

CHAPTER-I

Significance of Pre-primary Education with Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE)

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) was given a place of importance in National Policy on Education 1986 in the context of all round development of child and in achieving the goals of universalization of elementary education (UEE). Since then there has been appreciable increase in the number of ECCE centres both in Government and non-Government sectors.

There is a growing realization in the world today, particularly in the developing countries, that Investment in human, resource development is the key to the progress and societal health of any nation. In view of the fact therefore that human development. In essentially cumulative in nature and that the rate of development is highest in the first six years of life, the early childhood years become critical for all subsequent development of the personalty. Our own Indian scriptures consider this period to be important for Instilling the "sankaras" in the child and advocate 'laiayat' or an affection filled, indulgent child rearing at this stage as against 'tadayat' or a rigid discipline advocated for the next stage of development. (Kaul 1997).

The significance of quality Pre-primary education emerges from this context since it serves to compensate for environmental deficiencies and deprivations for children from the lower socio-economic strata. For the middle and high socio-economic categories it is necessitated because of the breaking down of the extended family system, the overwhelming increase in the numbers of women joining the work force as well as because of the pressures and preoccupations of the present way of life.

High quality Pre-primary education serves a dual purpose. It provides a strong foundation for the life long development of a child and as a short term benefit it prepares the child for the demands of primary schooling. Research studies conducted by NCERT

and other institutions in the country have demonstrated a significant positive impact of Early Childhood Education on retention rates in primary grades. Several researches have demonstrated the favourable impact of ECE on learning and achievement as well. The National Policy on Education (1986/92) has in conformity with this thinking also laid a great deal of emphasis on ECE and stressed the significance of making it development oriented with use of play way methodology. It has cautioned regarding the dangers of reducing it to teaching of the 3R's. The holistic and integrated concept of ECCE has now been further emphasized by terming ECCE universally as Early childhood development.

The Yashpal committee set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to examine curriculum load in school education has also endorsed that there should be no formal teaching of the 3R's at the pre-primary stage. It has also recommended abolishing of the admission test and Interviews at this stage and raising of the entry age to regular schools at pre-primary stage to 3½ to 4 years.

In terms of quantitative expansion ECE has seen an unprecedented expansion in the last few years. In the private sector, nursery schools and kindergartens have mushroomed at a phenomenal pace in urban areas and are gradually becoming more and more visible in the rural areas as well. In addition, balwadis and Anganwadi is are also functioning in various states.

1.1.2 Status of Pre School Curriculum

Surveys conducted in more than 10 cities in the country of 'prestigious' schools have uniformly indicated that play based development oriented ECE programmes as advocated in the National Policy on Education are more an exception than the norm. (Kaul, 1997). The curriculum surveys in all the cities indicate that children as young as three to four years are being taught the syllabus prescribed for not only grade-1 but even grade-2 in many cases for which they are neither cognitively nor physically mature enough. The school require children to go through admission tests and interviews which lead in most cases to experiences of rejection and anxiety in these very early years which can be

Based on a working paper titled "Pressures on the Preschool child; Issues and Strategies and Role of of Professional Organisation by Venita Kaul, NCERT (1997).

severely detrimental for personality development.

Children are made to give regular tests and examinations and get a regular dose of home work as well. Wherever play way method is reported to be practised, most cases play is demonstrated as supplementing the regular academic programme rather than being an integral part of it. Cases are also not rare when the parents are interviewed along with children by the so called english medium private schools.

1.3 Historical Perspective

Many educational thinkers, philosophers and psychologists both from the west and in India have done extensive research and experimental work in the area of early childhood education. Notable contributions have been made in this context by : Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670), Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1798), Henry Pestalozzi (1746-1827), Frindiuch Wilhelm August Froe bel (1782-1852) 5. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), John Dewey (1859-1952), Jean Piaget (1896-1980), Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Rabindra Nath Tagore (1861-1941)

Through a review of the contributions made by each above it may be concluded that the child is intrinsically curious. He is motivated to learn. Restrictive environment, emotional insecurity and stress of any kind tend to stifle this motivation. The work of piaget tells that development is function of both maturation and learning. Further, children at the Pre-primary stage differ in their needs, Interests and abilities and develop in different ways at different rates. Play, games and activities form the best medium for their learning.

Pre-school Movement in India

Pre-primary schools were first established to meet social needs such as looking after the children of working mothers or providing a suitable environment to little boys and girls from Urban families whose small Flats were hardly appropriate for the children's proper growth. Perier to 1947 little attention was paid to Pre-primary education and it was not even regarded as a State responsibility.



Pre-Independence Initiatives

The origin of Indian pre-schools can be traced back to the end of the 19th century when efforts by some private enterprises in this direction can be seen. Some of the earliest missionary efforts gave birth to institutions like Loreto Convent School, Lucknow (1874), Hilda's Nursery school, Poona (1885), Saidapeth High School, Madras (1888) Sholapur Kindergarten School for training teachers (1901-1902).

Later in the year 1924 Dakshinamurti Training College at Bhavnagar came up followed by others. Missionaries were mainly responsible for establishing and propagating kindergartens in this country. Other Landmark dates in the development of Pre-school Education in India during the Pre 1947 period.

1926 Formation of Nutan Balakrishnan Sangh. Starting of two Experimental pre-schools one in Gujarat and the other in Maharashtra.

1934 Besant Memorial School with Montessori section at Adyar.

1939, 1947 Visit of Dr. Maria Montessori to India Conduct of training courses in Montessori methods.

However, the real credit of shaping the pre-school education movement in India should go to the untiring efforts and models provided by Mrs. Annie Besant and Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. It was because of them that pre-school education, which was till then limited to missionaries, theosophists, rich and higher classes and few private hands, spread on a nationwide scale.

For the first time in our educational history the Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education on post-war Educational Development in India (1944), emphasised its significance and recommended that an adequate provision of pre-primary education should be an essential adjunct of a national system of education.

It emphasised the need for providing free pre-primary education in separate nursery schools or in nursery sections attached to junior basic schools. The Reports advocated the appointment of only trained women teachers for these schools. Then Mahatama Gandhi gave his scheme of pre-basic education for children below the age of seven.

