



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

(Volume 3, Issue 1)

Available online at [www.ijarnd.com](http://www.ijarnd.com)

## Comparison of Education System in Singapore and Hong Kong

Lini Varghese<sup>1</sup>, Gaurav Kankaani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Student of School of Business studies and Social Sciences

### ABSTRACT

*This article mainly focuses on the education system practised in Singapore and Hong Kong. The differences in the education system and practises are shown clearly in this article. The details on the different types of the education system with many other explanations are also given. The history of the educational reform in these two countries is also given. The different education opportunities and their strengths are mentioned. The attitude of parents towards their children's education is also clearly stated in this paper. This article also deals with the problems and weaknesses faced by both the countries and their reasons are shown*

**Keywords:** Education System in Singapore and Hong Kong History Strengths Weakness

### EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE

#### INTRODUCTION

Singapore institution (Raffles Institution) was established by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles in the year 1823 which in turn started education in Singapore. This formed 3 types of schooling systems in Singapore- Malay schools, Chinese and Tamil school (together) and English schools. The Singapore education provides multi-cultural and multi-racial characteristics, a bilingual policy which interns aim at providing students with a holistic and broad-based education. Under this bilingual policy, students get to learn two languages- English which the common language and their mother tongue languages (Chinese, Tamil or Malay) to maintain their culture, heritage, values and ethnic identity.

Singapore is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among the World's Best Education Systems. The existence of well reputed and strong education systems has become the main reason behind Singapore's fastest growing economy and development. There are two main policies formed by the Singapore's education system. They are:

- Meritocracy: One of the core principles of Singaporean education system is a meritocracy. The important key to students' career is based on their academic performance. Their objective is to prepare young minds for various leadership positions in the country.
- Bilingual: The main aim of this policy is to encourage English as the global language and at the same time to value their own cultures and ethnicity. A non-Tamilian in Singapore can also opt to study Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati, Punjabi or Hindi.

### EDUCATION SYSTEM

As Singapore is filled with many schools, colleges, and universities their education system is classified into the following:

#### 1. Pre-primary

The important components of pre-primary education are play school, kindergarten, and nursery which are usually run by the private sectors which include religious bodies, community foundations, business groups, etc.

## 2. Primary

Students start their primary education at the age of 7. It is made compulsory and is considered the first step towards formal education and for a duration of 6 years in total. At the end of their primary education, students will have to face the Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) to move toward the secondary level education,

- The primary education is broadly divided into two stages:  
Foundation stage - Primary 1 to 4, Total 4 years
- Orientation stage - Primary 5 and 6, Total 2 Years

## 3. Secondary

The secondary education system consists of four streams: Special, Express, Normal (Academic), or Normal (Technical). Based on the PSLE merit ranking, a student is placed in one of above streams,

The secondary education is usually completed in 4-5 years. After the secondary education, the students need to appear in Singaporean GCE 'O' Level exam. Based on the merit in that exam, students proceed to pre-university education.

## 4. Pre-University

- Junior Colleges and Polytechnics are the components of pre-university education

**Junior Colleges:** These colleges impart students with necessary skills and knowledge for university education. The students are provided with a 2-year junior college / 3-year centralized institute pre-university course which leads to the GCE 'A' Level examination.

- **Polytechnics:** these courses are practical-oriented, with opportunities for group work.

The students are provided with a 3-year diploma course in varied subjects like tourism, biotechnology, digital media, engineering, business studies, etc.

## 5. University

Graduate, post graduate and doctoral programs in varied fields are the components of university education. The National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University have been listed in Top 50 Universities of the world. Both these universities have given utmost importance in research activities and have led to the keen interest of a large number of research scholars across the world.

There are 6 six national universities in Singapore, this includes the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Management University, Singapore University of Technology & Design, Singapore Institute of Technology and SIM University. Among the above, SIM University is the only sole national private university in Singapore that is dedicated solely to adult learners only. The university offers part-time degree programs only for working adults.

All these universities in Singapore have affiliations with other top universities worldwide. This provides students with enhanced learning experiences especially in the field of research.

