**Low-Risk Investment Options in Major Indian Banks (HDFC, ICICI, SBI, Kotak Mahindra, Axis Bank)**

This document provides comprehensive insights into low-risk investment opportunities offered by leading Indian banks. These include Fixed Deposits (FDs), Savings Accounts, Certificates of Deposit (CDs), and the Public Provident Fund (PPF).

### **1. Fixed Deposits (FDs)**

FDs are one of the most popular low-risk investment tools in India. They involve depositing a lump sum amount for a fixed tenure at a predetermined interest rate. Below is a detailed look at FD options provided by each bank:

**HDFC Bank:** Offers interest rates ranging from 3.00% to 7.25% per annum for general citizens and 3.50% to 7.75% for senior citizens. The available tenures range from 7 days to 10 years. FDs can be opened online or in branch and allow for monthly, quarterly, or cumulative interest payouts. Premature withdrawals are allowed but may be subject to a penalty. Tax Saver FDs with a 5-year lock-in are also available under Section 80C.

**ICICI Bank:** Provides FD interest rates between 3.00% and 7.20% for general customers, and up to 7.70% for senior citizens. Tenure options also range from 7 days to 10 years. Customers can choose between cumulative and non-cumulative deposits. Special FDs for 400, 500, and 1000 days are available at slightly higher rates. Interest is compounded quarterly and is subject to TDS.

**State Bank of India (SBI):** Offers interest rates between 3.00% and 7.10% for general depositors, and 3.50% to 7.60% for senior citizens. SBI provides special term deposits like “Amrit Kalash” with higher returns for specific periods. FD tenure ranges from 7 days to 10 years. Tax-saving FDs and SBI’s “Multi Option Deposit” (MOD) facility allow partial withdrawals while earning FD rates on the remaining balance.

**Kotak Mahindra Bank:** Interest rates range from 2.75% to 7.40% for general citizens and from 3.25% to 7.90% for senior citizens. FD tenures start at 7 days and go up to 10 years. Kotak offers flexible interest payout options (monthly/quarterly) and allows auto-renewal of FDs. Special tenure FDs such as 390 days or 23 months may offer higher rates. Senior citizens receive a preferential rate.

**Axis Bank:** Offers interest rates ranging from 3.00% to 7.25% for regular depositors and 3.50% to 7.75% for senior citizens. Tenure options span from 7 days to 10 years. Customers can select from cumulative or non-cumulative interest payout plans. Tax Saver FDs with a 5-year lock-in are eligible for deductions under Section 80C. Axis also provides an FD calculator to estimate maturity amounts online.

**Common Features Across Banks:**

* Premature withdrawal allowed with possible penalty
* Nomination facility available
* Interest payout options: monthly, quarterly, or at maturity
* TDS applicable if annual interest exceeds ₹40,000 (₹50,000 for senior citizens)
* Tax-saving options with 5-year lock-in available under Section 80C

**2.SAVINGS ACCOUNT**

**HDFC Bank** offers a savings account interest rate of 3.00% per annum on balances below ₹50 lakh and 3.50% on balances of ₹50 lakh and above. The minimum balance requirement in metro areas is ₹10,000. Customers are provided with a debit card that includes transaction and withdrawal limits. HDFC supports full online and mobile banking features, including fund transfers and UPI. It also offers an auto-sweep facility through the “MoneyMaximizer” account, which converts surplus balance into fixed deposits for higher returns.

**ICICI Bank** provides 3.00% interest per annum for balances below ₹50 lakh and 3.50% for balances of ₹50 lakh and above. A minimum balance of ₹10,000 is required in urban areas. Customers get access to a debit card with reward programs and withdrawal limits. The bank supports comprehensive digital banking via the iMobile app and internet banking. ICICI also offers an auto-sweep feature under the “Savings Plus Account,” which links to fixed deposits for better earnings.