Post-Independence Initiatives

Pre-primary education has been rapidly gaining in popularity in the post-independence period.

In 1950-51, the numbers of pre-primary schools was only 303 with 866 teachers and an enrolment of about 28,000. In 1965-66 the number of pre-primary schools increased to 3,500 with 6,500 teachers and a total enrolment of about 250,000. These were mainly urban institutions. In rural areas excellent pioneering work has been done by the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) and community development administration which have been running balwadis.

Pre-school education as the base of the National system of education was formally recognised by the Government of India for the first time during the Third five-year plan when it directed the central welfare board to survey the child care needs and status in the country by setting up a special committee. Report of this committee, made comprehensive recommendations, during this period not only was there a rise in the number of Balwadis (3700 to 5761) but also training centres were set up for the training of Balsevikas.

The fourth five - year plan directed its efforts to the training of teachers and production of teaching materials for better implementation of pre-school education. Fifth five year plan with a focus on child welfare in rural, tribal and slum areas.

Grewal (1984) notes that National Policy Resolution for Childrens Board was constituted. The (ICDS) integrated child development scheme ((ICDS) was introduced in 33 experimental areas which provided supplymentary nutrition, immunizations, health check, referral services, nutrition, health education and non-formal education to children

in the age group 0-6 years.

The sixth five year plan onwards a more broad based nomenclature of "early childhood education", has replaced the name of pre-school education".

During sixth and seventh five year plans special attention is being given to the welfare of mother and child belonging to under privileged groups. The programme has now become much more comprehensive in scope, integrated in nature and systematically planned for the development of the "total child".

The importance and usefulness of pre-primary education has been recognised by the education commission (1964-66).

As per the latest policy documents ECE in India will involve itself in the care and education of children from birth to six years.

In recent years ECCE programmes are being made in such manner that they should include components of health, nutrition and pre-school education..

The objective is to ensure all round development of the child during this period of rapid physical and mental growth, it contributes to the goal of universalization of primary education on the one hand and acts as support service to the working women on the other.

Since, 1969 when the National Council of Educational Research and training through its department of pre-primary and primary education became actively associated with the development of Pre-primary school education in India. The long term and short term benefits of quality ECE programme have been researched and documented.

1.1.3 Nature, Aims and Objectives of Pre-primary Education

Pre-primary education has assumed great significance in educational development. This is so particularly in the context of universalization of elementary education. Pre-primary education helps in smoother transition of the child from home to school or from an informal atmosphere to a formal one. Driven by economic compulsions both parents seek jobs. They have to remain away from home for long hours. Pre-primary schools provide them an alternative where their children can feel at home. These schools meet the needs of children both physically and psychologically. Children develop "school readiness" during their stay in a pre-school.

1.3 Nature of Pre-Primary Education And Its Importance

A child acquires most of the personal and social habits before attaining the age of six. During these impressionable years the child has no inhibition. There is no rigidity in his thinking. Through rich and varied pre-school activities his creativity and problem solving capability can be developed and enhanced considerably. Bloom (1964) through his research on growth of intelligence has shown that half of the total intellectual development of the child is completed by the time he is four years old.

Pre-primary schooling is desirable for all children. It is more so for those coming from poorer and disadvantaged sections of the society. During this educationally potent period of life stimulating environment and facilities provide advantage in developing intellectual and physical skills.

Children form healthy personal and social value systems through Pre-primary education. It can promote personal and environmental cleanliness. Children may be medically examined regularly and remedial actions taken. Stressing the importance of a balanced diet and encouraging curiosity are other functions of Pre-primary education. The foundations of scientific attitude and proper values such as hard work, national sentiment, systematic work habits and manners could be developed better if a beginning

is made in early childhood.

The pre-primary years have been described as very critical because the rate of development during these years is more rapid than any other stage of development. In order to actualise the potentialities of the children during these years require specialised attention within a stimulating environment. The Pre-primary school environment is designed to provide.

- wide exposure to objects and events.
- variety of experiences
- opportunity to observe, manipulate, express and experiment
- enriched interactions
- security freedom and a desirable direction

1.1.4 General Objectives

Pre-school Education provides reading, writing, readiness, cognitive, language and other physical skills combined with his personal and social development. These help the child adjust better in primary schools, thereby contributing to the goal of universalization of elementary education. The programme may also have a positive impact on girls enrolment at the early stage because they will be relieved of the responsibility of the care of their younger siblings.

Pre-primary school programme as envisaged at the national level is a child centred programme. It follows the play-way method and activity approach. It aims at a harmonious development of the child by encouraging interaction with the environment, active participation in group activities and creative problem solving. The pre-school education programme consists of activities and experience for the development of

- a. Physical and motor skills
- b. Cognitive and language skills
- c. Social and emotional skills
- d. Creative and aesthetic appreciation skills.