## PROBLEMS FACED BY SINGAPOREAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

1. Rot learning- Studying only for the short-term benefits. Ex: Studying a subject only to pass an exam and later not remembering the content and thereby not benefitting the student. This problem arises since Singapore gives importance mainly to academic performance.
2. Only those who are succeeded in rot learning will be rewarded. Others aren't accepted.
3. There is more of spoon feeding of the subject to the students than students discovering their own talents and interests.
4. Some teachers completely ignore or neglect the soft skills among students. Hence some students lack communication and social skills.

## FINANCIALS

The education policy in Singapore is framed in such a way that no students will be deprived of education due to any financial reason (2018). The MOE also provides financial aid to the deserving students in the form of Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) and Endusave Merit Bursary (EMB) scholarships' is given to families of low income and EMB is given to deserving students from their respective schools.

In addition to this, every school has certain schemes to help school students in coping with their financial challenges.

## CONCLUSION

Singapore has done a lot to reach its many achievements in the field of education. The governments have strived a lot to maintain an important position in the fast-growing world. The attempts made by the Island nations have made Singapore the 'Hub' in the field of economy and education among the South East Asian nations. Singapore used the technical ways to achieve its success in the academic institutions. Singapore prioritises in the field of industry and education. Most of the educational institutes have highly trained faculties and many training programmes abroad with ties with many well-known institutes of Japan, US, and UK. The research staff and faculties are paid very well, and the infrastructure is provided for efficient performance. The issue with Singapore's educational system is lack of sufficient incentives for the faculty and there is a reward for publishing their research.

## EDUCATION IN HONGKONG

### INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong's schooling is modelled on the UK, especially the English course. In 2013 there were around 569 primary schools, 514 secondary day schools and 61 special schools in Hong Kong and they are all governed by Education bureau and Welfare department.

Every child in Hong Kong is required to attend primary school by law after the child has attained the age 6. After completing primary schooling, the child needs to attend secondary education that gets over by the age of 19.

The government of Hong Kong is very actively involved in the education system and is trying to improve the current conditions by giving more and more importance to educating the youth. Hong Kong government has made many public schools for those students who can't afford to pay for education.

### EDUCATION SYSTEM

**1. Primary education:** Students spend around 6 years to complete primary education which starts at the age of 6. 3 modes of operation are -am, pm and the whole day. Chinese is their medium of communication with English being their second language. The government is trying to improve student's values, knowledge and to enhance their Bi-literate (English and Chinese) and Tri-literate (English, Putonghua, and Cantonese)

**2. Secondary Education-**Students should undergo 6 years of secondary education. At the end of 6 years, students face the board exam - the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). This was started in 2012. The secondary education in Hong Kong is classified into 3 types-

- a. Government Schools-**They are only operated by the government.
- b. Aided schools:** They are completely assisted by the government but run by private institutions.
- c. Private schools:** They are run by private institutions but at times receives financial aid from the government.

**3. Post-Secondary; Education:** Students after completing their HKDSE exam either go to their bachelor's degree programme or do sub degree programmes. About 70% of people have access to post-secondary education.

**4. Vocational and Professional Education and Training:** This plays a great role in broadening the learning opportunities for the school leavers who are searching for a job thereby increasing the capital of Hong Kong. The Vocational training council provides almost 250000 training institutes for the people who are trying to pursue a job.

**5. International Schools:** The government started international schools for those overseas families who are coming for work and investment.

### DISCIPLINE

Good behaviour has been given importance in Hong Kong and the Education board (EDB) has made certain guidelines that outline the principles and policies regarding student discipline, the organizational structure of a school discipline team, the roles and responsibilities of the discipline master and mistress, and discipline strategies illustrated with case studies and are to be followed by every school.

### EDUCATION REFORM

With the impact of extra-curricular activities, Hong Kong's education has become synonymous for leaning towards quantity. As early as March 1987, education advisory inspectors became concerned with the excessive amounts of "mechanical work and meaningless homework".

