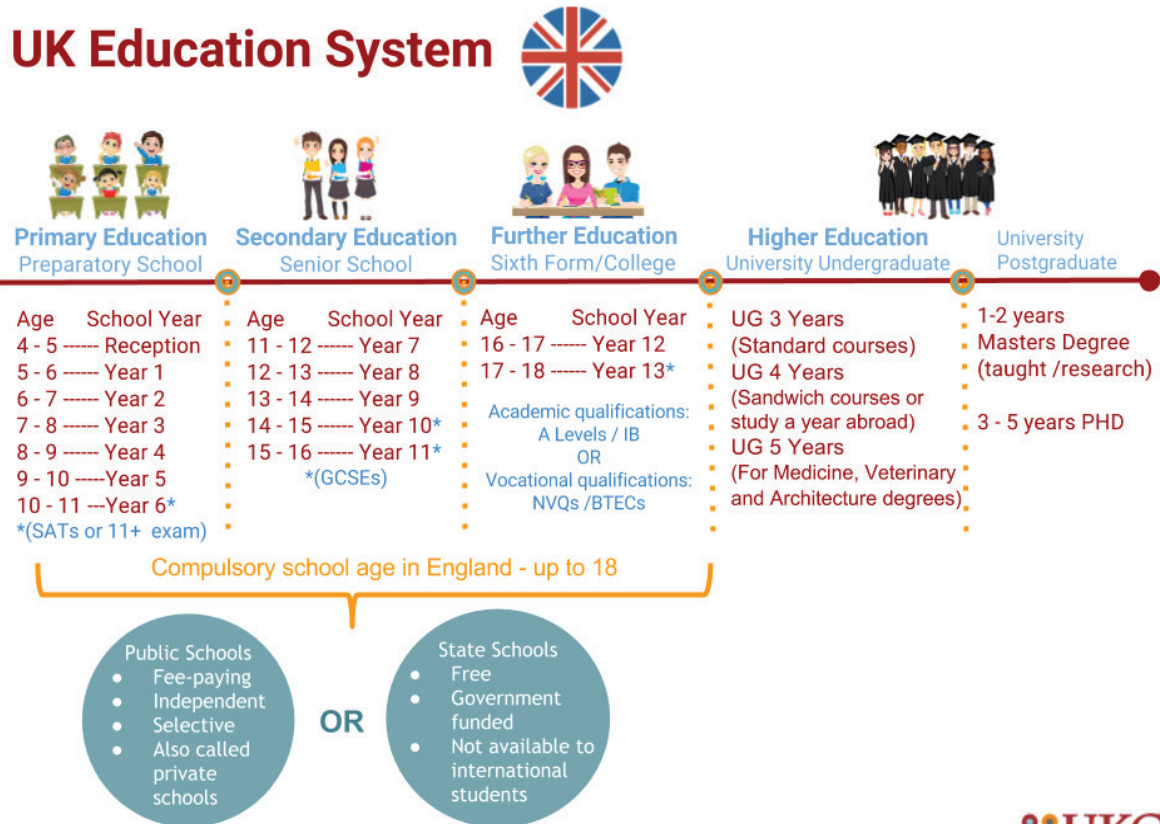


Illustration 4: Education in UK

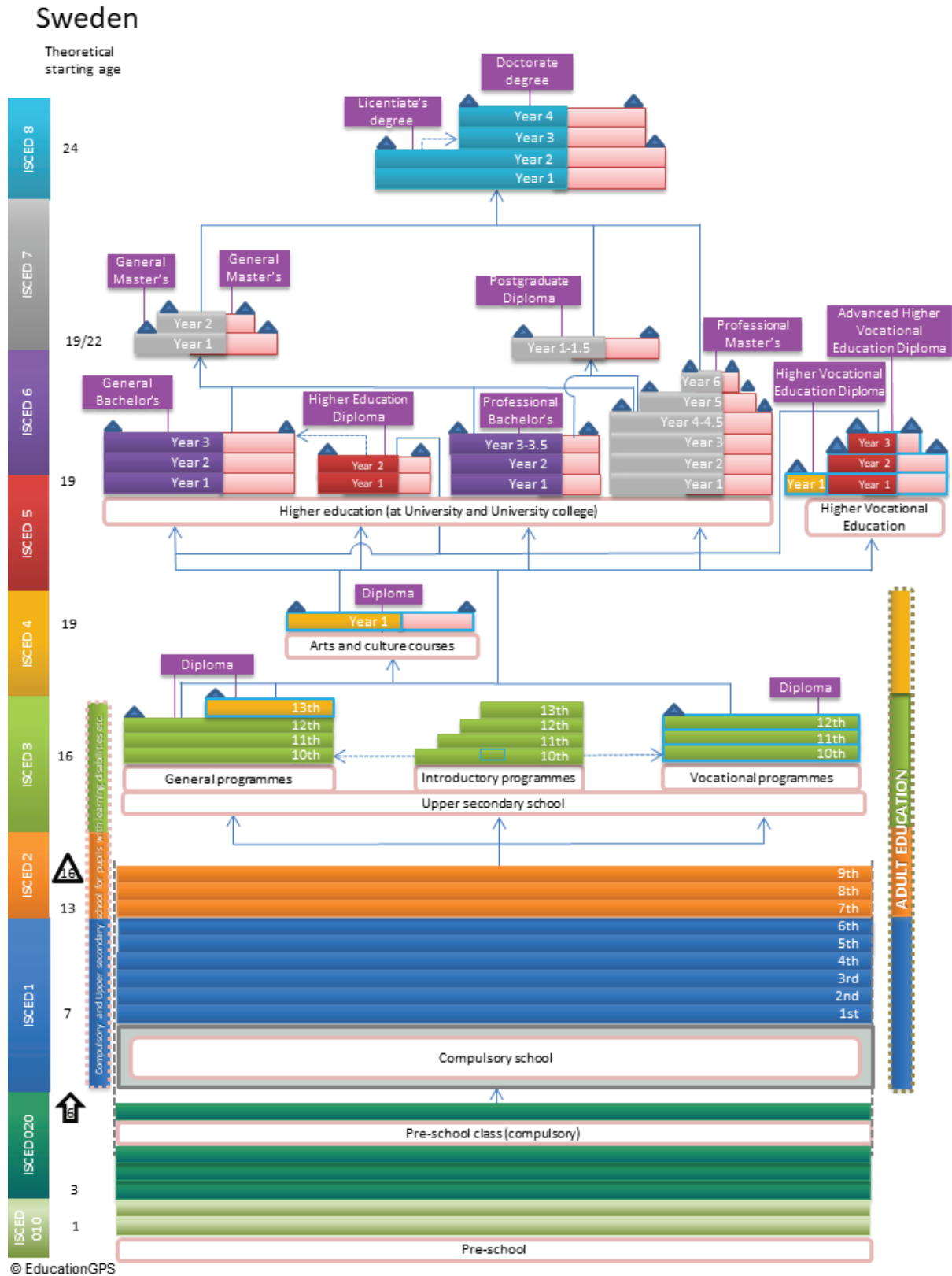


Please note that Scottish Education System differs from the rest of the UK.













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WORLD EDUCATION STARTS HERE

Illustration 5: Education in Sweden



Key

-  Starting/ending age of compulsory education
-  Ending age of compulsory training
-  Recognized exit point of the education system
-  Typical student flow
-  Transfer from a program to another
-  Program designed for part-time attendance
-  Vocational/Professional orientation
(according to national definition at tertiary level)
-  Program can be offered via dual as well as non-dual learning
-  Single structure education (integrated ISCED levels)
-  May be provided within one school structure
-  Transfer at crossing lines is not possible
-  **Diploma** Name of diploma, degree or certificate
- ECTS** European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
- NQF L** National Qualification Framework - Level
- 2023** Reference year (school year 2022/2023 in the northern hemisphere)

* **Theoretical starting ages** refer to the ages as established by law and regulation for the entry to a programme, actual starting ages may vary depending on the programme.