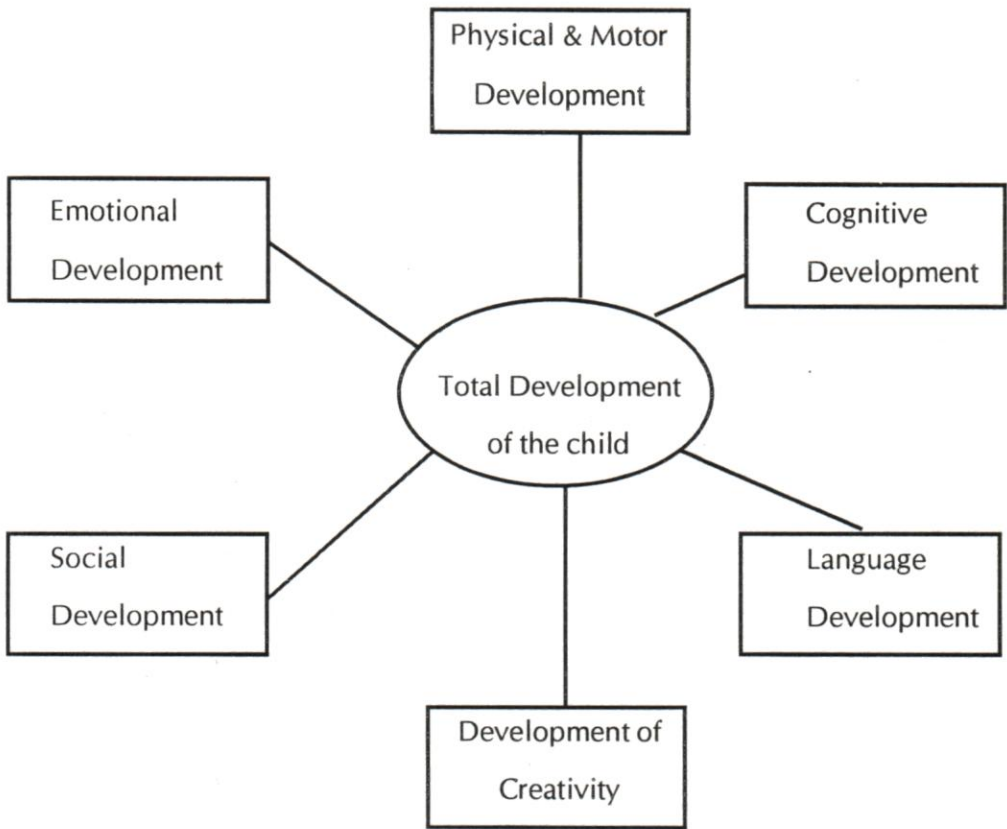


Diagram showing all round development of the child

The broad general objectives of the pre-school education programme as described inter alia in the Report of the Education commission are :

- i. Developing in the child a good physique adequate muscular coordination and basic motor skills.
- ii. Developing in the child good health habits and basic skills necessary for personal adjustment like dressing, eating, washing, cleaning etc.
- iii. Developing ^{desirable} social attitudes and manners to encourage healthy group participation and to make the child. Sensitive to the rights and privileges of others.
- iv. Developing emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control his feelings and emotions.
- v. Encouraging aesthetic appreciation.
- vi. Stimulating intellectual curiosity and helping him understand the world in which he lives.
- vii. Fostering new interests by giving opportunities to explore, investigate and experiment.
- viii. Encouraging independence and creativity by providing the child with sufficient opportunities for self expression.
- ix. Developing the child's ability to express his thoughts and feelings in fluent, correct, clear speech.

1.1.5 Specific Objectives

Social and Emotional Development

- to develop a sense of security in the child.
- to develop desirable personal and social habits.
- to develop positive self concept.
- to develop participation in group activities.
- to develop ability to control ones' behaviour or emotional expressions.

Physical and Motor Development

- to help maintain adequate physical growth.
- to develop Neuro-muscular coordination

Language Development

- to develop listening skills.
- to develop verbal expression skills

Cognitive Development

- to develop skills of classification, sequential thinking and problem solving.
- to help formation of concepts like those of shape, colour, space, size, prenumber, Number of concept, concept of time, temperature, home and environment.

Self Expression and Aesthetic Appreciation

- to develop creative self expression and aesthetic appreciation. The aims of pre-school education as given by the UNESCO in its report "world survey of pre-school education" are social goals, educational goal and development goals and development goals. In this context health care of children has been emphasised by the Report.
- To sum up the desirable goals of pre-primary education programme seem to be:
 1. the development of a positive self concept.
 2. the development of child's capacity as a better functioning individual.
 3. Providing opportunities to be useful member of the community, promoting adaptability and developing helpful attitudes.

A positive self concept gives a tremendous advantage to the child in dealing with life situations.

The contents of pre-primary school programmes emphasise attitude development and environmental

peers, adults and the environment evoke curiosity and interest, skills of course, important and so also the problem-solving approach and a scientific during pre-school group experiences, free and structured play and promotion of desirable, social behaviour lead to more acceptable behaviour patterns.

1.4 ECE programme : Its objectives

The ECE programme that is described in this document has synthesized these major theoretical and pedagogical view points. While this synthesis forms its base the programme has been drawn up to suit the needs and demands of the Indian situation.

The broad objectives of this programme as described in the Report of the Education Commission are !

- To develop in the child good physique adequate muscular coordination and basic Motor skills.
- To develop in the child good health habits and to build up basic skills necessary for personal adjustment such as dressing eating, washing cleaning etc.
- To develop desirable social attitude and manners, to encourage healthy group participation and to make the child sensitive to the rights and privileges of others.
- To develop emotional maturity by guiding the child to express understand accept and control his feelings and emotions.
- To encourage aesthetic appreciation,
- To stimulate intellectual curiosity and to help him understand the world in which he lives and to foster new interests through giving opportunities to explore investigate and experiment.
- To encourage Independence and creativity by providing the child with sufficient opportunities for self expression.
- To develop the child ability to express his thoughts and feelings in fluent correct clear speech.

1.5 Some basic Assumptions in the ECE programme

1. Development is a function of both. Maturation and learning. Regardless of how much environment stimulation children may receive they cannot learn until they are developmentally ready to do so. On the other hand if the environment limits opportunities for learning, children will be unable, to realize their potential. The ECE programme therefore takes into account the developmental readiness of the child as well as the experiential level.
2. Children differ in their needs interests and abilities and develop in different course and every individual normally passes through each major stage of development. The difference may occur due to various factors Viz, hereditary factors, socio-economic conditions, urban-rural differences quality of schooling or lack of it, customs and traditions etc. For example research evidence on Indian children in the age group of 2.5 to 5 years. Indicates that urban children are faster in their development compared to rural and industrial children. While the ECCE programme delineates agewise objective and activities, these need not be strictly adhered to. The guiding factor should be the maturational and experiential level of the child.
3. With in hamogenous group of children, individal differences may also exist. The unique personality of each and every child should be recognized. So should also be recongnized the right of a child to follow his/her unique learning style.
4. Children are intrinsically curious and motivated to learn about the world around them. This motivation to learn may be stifled, however by a restrictive environment or emotional insecurity or stress.
5. Young childrens learing is enhanced. In interactive process. They gain a great deal cognitively as well as socially in the course of intoracting with each other, with adults and with aspects of their environment.
6. Early childhood is critical period for development of communication competence i.e. competence in self expression and in understanding other's. All the basic fanctions of language are strengthened when children are

engaged in active conversation rather than when they are simply passively exposed to language.