History education has been recognized as ineffective, with critics claiming that the curriculum is not capable of delivering a sense of identity. Not only that, students must memorize the whole history texts, thereby indicating that rote-learning has greater priority than absorbing and understanding the material.

Some have criticized the system for having too narrow of a stream focus, too early on. Legco Member Alan Leong of the pointed out in a guest lecture at the Chinese University of Hong Kong that secondary level science students are incapable of participating in meaningful discussions on history, arts, or literature. Vice versa journalists of arts stream background are incapable of accurately discussing technological issues. The narrow focus of education in Hong Kong has been a concern.

The pervasive perception from observers in overseas education institutions generally is that a typical Hong Kong student compared with other students, even against other students in the Asia region, lacks systematic decision-making confidence and relies on repetition and undeveloped answers. This deviates from the common benchmark of intellect where value propositions are generated from innovation and distinctive solutions, and this has led to much schism in the debate of educational direction of Hong Kong, where the populace makes no such aspiration for intellect but seek constant reaffirmation of the value of myriad certificates obtained through pedagogy throughout their working lives.

## **WEAKNESS**

Hong Kong's education system is all about scores and academic excellence. On an average, every student in Hong Kong is given around 2 hours of daily homework and the education system gives high preference to only theoretical knowledge and the exchange of views and ideas is rarely seen or supported. Hong Kong has developed a youth problem of hopelessness, frustration, and disillusion. Due to the highly marks oriented environment students who are average in academics get frustrated as they have limited job opportunities and no other talent or skills. Students in Hong Kong are judged by their marks and not by their talents, passion, and character. Students who are below average do not get a lot of opportunities as the education system segregates students based on their marks. The ones who score well get various opportunities, but rest of the students are left to languish.

## **STRENGTHS**

Parents have a strong influence in schools by being a part of parent teacher's association and home school co-operation committees. Permanent secretary Cherry Tso told that parents have more influence on schools than the education board. Hong Kong spends around 23% of its budget on the field education which means Hong Kong devotes more public budget to education than any other OECD country. In 2012 first generation of students studying under new education system graduated and the results were good. PISA results depicted that Hong Kong was on right track and students showed high growth in performance and important improvements in student's metacognitive skills and confidence as a learner. Currently, the education system of Hong Kong is very vast and covers a major number of important topics. The new curriculum aims at improving a student's intellectual, moral, social, physical and aesthetical aspects. Besides the govt has also tried to increase the funds allotted towards the educational field.

## **CONCLUSION**

It can be said that the current education system of Hong Kong is very nice and competitive, but it also has a few flaws. The highly teaching oriented system is not suitable for everyone and the ones whose performance is below average are left with a very limited amount of choices and hence feel frustrated and hopeless. With the amount of burden on students, the creative side is very hard to discover. Currently, the education system is focusing on the theoretical aspects and hence do not give much needed importance to the exchange of ideas. Current education system focuses on quantity and students are given 2 hours of daily homework aside from extra-curricular activities and the critics have many times stated that history is a meaningless subject as students must only memorize the text and write down the same in papers which is of no great importance as there is no knowledge sharing in the procedure. The education system in Hong Kong is too much dependent on quantity rather than quality at present.

Due to a lower birth rate, the primary schools face a shortage of students and hence try to cut down their expenses by reducing the staff size and working hours of schools. But this low birth rate gave rise to an opportunity to address short class teaching and capitalize on the current situation.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. Retrieved from <http://www.studyinhongkong.edu.hk/en/hong-kong-education/education-system.php> (2018, 01 25). Retrieved from <http://www.studyinhongkong.edu.hk/en/hong-kong-education/education-system.php> <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1352/Singapore-SUMMARY.html>. (2018, 01 25).
2. <https://www.eduhk.hk>. (2018, 01 25). Retrieved from <https://www.eduhk.hk/apcl/downloadables/Publications/2009/Hong%20Kong%20educational%20reforms%20in%20the%201st%20decade.pdf>
3. *singapore education*. (2018, 01 25). Retrieved from <http://www.singaporeeducation.info/Education-System/index.html>