Illustration 6: Education in Thailand

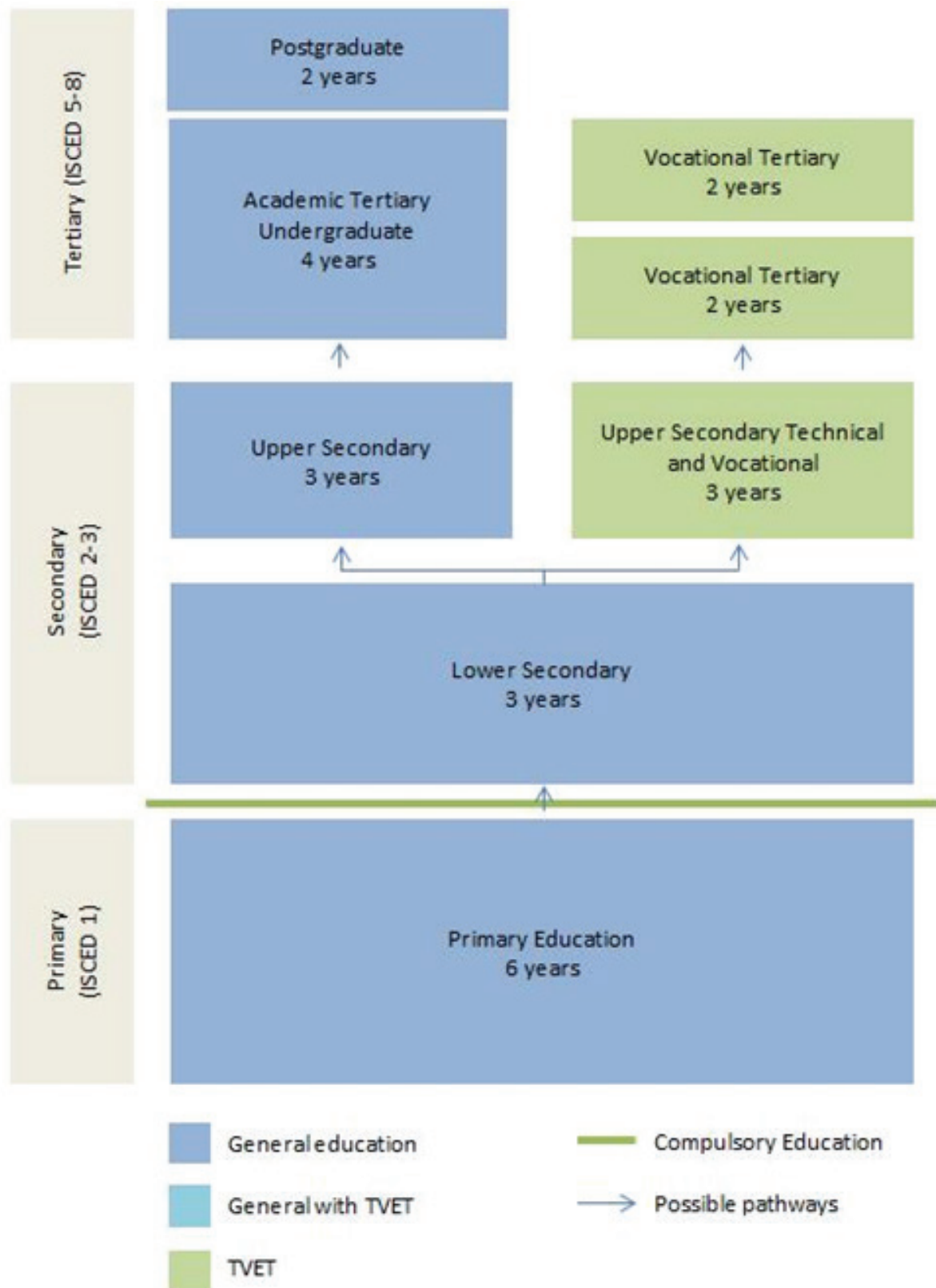
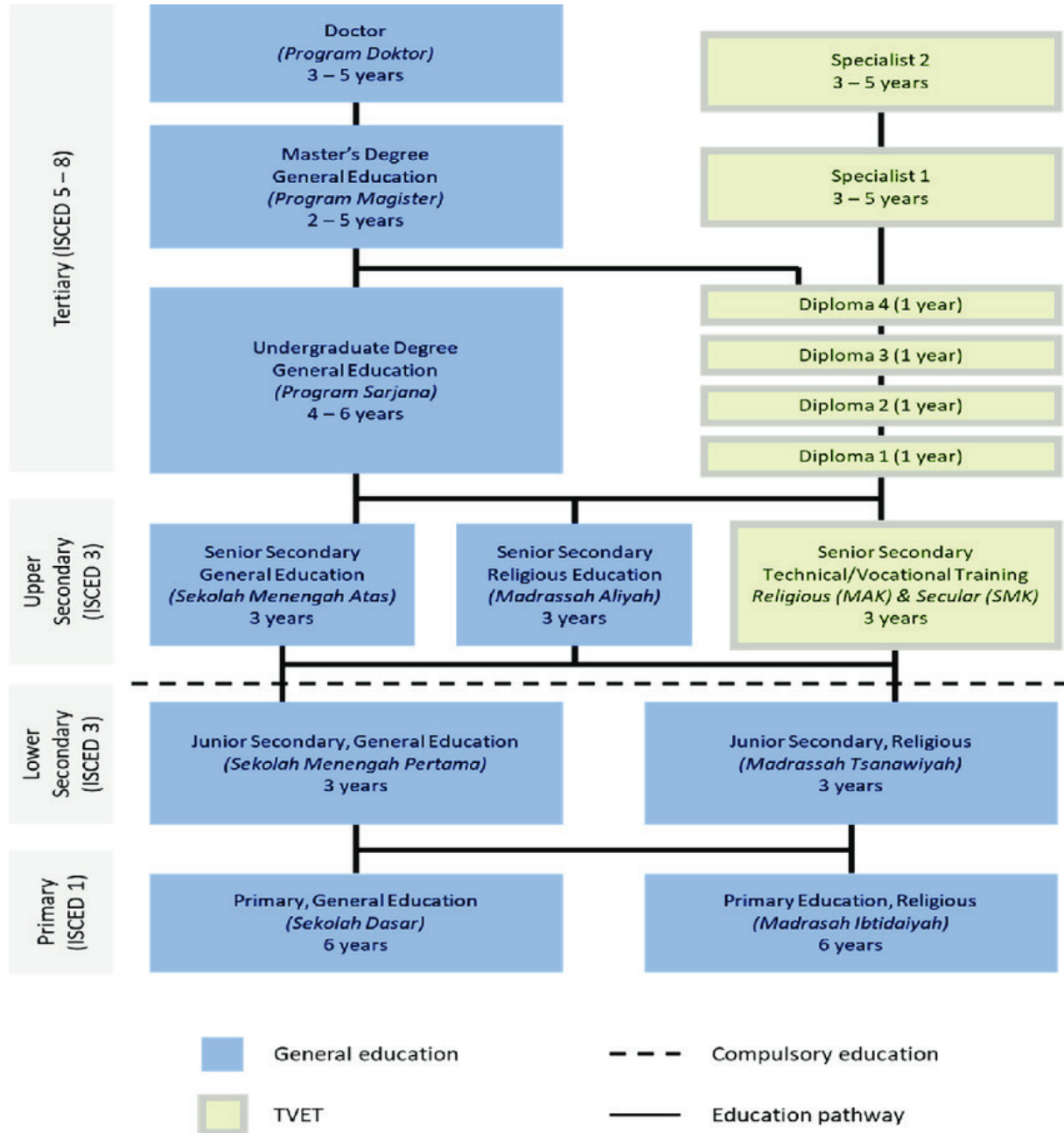