7. Children develop not through rote learning but through active exploration and manipulation of their environment. play and activity thus form the best medium for their learning.

1.6 Importance

Early childhood education is Important for the overall development of the child. specifically.

- The first six years of life are "critical" years in a child's life span since the rate of development in these years is more rapid than at any other stage of development.
- To develop to his or her full potential, a child particularly in these years needs a stimulating environment.

By stimulating environment is meant an environment which should provide to a child :-

- (I) exposure to, and opportunities with a variety of experiences objects and places.
- (II) opportunities for meaningful and enriching interaction with adults and others of the peer group.
- (III) an Emotionally secure and supportive environment.

with the perpetually increasing number of mothers joining the work force, the break-up of the traditional joint family system and the mounting tensions and preoccupations of parents resulting from the existing life styles, children often do not get the benefit of a stimulating environment.

Children from the underprivileged sections are particularly deprived in this respect. The parents, who are illiterate, are not able to effectively interact with the children or help them develop appropriate language and cognitive skills. Lack of material comfort and facilities e.g. toys, books, play facilities, etc. only add to their disadvantages. If a child is brought up in this kind of deprived environment in the first six years of this life, it is likely to have

adverse effects on his development, particularly his intellectual and language development.

Early childhood education is very important in this context. An ECE programme provides children with stimulating experiences for cognitive language, physical, social and emotional development of organised effectively, an ECE programme can compensate for the deprivation at the home front and can help the child build a strong foundation which would later facilitate the development of his full potential.

Early childhood education also contributes to the universalization of elementary education.

- It provides a school readiness programme to the child i.e. it prepares him with the necessary concepts, language and physical skills for the later learning of reading, writing and mathematics in the primary grades. It helps the children develop other competencies too e.g. getting along with other children, following a routine programme, learning to sit and concentrate on an activity for a period of time. All these skills and competencies help in adjustment in the first few years of primary school. This to some extent, leads to reduction in the number of drop out and failures at the primary level.
- Since the younger children come to the ECE centre their older sisters are freed from the chores of minding the young ones and can therefore, attend regular school. Indirectly, therefore, early childhood education also has a positive impact on the enrolment of girls.

1.7 Content of pre-primary education

- They tend to be egocentric or self centered and see everything primarily from their own point of view. For example in a play situation, when the children are told to sit quietly. With closed eyes one of the children invariably points out that another child's eyes are open without realizing that by saying so he is also giving himself away! Children at these ages are unable to adjust

their thoughts and the expression of these thoughts from others point of view. Often a story-telling session with preschoolers is accompanied with some what unrelated comments from each child.

- They tend to learn through concrete objects and first hand experiences since the ability for abstract thinking and reasoning has not yet developed.
- Therefore they learn best through activity and play.
- They have a short attention span i.e. the ability to concentrate on or attend to an activity for a length of time. This span ranges from barely 7 minutes to 15 minutes at a time, that too for an activity in which they are physically or mentally involved e.g. story-talling. block building sand play etc. They cannot threfore continue an activity for a longer duration.
- They are curious spontaneous and eager to learn and respond with interest to new thing.
- They are not yet used to large group actitivites and therefore enjoy and benefit more from small group activities.
- They cannot sit still for a long time, for these is an inherent need for mobility and physical activity at this age.
- They are spontaneous and demonstrative in their emotional reactions towards adults and other children.
- They enjoy repetition particularly of stories and songs.
- They respond spontaneously to music rhyme and rhythm.

The ECE method

The ECE method should definitely be the playway method i.e. it should be play and activity based.

Bacause

- Playway method is essentially child centred and centers to Individual needs interests and abilities. Play is second nature to a child. It serves as a natural way for children to express ideas and feeling as well as to explore and understand the world around them. It also helps to build social relations among children. It is thus valuable supporting the all

round development of a child. For importing early childhood education, it therefore becomes an effective medium.

- It provides learning experiences to the child so that the child becomes an active participant and not a passive recipient in the total learning process.

- It provides a balanced process oriented programme which fulfils all development objectives. It nurtures development of learning processes like observation, experimentation, problem solving and creativity in children while also catering to the promotion of their physical, language and social skills.

- It facilitates individual attention and continuous evaluation of each child. Group and individual play activities provide immediate feedback to the ECE teacher/worker on every child.

- It makes learning enjoyable for children and develops in them a sustained motivation for school and schooling of number activities while the other groups can simultaneously work on activities which children can do on their own, for example free play puzzles creative activities etc. The groups can later be rotated to give the different experiences to all the children.

The programme for ECE should be planned keeping in mind both the age as well as the developmental level of the children.

If the ECE worker has to take a group of 3 to 6 year olds together she could divide children into age wise groups. Particularly for reading and writing readiness and cognitive activities. Story telling, rhymes, puppet play conversation can be done in the large group.

Mixed grouping of children belonging to different age groups can also be done. In this kind of grouping children at a higher developmental level can help the other's.

In planning And conducting Activities

Proceed from :-

- concrete to abstract

- Familiar to unfamiliar
- simple to complex

All activities should as far as possible be planned and given in the following sequence;

- Experiences through manipulating Materials that represent real life experiences.
- Experiences through pictures of real life experiences and drawings of objects.
- Working with symbolic or abstract materials for example alphabets and words.

Planing and Implementation :

The ECE method i.e. the playway method include activities like.

free and structured conversation	sand play
story-telling and story-making	water play
dramatisation	puppet play
rhymes and songs	circle/group games and activities.
Music and movement	structured cognitive and language activities with play material.
free indoor play with puzzles	Nature walk.
beads blocks etc.	
out door play	Field trips/outings.

*** Planning is vital for implementing the playway method**

Planning in term of specific objectives and activities should be done both on a long term and short term basis.

