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IIT entry turns into a lopsided 'board game', 80% candidates from 3 boards

Hemali Chhapia, TNN | Jul 11, 2013, 04:58 AM IST



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MUMBAI: For long, when it came to getting into an [Indian Institute of Technology](#), signing up with the right coaching centre was what mattered more than which school board you attended. But the new entrance exam system, which gives weightage to class XII scores of candidates, has changed the rules of the game in one fell swoop.

The list of candidates selected last week for the IITs showed that a vast majority of the successful candidates - more than 8,000 out of 9,700 - or over 80% came from just three school boards: the CBSE, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab state boards.

"More than 5,500 students come from the [CBSE](#) board. Then, there are close to 1,800 of them from Andhra Pradesh and another 750 from Punjab," said JEE (advanced) chairman H C Gupta, about this year's list. There are 30 other boards in India from where a small count of students has qualified.

"There are anywhere between five and 10 to a little more than a 100 students from some other boards," Gupta said.

In other words, if you want to get into one of these premier engineering institutes, it appears that passing class XII from one of these boards gives you an edge over competition.

Because it never mattered earlier, the IITs do not have records on the school boards that students had attended, giving little data to make any historical comparisons. Nevertheless, it is well-known that the CBSE board sends the largest chunk of students to the IITs every year.

"We always knew that many students come from the CBSE board. But we had no clue which other state boards sent more students to the IITs," said [IIT Roorkee](#) director Pradipto Banerjee.

Statistics from the IITs show that in JEE 2010, of the qualified candidates, 58% were from CBSE, 36% from state boards and 6% from ICSE. While 3.5% of the CBSE candidates qualified, it was 2.3% for state boards and 2.7% for ICSE.

In 2011, of the 13,196 qualified candidates, 543 were from [ICSE](#) (4.1%), 7,396 from CBSE (56%), and 5,195 from state boards (39.4%). "It is noted that the participation and the performance of the candidates from state boards have improved in JEE-2011 in comparison to previous years," an analytical report released by the IITs read.

Many students say a whimsical selection process has given an unfair advantage to students of certain boards. But IIT officials rubbish that. "Honestly, we had no clue that the Punjab state board would rank up there among the top three. We feel making it to the IITs has a lot to do with the coaching facilities available to students," said an IIT director.

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