Illustration 7: Education in Indonesia





Confederation of Indian Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government and civil society, through advisory and consultative processes.

CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organization, with around 9,000 members from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 365,000 enterprises from 294 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.

For more than 125 years, CII has been engaged in shaping India's development journey and works proactively on transforming Indian Industry's engagement in national development. CII charts change by working closely with Government on policy issues, interfacing with thought leaders, and enhancing efficiency, competitiveness, and business opportunities for industry through a range of specialized services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues.

Through its dedicated Centres of Excellence and Industry competitiveness initiatives, promotion of innovation and technology adoption, and partnerships for sustainability, CII plays a transformative part in shaping the future of the nation. Extending its agenda beyond business, CII assists industry to identify and execute corporate citizenship programmes across diverse domains including affirmative action, livelihoods, diversity management, skill development, empowerment of women, and sustainable development, to name a few.

For 2024-25, CII has identified "Globally Competitive India: Partnerships for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth" as its Theme, prioritizing 5 key pillars. During the year, it would align its initiatives and activities to facilitate strategic actions for driving India's global competitiveness and growth through a robust and resilient Indian industry.

With 70 offices, including 12 Centres of Excellence, in India, and 8 overseas offices in Australia, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Singapore, UAE, UK, and USA, as well as institutional partnerships with about 300 counterpart organizations in almost 100 countries, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

Confederation of Indian Industry

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