By long term "is meant drawing up a plan for the full year as well as each term. Short term planning means drawing up a weekly plan which should include objectives and specific activities for each of the days of week.

While the full year's plan should be drawn up at the beginning of academic year the weekly plan could be prepared on the last day of each week, on a regular basis.

- each days programme must be so planned as to reflect a balance of
- individual and group activities.
- outdoor and indoor activities.
- active and quiet activities.
- activities to foster all aspects of development.



Each weeks programme should be main trained in diary and should be evaluated in terms of achivement of objectives laid out for that week. The subsequent weeks programme should be based on this evaluation.

- The projects specified for the term could provide the theme for the weekly planning. All the activities planned for the week, in that case, should as far as possible be related to the specified theme.
- While planning is essential the ECE programme should also provide for flexibility to accommodate immediate needs and situations for example if the teacher has planned to do an activity an air while the children want to be told a story the teacher should be able to remould her planning within the context of her objectives.

The characterastic feature of the playway methodology is alternating between large and small group activities.

While many activities for example story telling, puppet play etc. Can be conducted in large groups several free play or creative or structured cognitive activities should be given in small groups. The techniques of organizing small group activities with only one adult available is to divide the children into 3 or 4 small groups depending on the total number let one group work on an activity which requires teacher's guidance for example a structured language.

Major programmes / schemes in pre school education.

As seen in the previous section the pre-independence era pre-school education programmes in India took their roots and grew mainly due to the efforts of private enterprises and missionaries backed by the social welfare agencies. In the post-independence period it was the central social welfare Board, set up in 1953, which spearheaded the movement through its own programmes for women and children and also through grant-in-aid to voluntary organisations.

In 1972 a study group was entrusted the task of preparing a programme for the development of pre-school institutions in rural areas with specific emphasis on vulnerable groups of children. The groups suggested five major operational models like comprehensive day care centres, half-day balwadis first stage centre aganwadis rural areas and primary school based centres.

Following this a National policy resolution for children was issued in 1974 and a National children's board was constituted.

A number of early childhood education programmes have been started following the National policy for children. The existing ECE programmes include:-

- 1) ICDS
- 2) Scheme for assistance to voluntary organisations for conducting Early childhood education (ECE) centres.
- 3) Balwadis and day care centres run by voluntary agencies with Government assistance.
- 4) Pre-primary schools run by the state Governments municipal corporations and other governmental and non-governmental agencies.
- 5) Maternal and child health services through primary health centres and sub centres and other agencies.

Integrated child development services (ICDS)

Based on all the previous experiences, recommendations and suggestions the

government adopted a comprehensive and intergated programme of ICDS in 1975. It had a core of objectives which were Inter related. These included immunization, health checks, treatment and referral services, supplementary nutrition service. These included services supplymentary nutrition services and education services including non-formal pre-school education and health and nutrition education for women.

The ICDS in basically a child welfare scheme. It is aimed at the all round development of a child, the objectives of the scheme are to :

- Improve health and nutritional status of children in the age group 0-6 years.
- Lay foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child.
- reduce the Incidence of morbidity, mortality, malnutrition and school dropouts.
- enhance the ability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child. This is to be done through proper nutrition and health education.
- achieve effective coordination of policy and implementation amongst various departments to promote child development.

The programme of ICDS focuses its activities on urban slum areas, nodal and tribal blocks. The nodal point for the delivary of the Intergrated child development services package is anganwadi which is to be run on a local basis. The anganwadis are located in villages, tribal areas and slums and are managed by anganwadi workers. Angawadi workers are trained through sepecially designed training programmes. The ICDS scheme started with 33 experimental projects in 1975 and expanded it's area of operation sharply each year. provision has so for been made for 1200 such projects in target areas.

As at present ICDS is the biggest programme of early childhood development. By the end of 1991-92 there were 2.90 lakh Aganwadis serving nearly 140 children and about 27 lakh mothers. 91.5% ICDS projects are located in rural and tribal areas and

8.5% in urban slums.

Over the recent years a number of initiatives have been taken to make the programme more focussed. The measures under ICDS include emphasis on practical, training for anganwadi worker's and extension work by anganwadi training centers which are required to adopt 10 anganwadis each for developing them as model anganwadis.

The POA 1992 stipulates that efforts will be made towards universalization of ICDS by A.D. 2000. By the end of the eighth plan 3.75 lakh anganwadi centres and by A.D. 2000 seven lakh anganwadi centres, would be established. Anganwadi's will be gradually converted into Anganwadis cum creches.

In the context of ICDS programme the POA, 1992 further states that ongoing programmes schemes that reflect a concern for the all-round development of young children and this will be improved to provide effectively intergrated services. These would include.

1. Assigning each Anganwadi worker's Training centre the responsibility of developing at least 20-25 anganwadi centres so as to provide the trainees with adequate field practice.
2. placing trainees for a minimum of one month in the Anganwadi for practical training.
3. Development of instructional materials for use of trainers and the trainees.
4. Providing materials for children picture books, picture posters, minimum essential play materials to all anganwadi and replenishing them periodically.
5. Developing at the CDPO's office into a resource, centre that is equipped with training materials.
6. Coordinating the timings of ICDS Anganwadis with the primary schools wherever possible.

Balwadis

A Balwadi has been defined as rural primary school which is run economically but on scientific lines. Its uses as many educational aids as possible. These aids for a balwadi are prepared from locally available material.

The genesis of the term "Balwadi" can be traced to the open air pre-schools started by **Tarbai modak** in tribal and rural hamlets of thane district in Maharashtra. These were conducted near the huts of tribal children.

Balwadis are multi-purpose institutions having a variety of objectives in view. Their chief objectives are.