**State Bank of India (SBI)** offers a flat savings account interest rate of 2.70% per annum, irrespective of the account balance. The minimum required balance is ₹3,000 in metro areas and ₹1,000 in rural branches. Customers receive a globally accepted debit card. SBI enables full digital access through its YONO app and Online SBI portal. The bank offers an auto-sweep facility via its “Savings Plus” account, which links the savings account to Multi Option Deposits (MODs).

**Kotak Mahindra Bank** provides savings account interest rates of up to 4.00% per annum, depending on the account balance. The regular savings account requires a minimum balance of ₹10,000, while the Kotak 811 account allows zero balance. Debit cards offered by Kotak come with premium benefits and high transaction limits. Digital banking is fully enabled via the Kotak 811 app and online services. The bank offers an auto-sweep facility where excess funds are moved into fixed deposits for better returns.

**Axis Bank** offers 3.00% interest per annum on balances less than ₹50 lakh and 3.50% on balances of ₹50 lakh and above. A minimum balance of ₹12,000 is required in metro and urban areas. Customers get debit cards with various shopping and travel perks. The Axis Mobile app and online banking portals provide 24/7 digital banking access. Axis also provides an auto-sweep facility through its “Encash 24 Flexi Deposit,” which links surplus funds to FDs.

### **3. Certificates of Deposit (CDs)**

### **Certificates of Deposit (CDs) – Detailed Overview**

**HDFC Bank** issues Certificates of Deposit as per RBI guidelines primarily to institutional and high-net-worth investors. These CDs are available in dematerialized form and require a minimum investment of ₹1 lakh. The maturity period can range from 7 days to 1 year. The interest rates on HDFC CDs are market-driven and usually slightly higher than regular FDs, depending on liquidity conditions. These CDs are non-renewable and generally non-withdrawable before maturity.

**ICICI Bank** offers Certificates of Deposit to corporate and institutional investors with a minimum denomination of ₹1 lakh. These are issued in demat form and cannot be redeemed before maturity. The tenure ranges from 7 days to 1 year, and interest is paid at maturity. Rates are typically competitive and vary with market trends. ICICI CDs are tradable in the secondary market, offering some level of liquidity if needed.

**State Bank of India (SBI)** provides Certificates of Deposit mainly to large investors, such as companies and mutual funds. The minimum amount for investment is ₹1 lakh, and the tenure ranges between 7 days and 1 year. SBI’s CD rates are determined based on market conditions and liquidity demands. These instruments are issued only in dematerialized form and are not subject to premature withdrawal, though they are tradable on the secondary market.

**Kotak Mahindra Bank** offers CDs to eligible investors like corporations and financial institutions. The minimum investment required is ₹1 lakh, with maturity periods typically spanning 7 days to 1 year. The interest rate is fixed at the time of issuance and is generally higher than the bank’s fixed deposit rates. These CDs are issued in demat form, are non-negotiable before maturity, and can be sold in the secondary market under certain conditions.

**Axis Bank** issues Certificates of Deposit to institutional clients, conforming to RBI norms. The face value starts from ₹1 lakh, and the maturity tenure ranges from 7 days up to one year. Interest is paid at maturity, and the yield is decided based on prevailing market rates. Axis CDs are issued in electronic form and are not available for premature encashment but can be traded on the secondary market.

### **Key Common Features Across Banks:**

* CDs are available only in dematerialized (electronic) format.
* Minimum investment amount: ₹1 lakh.
* Maturity: 7 days to 1 year.
* Interest is fixed and paid on maturity
* Premature withdrawal is not allowed.
* CDs are tradable in the secondary market

### **4. Public Provident Fund (PPF)**

PPF is a government-backed savings scheme offering tax benefits and fixed returns.

The current PPF interest rate is 7.1% per annum, compounded annually. The scheme has a tenure of 15 years, with options for extension. Investors can contribute a minimum of ₹500 and a maximum of ₹1.5 lakh per financial year. The PPF offers EEE (Exempt-Exempt-Exempt) tax benefits, meaning investments, interest earned, and maturity amount are all tax-free. Partial withdrawals are allowed after the 7th year, and loans can be availed between the 3rd and 6th year.