1. To enter to personal and environmental health and sanitation needs of children. Activities like personal cleanliness, cleanliness of the surroundings washing of clothes identifying common deficiencies and ailments prescribing simple remedies and so on are covered to achieve this objective.
2. To provide free and structured play for developing motor skills. Activities covered under the category are various indoor and outdoor plays. For physical and motor developments, scientific and hygienic way of undertaking certain household activities like washing and cutting of vegetables preparing simple meals etc.
3. To organise individual and group activities to develop neuro-muscular coordination. Activities relevant to this objective may be like climbing on or rope ladder, brush painting, manipulating finger puppets threading beads etc.
4. To provide creative and self expressive experience to children through activities clay modelling, music, sewing creative drama etc.
5. To improvise teaching materials using local inexpensive material.
6. To organize activities like free conversation, informal discussion story telling action songs and Rhymes sorting, arranging classifying objects etc, to develop

language, learning and pre-number and number concepts.

7. To include cooperative attitude social feelings awareness about the local environment and various vocations within the community.

However these are variety of patterns in the balwadis. These with their unique objectives today, functions in various localities in different states of the country run by voluntary agencies. Each scheme has own history and background. These us its need to fashion them in a comprehensive manner and convert them into total child development centres.

Mobile Creches

Three days creches where working mothers leave their young children for day are becoming common, particularly in bigger urban centres where mothers are busy at work outside the home. A creches may be generally organised in a residential house or at the work site by individuals or social welfare agencies.

SOS Village

SOS villages are yet another type of programme directed to the total development of the child so that the effects of deprivations and other disadvantages can be overcome.

While it is important to emphasise the role of capable voluntary agencies in creating a wide and rich network of resources for early childhood care and education, it is equally important at the same time to discourage proliferation of sub-standard institutions. Norms and minimum standards will have to be devised.

1.10 National Guidelines for the Implication of ECCE Programme

Many probable approaches the Commission gave the following recommendation for the development of pre-primary education.

- i. There should be a State level centre located in the State Institute of Education. In addition, a pre-primary education development centre should be

established in each district. Main functions of these centres will be training of pre-primary teachers, preparation of teaching material and education of parents.

- ii. The establishment and conduct of pre-primary schools may be left mainly to private enterprise. The state should assist through grants- in- aid.
- iii. Every encouragement should be given to experiment methods of expanding pre-primary education.
- iv. Children's play centres concentrating on group singing, story telling, games, personal hygiene and health for about two hours a day should be attached to as many primary schools as possible.
- v. The role of the State should be to maintain such centres, train pre-primary teachers, conduct research, assist in preparation of materials and literature and run model institutes.
- vi. The pre-primary programme should consist of :
 - Play activities
 - Physical training
 - Manual activities
 - Sensorial education
 - Handwork and artistic activities
 - Activities for language learning, personal hygiene and health, nature study, Self-service.
- vii. The commission set a target of 5 per cent enrolment of the children in the age group 3 to 5 by 1986.

National Policy on Education (1986) on Early childhood care and Education

The National policy on Education (NPE) (1986) has given a great deal of importance to Early Childhood care and Education (ECCE) . It views ECCE as crucial input in the strategy of human resource development. The NPE 1986 has also taken into account the holistic nature of ECCE. The ECCE thus involves the total development of child i.e. physical, motor, cognitive, language, emotional, social and moral.

The NPE stipulates that "programmes of ECCE will be child-oriented, focussed around play and the individuality of the child. Formal methods and introduction of the 3 R's will be discussed at the stage. The local community will be fully involved in these programmes". The policy envisages "a full integration of child care and pre-primary education... both as feeder and a strengthening factor for primary education."

a. The programme of Action (1986) and ECCE

The programme of Action (POA) document (1986) analysed the policy statements, provided the strategy of implementation and described the various target groups described strengthening of the training component and the way of improving, monitoring and evaluation of the various programmes at this stage.

The age span covered under ECCE is conception to about 6 years. Its proper development requires workers with integrated ECCE training. There should be integrated ECCE centres where young children receive essential services throughout the period of their growth and preparation for formal education. It would require coordinated functioning of various agencies, governmental and non-governmental. According to POA 1986 "Even a modest development process during this period includes care of mother during pregnancy (ante-natal health check up, nutritional supports, control of anaemia, immunization for prevention of tetanus following delivery, etc.), hygienic and skilled birth attendance, nutritional care of mother during lactation, correct infant feeding practices, immunization of infant from communicable diseases, mother's education in child care, early childhood stimulation and health and nutritional support throughout."

The POA (1986) suggested that 70% of the target groups (children 0-6 years) should be covered by all services by 2000 A.D. In this context strengthening of the following in terms of training, adding components of health and nutrition, discouraging early introduction of 3 R's, introducing play-way method and developing materials and community linkages has been stressed :

1. Integrated child development services (ICDS)
2. ECE centres

3. Balwadis
4. Pre-primary schools
5. Day-care centres

Pre-school education component needs to be strengthened in ICDS. Health and nutrition components, training of personnel, play-way educational materials are to be provided in ECE centres. Balwadis run by voluntary agencies need to be converted into total child development centres. components of health and nutrition, play-way method, home-community relationship need to be introduced and developed in pre-primary schools. Day care centres are to be reviewed and strengthened.

b. The Revised policy Formulations POA (1992) and ECCE

The Revised policy Formulations reiterated the postulates of NPE 1986 on ECCE. The POA (1992) as a matter of fact attempted to update the POA (1986) taking into account the developments in the intervening period. It stressed the need to strengthen the programme by improving the :

- i. Programme components
- ii. Co-ordination mechanism and
- iii. Community participation in mobilising resources, planning and monitoring.

The ICDS is currently the biggest programme of early childhood development. In order to make the programmes more focussed several measures have been taken. These include emphasis on practical training for Anganwadi workers and extension workers by Anganwadi training centres. Efforts are also being made to distribute education cum play materials to Anganwadis to improve their pre-school education components. Initiative has also been taken to improve the scheme of creches.

The aim of ECCE is that every child should be access to the fulfilment of all basic needs. The POA (1992) has, enlisted many steps to improve each programmes under ECCE . As regards pre-primary schools and classes it suggests :

- (i). Adding components of nutrition with community / parent participation.
- (ii). Discouraging the early introduction of the three R's.
- (iii). Developing a relationship between home and community.
- (iv). Discouraging entrance tests for admission.