### **Public Provident Fund (PPF) – Detailed Overview**

The **Public Provident Fund (PPF)** is a long-term, government-backed savings scheme designed to provide safe and tax-free returns to Indian citizens. It is available through all major public and private sector banks, including HDFC, ICICI, SBI, Kotak Mahindra, and Axis Bank.

The **current interest rate on PPF is 7.1% per annum**, compounded annually, and it is reviewed quarterly by the Ministry of Finance. The interest earned is fully exempt from tax under Section 10 of the Income Tax Act.

The **tenure of a PPF account is 15 years**, which can be extended in blocks of 5 years after maturity. Investors must deposit a **minimum of ₹500 and can invest up to ₹1.5 lakh per financial year**. Contributions can be made in a lump sum or in a maximum of 12 installments annually.

PPF investments fall under the **EEE tax category** (Exempt-Exempt-Exempt), meaning the invested amount, interest earned, and maturity proceeds are all exempt from tax under Section 80C, making it one of the most tax-efficient savings tools available.

Partial withdrawals are permitted **after completion of the 7th year**, and **loans can be availed between the 3rd and 6th year** against the balance in the account. The loan amount can be up to 25% of the balance at the end of the second financial year preceding the year of loan application.

All the mentioned banks offer PPF account services through **both online and offline channels**. Customers can open and manage their PPF accounts using internet banking or by visiting a branch. Contributions can be automated via standing instructions.

The PPF scheme is best suited for **long-term wealth creation and retirement planning**, especially for risk-averse investors seeking **stable, sovereign-guaranteed returns**.

### **Investment Advisory Considerations:**

1. **Risk Appetite:** All listed options are low-risk. PPF has sovereign backing.
2. **Liquidity Needs:** Savings accounts and FDs (with premature withdrawal) offer more liquidity.
3. **Investment Horizon:** PPF for long-term, FDs/CDs for medium term, savings for short-term.
4. **Taxation:** FDs/CDs are taxable; PPF is tax-free under Section 80C.
5. **Senior Citizens:** Opt for senior citizen FD schemes to maximize returns.
6. **Diversification:** Use a mix of instruments to balance returns and liquidity.

### **Final Recommendation**

A well-diversified low-risk portfolio could include:

* 40% in Fixed Deposits (laddering for liquidity)
* 20% in Savings Account (for daily expenses and emergency fund)
* 20% in PPF (for tax savings and long-term growth)
* 20% in Certificates of Deposit (for higher short-term returns)

Consult a certified financial advisor to tailor this strategy to your individual goals and tax situation.

### HDFC Asset Allocator Fund of Funds

* **Returns (1 Year):** 15.46%
* **Performance Summary:**
  + Scheme Returns (%): 1 Year: 9.97%, 3 Years: 15.22%, Since Inception: 15.46%
  + Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 7.08%, 3 Years: 10.49%, Since Inception: 11.31%
  + Additional Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 1.89%, 3 Years: 10.92%, Since Inception: 12.82%
  + Value of Investment of ₹10,000:
    - Scheme: 1 Year: ₹10,996.83, 3 Years: ₹15,300.35, Since Inception: ₹17,320.00
    - Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹10,708.24, 3 Years: ₹13,494.03, Since Inception: ₹15,061.27
    - Additional Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹10,189.46, 3 Years: ₹13,651.86, Since Inception: ₹15,858.49
* **Top Allocations:**
  + HDFC Flexi Cap Fund - Direct Plan- Growth Option: 17.79%
  + HDFC Large Cap Fund - Direct Plan - Growth Option: 17.02%
  + HDFC Short Term Debt Fund - Growth Option - Direct Plan: 14.08%
  + HDFC Gold Exchange Traded Fund: 13.25%
* **Additional Details:**
  + NAV: 11.31%
  + Risk Level: High Risk
  + Benchmark: 90% NIFTY 50 Hybrid Composite Debt 65:35 Index + 10% Domestic Gold Prices
  + Minimum Investment: ₹100.00

### HDFC Equity Savings Fund

* **Returns (1 Year):** 10.22%
* **Performance Summary:**
  + Scheme Returns (%): 1 Year: 4.89%, 3 Years: 10.09%, 5 Years: 12.01%, 10 Years: 10.10%, Since Inception: 10.22%
  + Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 5.92%, 3 Years: 8.33%, 5 Years: 9.88%, 10 Years: 8.38%, Since Inception: 9.25%
  + Additional Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 9.06%, 3 Years: 6.76%, 5 Years: 5.41%, 10 Years: 6.55%, Since Inception: 6.59%
  + Value of Investment of ₹10,000:
    - Scheme: 1 Year: ₹10,489.03, 3 Years: ₹13,346.59, 5 Years: ₹17,640.11, 10 Years: ₹26,208.20, Since Inception: ₹32,684.77
    - Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹10,592.35, 3 Years: ₹12,714.66, 5 Years: ₹16,027.83, 10 Years: ₹22,383.89, Since Inception: ₹29,342.10
    - Additional Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹10,906.10, 3 Years: ₹12,172.06, 5 Years: ₹13,014.85, 10 Years: ₹18,868.43, Since Inception: ₹21,745.69
* **Top Allocations:**
  + HDFC Bank Ltd.: 8.73%
  + Reliance Industries Ltd.: 5.61%
  + ICICI Bank Ltd.: 5.15%
* **Additional Details:**
  + NAV: 9.25%
  + Risk Level: Moderately High Risk
  + Benchmark: NIFTY Equity Savings Index
  + Minimum Investment: ₹100.00

### HDFC Flexi Cap Fund

* **Returns (1 Year):** 16.44%
* **Performance Summary:**
  + Scheme Returns (%): 1 Year: 10.05%, 3 Years: 22.19%, 5 Years: 24.12%, 10 Years: 14.51%, Since Inception: 16.44%
  + Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: -0.08%, 3 Years: 12.70%, 5 Years: 17.78%, 10 Years: 11.91%, Since Inception: 13.67%
  + Additional Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 1.89%, 3 Years: 10.92%, 5 Years: 15.94%, 10 Years: 10.95%, Since Inception: 12.76%
  + Value of Investment of ₹10,000:
    - Scheme: 1 Year: ₹11,005.06, 3 Years: ₹18,253.68, 5 Years: ₹29,495.93, 10 Years: ₹38,829.92, Since Inception: ₹63,719.84
    - Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹9,991.76, 3 Years: ₹14,319.97, 5 Years: ₹22,682.95, 10 Years: ₹30,845.27, Since Inception: ₹47,535.46
    - Additional Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹10,189.46, 3 Years: ₹13,651.86, 5 Years: ₹20,966.19, 10 Years: ₹28,308.42, Since Inception: ₹43,097.81
* **Top Allocations:**
  + HDFC Bank Ltd.: 9.73%
  + ICICI Bank Ltd.: 9.29%
  + Axis Bank Ltd.: 8.87%
* **Additional Details:**
  + NAV: 13.67%
  + Risk Level: Very High Risk
  + Benchmark: NIFTY 500 Total Returns Index
  + Minimum Investment: ₹100.00

### **HDFC Gold ETF Fund of Fund**

* **Returns (1 Year):** 7.54%
* **Performance Summary:**
  + Scheme Returns (%): 1 Year: 34.79%, 3 Years: 17.65%, 5 Years: 13.86%, 10 Years: 11.32%, Since Inception: 7.54%
  + Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 36.63%, 3 Years: 18.48%, 5 Years: 14.74%, 10 Years: 12.34%, Since Inception: 8.77%
  + Value of Investment of ₹10,000:
    - Scheme: 1 Year: ₹13,478.84, 3 Years: ₹16,290.27, 5 Years: ₹19,148.03, 10 Years: ₹29,269.70, Since Inception: ₹24,213.55
    - Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹13,662.59, 3 Years: ₹16,637.54, 5 Years: ₹19,898.59, 10 Years: ₹32,066.04, Since Inception: ₹27,797.57
* **Top Allocations:**
  + HDFC Gold Exchange Traded Fund: 99.71%
* **Additional Details:**
  + NAV: 8.77%
  + Risk Level: High Risk
  + Benchmark: Domestic Price of Physical Gold
  + Minimum Investment: ₹100.00