The POA (1992) emphasised that the content of pre-school programme should provide inputs for a total development of child faculties. This would mean providing components of health, nutrition and education. These would include :

- Regular medical check up of children with follow-up and referral services where necessary.
- Daily provision of supplementary nutrition in accordance with the nutritional status of children.
- Growth monitoring through maintenance of height and weight through monthly/bi-monthly records.
- Child-centred development and process-oriented play activities planned in a manner to expose children to variety of experiences that foster a sense of joy and curiosity.
- Promote language skills and cognitive curiosity.
- Foster joy, creativity and confidence.
- Promote muscular development.

It further stipulated that :

Daily activities should be planned according to the age and developmental levels of the children. There should be a flexible balance of activities for all aspects of development as well as balance between individual and outdoor activities, vigorous and quiet activities group activities, indoor and guided and free activities.

Medium of communication should be mother tongue / regional language.

The programme of action (1992) has also stressed the need for a comprehensive review of the existing ECCE programmes and a continuous monitoring and evaluation.

Innovations in pre-school Education

Over the years some noteworthy innovations have been planned and implemented

in the area of pre-school education with reasonable success. In this context the role of NCERT through its Department of pre-school and Elementary Education can be highlighted. This has taken up pioneering research and developmental work in this relatively new area of education. Two recent innovations done in the field of pre-school education, namely early stimulation programmes through home stimulation and child-to-child programme as an international movement are described here in detail.

Home stimulation programme

The first six years of a child's life are now being universally recognised as the most critical years due to the rapid pace of development at this stage. Qualitatively stimulating and enriching environment is therefore most essential in these years to optimize child's overall development and help him realize the full potential. The children in the age group of 0-6 year generally spend most of their time at home. Even if they start going to a pre-school at the age of three or so, it is only for a short-period of two to three hours a day.

The onus of providing the child with necessary stimulation therefore rests with the parents who are often, due to ignorance and /or other constraints, ill equipped to tackle this task effectively. The need for them to be educated to play the role of effective educators to their own children cannot therefore be over emphasised. This is precisely the objective of home stimulation programme which is based on useful traditional child rearing practices, games and songs.

The home-based early childhood stimulation programme can be effectively used by parents, community and child development workers and by teachers in their parent education programmes.

The genesis of the innovative programme can be traced to the experiences gained in a project on Home-based programme in child development in the tribal and urban slum areas of Orissa conducted by the Early childhood Education project in collaboration

with two voluntary organizations.

Aims

The aims of the project were :

- to evolve a home-based approach to child development.
- to develop an awareness in parents of their own strength and potential as home educators, and
- to develop an home-based instructional package in accordance with the immediate environment and culture of the parents and children.

Methodology

Experience of the project indicates that young parents generally do not see the relevance of stimulation activities. Some of them who practise it do so mechanically rather than intelligently. A number of parents have no knowledge of such practices. The home stimulation programme therefore, focuses its attention to the rich cultural heritage and highlights its relevance in enhancing child development. The approach here is home-based. Community or pre-school workers through parent education programmes train the mothers by way of individual home visits and small group meetings. The workers do the activities under the programme with the mothers, who in turn, are encouraged to do them with the children.

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The home stimulation programme in the Indian context draws its inspiration from the rituals, the festivals, songs and games which are strong components of Indian child rearing practices.

Much of the learning in the early childhood takes place through the child's day to day interactions within the family. It is here that the child gets numerous opportunities to observe and learn through watching, participating and imitating.

Over the years there have been socio-cultural changes in the Indian society . The joint family system is beaking up fast. There is increasing migration from rural to urban areas and mothers are seeking jobs outside home in large numbers. Women's participation has diversified in varied fields of life away from home. These have greatly changed the traditional child rearing practices. The age-old games, songs and stories , the home-made indigenous toys which parents and grand parents used with their children are no longer in use. Home stimulation programme , therefore , emphasises the role of family in stimulation of the young child.

NCERT has brought out a compilation of "stimulation Activities for Young children" (1991). The manual deals with stimulation activities for different age groups. Each of the seven chapters in the manual is divided into five sub-sections. The first sub-section lists the milestones of the particular age and the other sub-sections suggest stimulation activities for (a) physical-motor , (b) language , (c) personal-social and (d) cognitive development.

The stimulation programme includes a large number of activities that help the child understand the immediate environment through his interaction with animals, plants, ponds, rivers and hills. His first hand experience helps him to develop the concepts of colour, shape, texture, smell and sound which are all emphasised in the programme. It also stresses on group activities wherein the child learns to adjust to the demands of the group, to wait for one's turn, to cooperate with others and to understand other's point of view. The programme envisages an environment full of freedom, opportunities and incentives to move ahead and explore. Senosory and motor experiences are important components of the programme.

The home stimulatoin programme recognises richness of home environment not merely by costly clothes, good food, expensive toys and a spacious house but it is valued in terms of the rich experiences of the child ththrough parent-child interaction and parental aspiration. A home in which the child gets opportunity to listen to good stories, to play with a variety of objects, to observe and explore, is perhaps the richest home so far as the

young child is concerned. The best stimulator for the child is a home which believes in the capability of the child and keeps high hopes for him.

Child to child programme

The child to child programme is an activity-based approach to health education. Its purpose is to teach children the basic health and development concepts. It aims at improving their knowledge to communicate relevant messages to younger children, parents and the community.

The child to child programme was started to 1979. It is an international movement spread over 75 countries. Majority of school-going children in developing countries are from disadvantaged families. Many of them are "first generation learners". They not only attend the school but also look after their younger brothers and sisters.

In the child to child approach the child may participate in any one of the following ways :

1. Child to child

The child may be involved in providing care for younger brothers and sisters or other younger children.

2. Child to family

The child may influence the health practices of his parents/ family.

3. Child to community

Children as a group may influence the health practices of their community through songs, plays, puppet shows, etc.