### **HDFC Large Cap Fund**

* **Returns (1 Year):** 13.74%
* **Performance Summary:**
  + Scheme Returns (%): 1 Year: 1.25%, 3 Years: 15.77%, 5 Years: 18.51%, 10 Years: 11.79%, Since Inception: 13.74%
  + Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 0.91%, 3 Years: 10.94%, 5 Years: 15.99%, 10 Years: 11.12%, Since Inception: 13.00%
  + Value of Investment of ₹10,000:
    - Scheme: 1 Year: ₹10,124.91, 3 Years: ₹15,521.97, 5 Years: ₹23,397.36, 10 Years: ₹30,526.39, Since Inception: ₹47,907.03
    - Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹10,091.49, 3 Years: ₹13,658.18, 5 Years: ₹21,014.45, 10 Years: ₹28,747.78, Since Inception: ₹44,234.14
* **Top Allocations:**
  + HDFC Bank Ltd.: 10.28%
  + ICICI Bank Ltd.: 9.62%
  + Larsen and Toubro Ltd.: 5.66%
* **Additional Details:**
  + NAV: 13.00%
  + Risk Level: Very High Risk
  + Benchmark: NIFTY 100 (Total Return Index)
  + Minimum Investment: ₹100.00

### **HDFC Arbitrage Fund**

* **Returns (1 Year):** 6.41%
* **Performance Summary:**
  + Scheme Returns (%): 1 Year: 7.89%, 3 Years: 7.01%, 5 Years: 5.77%, 10 Years: 6.26%, Since Inception: 6.41%
  + Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 7.52%, 3 Years: 6.74%, 5 Years: 5.26%, 10 Years: 5.58%, Since Inception: 5.83%
  + Value of Investment of ₹10,000:
    - Scheme: 1 Year: ₹10,789.34, 3 Years: ₹12,255.15, 5 Years: ₹13,244.73, 10 Years: ₹18,361.01, Since Inception: ₹19,683.00
    - Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹10,752.32, 3 Years: ₹12,163.35, 5 Years: ₹12,924.97, 10 Years: ₹17,225.63, Since Inception: ₹18,558.92
* **Top Allocations:**
  + Reliance Industries Ltd.: 7.32%
  + ICICI Bank Ltd.: 5.57%
  + Axis Bank Ltd.: 5.15%
* **Additional Details:**
  + NAV: 5.83%
  + Risk Level: Low Risk
  + Benchmark: NIFTY 50 Arbitrage Index
  + Minimum Investment: ₹100.00

### **HDFC Balanced Advantage Fund**

* **Returns (1 Year):** 15.31%
* **Performance Summary:**
  + Scheme Returns (%): 1 Year: 4.77%, 3 Years: 19.76%, 5 Years: 20.90%, 10 Years: 13.56%, Since Inception: 15.31%
  + Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 4.96%, 3 Years: 8.86%, 5 Years: 11.80%, 10 Years: 9.62%, Since Inception: 10.62%
  + Value of Investment of ₹10,000:
    - Scheme: 1 Year: ₹10,477.26, 3 Years: ₹17,186.50, 5 Years: ₹25,855.03, 10 Years: ₹35,705.38, Since Inception: ₹56,616.38
    - Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹10,496.29, 3 Years: ₹12,903.37, 5 Years: ₹17,477.53, 10 Years: ₹25,080.87, Since Inception: ₹34,147.74
* **Top Allocations:**
  + HDFC Bank Ltd.: 5.71%
  + ICICI Bank Ltd.: 3.73%
  + Infosys Limited: 3.43%
* **Additional Details:**
  + NAV: 10.62%
  + Risk Level: Very High Risk
  + Benchmark: NIFTY 50 Hybrid Composite Debt 50:50 Index
  + Minimum Investment: ₹100.00

### **HDFC Banking & Financial Services Fund**

* **Returns (1 Year):** 12.32%
* **Performance Summary:**
  + Scheme Returns (%): 1 Year: 5.49%, 3 Years: 15.28%, Since Inception: 12.32%
  + Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 13.98%, 3 Years: 11.82%, Since Inception: 10.65%
  + Value of Investment of ₹10,000:
    - Scheme: 1 Year: ₹10,549.24, 3 Years: ₹15,324.86, Since Inception: ₹15,308.00
    - Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹11,398.45, 3 Years: ₹13,986.85, Since Inception: ₹14,490.59
* **Top Allocations:**
  + HDFC Bank Ltd.: 22.24%
  + ICICI Bank Ltd.: 17.67%
  + Axis Bank Ltd.: 6.53%
* **Additional Details:**
  + NAV: 10.65%
  + Risk Level: Very High Risk
  + Benchmark: NIFTY Financial Services TRI
  + Minimum Investment: ₹100.00

### **HDFC Banking and PSU Debt Fund**

* **Returns (1 Year):** 7.96%
* **Performance Summary:**
  + Scheme Returns (%): 1 Year: 7.76%, 3 Years: 6.55%, 5 Years: 6.61%, 10 Years: 7.85%, Since Inception: 7.96%
  + Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 7.44%, 3 Years: 5.83%, 5 Years: 6.03%, 10 Years: 7.04%, Since Inception: 7.37%
  + Value of Investment of ₹10,000:
    - Scheme: 1 Year: ₹10,776.05, 3 Years: ₹12,100.14, 5 Years: ₹13,777.36, 10 Years: ₹21,309.24, Since Inception: ₹23,100.50
    - Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹10,744.46, 3 Years: ₹11,854.89, 5 Years: ₹13,404.76, 10 Years: ₹19,763.88, Since Inception: ₹21,757.11
* **Top Allocations:**
  + 7.18% GOI MAT 140833: 3.86%
  + Indian Railways Finance Corp. Ltd.: 4.72%
  + Small Industries Development Bank: 3.85%
* **Additional Details:**
  + NAV: 7.37%
  + Risk Level: Moderate Risk
  + Benchmark: Nifty Banking & PSU Debt Index A-II
  + Minimum Investment: ₹100.00

### **HDFC NIFTY 50 Index Fund**

* **Returns (1 Year):** 12.41%
* **Performance Summary:**
  + Scheme Returns (%): 1 Year: 1.58%, 3 Years: 10.62%, 5 Years: 15.52%, 10 Years: 10.63%, Since Inception: 12.41%
  + Benchmark Returns (%): 1 Year: 1.89%, 3 Years: 10.92%, 5 Years: 15.94%, 10 Years: 10.95%, Since Inception: 12.76%
  + Value of Investment of ₹10,000:
    - Scheme: 1 Year: ₹10,158.30, 3 Years: ₹13,541.16, 5 Years: ₹20,591.72, 10 Years: ₹27,492.36, Since Inception: ₹41,507.55
    - Benchmark: 1 Year: ₹10,189.46, 3 Years: ₹13,651.86, 5 Years: ₹20,966.19, 10 Years: ₹28,308.42, Since Inception: ₹43,097.81
* **Top Allocations:**
  + HDFC Bank Ltd.: 13.30%
  + ICICI Bank Ltd.: 8.58%
  + Reliance Industries Ltd.: 8.23%
* **Additional Details:**
  + NAV: 12.76%
  + Risk Level: Very High Risk
  + Benchmark: NIFTY 50 Index (Total Returns Index)
  + Minimum Investment: ₹100.00