4. Child to Environment

The child may be involved in activities aimed at improving the quality of the environment e. g. environmental sanitation , tree planting etc.

i. Objectives of child to child programme

- The Objectives of child to child programme are :

- to improve the levels of health, nutrition and development of school-going children through child to child activities.
- to enable school-going children to bring qualitative improvement in the life of their younger brothers, sisters, parents and their neighbours by applying facts learnt to daily life.
- to improve the school and neighbourhood environment through planned activities.
- to make learning a relevant, meaningful and enjoyable experience for children.

ii. Implementation of child to child programme

The child to child programme is based on needs and problems of the children, school and the immediate home environment. These may include problems related to personal hygiene, health, nutrition and environmental sanitation.

In order to effectively implement the programme, strategies are planned at three levels-namely classroom, school and community. The following steps of implementation are suggested for obtaining results :

1. Each teacher should prepare an action plan in advance for classroom, school and community levels.
2. Develop suitable communication aids like songs, role plays, rhymes, puppet, plays etc. Dust bins, tooth powders, toys, puppets, health games etc. may also be prepared. Children are to be actively involved in all these activities.
3. Create a conducive environment by organising school cleanliness drives. Classrooms can be made attractive with bright, colourful and catchy posters, charts etc. children may contribute in developing a wall magazine with their paintings, essays, rhymes etc.
4. Divide the school premises including open space into as many parts as there are sections in the school. Make each section responsible for upkeep cleanliness and beautification of one part. Encourage the best section by clapping etc. during morning assembly.
5. Take children to brief educational trips to vegetable and fruit market, primary

health centre, neighbourhood places to indentify healthy practices and health hazards.

6. Involve parents in improving health, hygiene and nutrition habits of children. Parents can be provided with evaluative forms and asked to evaluate and accordingly improve the health and nutrition habits of their children e.g.
 - does your child brush his teeth daily ?
 - does your child take a bath daily ?
 - does your child wash hands before and after every meal ?
 - are the nails of your child short and clean ?
7. The community may be made aware of significance of improved health practices through simple and direct health messages by organizing puppet plays, songs, role plays, display charts, toys, 'prabhat pheris' or processions carrying catchy health slogans etc. 'Bal Mela' may provide a useful occasion in this regard.

1.11 Need and Importance of the Study

The need and importance of early childhood education is now being recognised all over the world. The child acquires most of its personal and social habits before the age of six. Early years of the child are plastic and impressionable. It is during these years that the bases for later development are laid. Recent developments in the field of Psychology have focused the attention of the society on the needs of children during the impressionable years.

Early environmental stimulation helps in the cognitive development of the children. Bloom (1964) has analysed research data on growth of Intelligence. It shows that 50 percent of the total intellectual development of the child is completed by the time a child is four years old. If the cognitive development of the children is normal, it means that they will acquire better knowledge, develop their thinking and utilize them in problem solving. Research in the area of creativity have pointed out that if the children are provided early formalised experiences through play, their creative ability will also be enhanced. The early years are the best period when the child is without inhibition and external

control. His thinking is not rigid. He has originality and flexibility. If he is provided experience through pre-school activities his creativity level and problem solving capacity can be developed considerable of Bloom (1964); in his book 'stability and change in human characteristics' has analysed data concerning intelligence which led him to conclude that the rate of intellectual development is at the point of highest acceleration during the child's early years. Therefore, the greatest advantage in matters of child's intellectual, development will come from the stimulation of home and school environment of the child during the first four to six years, of life.

Pre-school years are also crucial for developing proper values and attitudes in children. The foundations of scientific attitude and proper values such as hard work, national sentiment etc. could be developed in children better if a beginning in this direction is made in early childhood.

Further, pre-primary education has been found to be essential and useful towards achieving the goal of universalization of primary education.

Keeping the above in view the National Policy on Education (1986) and the programme of action 1986, 1992 have given much importance to early childhood care and education (ECCE). Many projects like ICDS, ECE, Balwadi, Anganwadi have been initiated all over the country following the NPE 1986. The NCERT through it department of pre-school and elementary education has given National guidelines in this regard and also circulated practical materials giving in insight into the process of pre-primary education. It is observed that in every big city their is mushrooming of pre-primary schools in a variety of settings. The city of Bhopal is no exception to this.

It was therefore, felt that a systematic study of the functioning of pre-primary schools in the city of Bhopal will give a fair idea of the real stituation in these schools in respect of content, methodology of teaching, teachers and facilities available for all round development of the children at this impressionable age. The study will also bring out a

profile of the children and their parental background. Suggestions originating from the study findings will go a long way in improving the process of pre-schooling in the city.

1.12 Statment of the problem :

The present study has been formally stated as "A critical study of pre-primary education programme in Bhopal city."

1.13 Objectives of the study

- to study the development of pre-school education in a historical perspective,
- to study the functioning of pre-schools in the city of Bhopal.
- to critically analyse the responses of the teachers and headmistresses in the light of national recommendations on pre-school programme,
- to study the infrastructural facilities available in the pre-schools,
- to study the profile of a pre school child,
- to suggest measures for effective implimentation of Pre-primary education programme.

1.16 Delimitations of the study :

The study has following delimitations:

- Only schools of Bhopal city, have been included
- Only the students of nursery to K.G.II have been studied
- Only selected pre-primary schools have been included.

1.15 Setting of the study

- A. Sample :** The present study has been conducted on a sample of students of six pre-primary schools in Bhopal City. It also includes Principals and teachers of these school. Facilities available in these schools have also been studied.
- B. Tools :** Three questionnaires, one each for (a) principals (b) teachers and (c) students were developed by the investigator for the purpose of collecting data from them.

C. **An observation schedule:** was also developed to observe availability of facilities and records relating to pre-primary education programme.

1.16 Organisaiaon of the balance of the study

In Chapter two an attamp has been made to review relevant researches to understand and analyse the efforts that have so far been made to implement the idea of pre-primary education.

Chapter three provides the design of the study, sampling, development of tools and procedures.

Chapter four deals with the analysis of results and interpretation of the data. It is divided into four parts namely principals, teachers, students and school observation.

Chapter five gives a summary of the study and also the suggestions for improvement and furhter study.

