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A STUDY OF QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN PRESCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Complementing the qualitative insights, a quantitative survey disseminated among a larger sample of parents aims to gauge broader sentiments regarding ECCE policy implementation. By quantifying perceptions, this phase of the study provides a structured overview of parental attitudes and allows for the identification of patterns across different demographic segments. Additionally, the survey examines the degree of parental awareness and involvement in shaping policy-related decisions, shedding light on the extent to which parents feel empowered within the preschool context. The synthesis of qualitative and quantitative findings offers a comprehensive panorama of parental perspectives on ECCE policy implementation in preschools. The study's outcomes not only contribute to academia but also hold practical implications for policymakers, educators, and parents alike. Insights gained from this research can facilitate informed adjustments in policy execution strategies, fostering an environment that aligns more closely with parental expectations and aspirations. Ultimately, this study bridges the gap between policy formulation and on-the-ground implementation, nurturing a more collaborative approach to early childhood education that values the crucial role of parental involvement.

KEYWORDS: Early Childhood Care, Education Programs, Preschools, ECCE policy implementation, parental involvement

INTRODUCTION

Only elementary schooling was conceived of as a possibility in the 16th century. Children are deemed school-ready at about the age of five or six, when they have mastered the skills necessary to walk, speak, comprehend, and express themselves. Teachers and parents saw a gap in communication at the elementary level, which inspired the creation of kindergarten. Preschool education's significance has long been recognized. Looking into the paramount significance of early childhood education, Mahatma Gandhiji in 1937 created a commission led by Dr. Zakir Hussan, who argued forcefully for the establishment of state-

run or -supported programs targeting children aged three to seven.

The study from UNICEF highlights the importance of the years 2-4. The brain of a youngster has the most room to grow at this age. Education is going through a transition. The transition is altering the balance of power. Now, the kid is center stage, and all the educational planets revolve around him or her.

The administration of a school is an additional dynamic facet of the educational sector. "School Management, as a body of educational doctrine comprises a number of principles and percepts relating primarily to the techniques of classroom procedure, and

derived largely from the practising teachers of the past," writes Paul Monre in A Cyclopedia of Education (1913). The authors in the discipline have provided a variety of interpretations of these principles and percepts, often by referring to more general concepts in psychology, sociology, and ethics. As time and technology have progressed, so too have ideas on how to best run a school. Management is now recognized as its own separate concept because to the proliferation of information and communication technologies.

In this setting, "school management" refers to the "art and science" of coordinating the human and material resources of the school to the greatest possible effect, benefiting both the people being served and the people providing the service through increased motivation and pride in their work. It was formerly believed that a child's intellectual demands could be fulfilled only by exposure to concrete examples of abstract concepts like arithmetic, sociology, language, art, and craft in the real world. These organized data sets are only a selection of information taken from the forgotten societal past. They were born out of collective experiences and reflected collective attempts to address pressing issues. A child's primary source of care used to be their own parents, although other relatives often helped out as well. In this regard, the institution would function as an educational research laboratory.

ECCE and the Successive Five-Year Plans of India

After India gained its independence, the First Five Years plan became a priority.

Five-year plans are comprehensive, nation-wide economic strategies.

First Five-Year Plan (1951–1956)

Early childhood education is also being prioritized in this strategy, at least in some capacity. The First Five-Year Plan was presented by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, to the Indian Parliament. In 1951, the government unveiled its first Five-Year Plan, which had a main focus on agricultural and industrial expansion.

At this time, the state's involvement in all economically viable fields was of paramount importance. This was appropriate given India's nascent struggles with capital shortages and inadequate savings capacity immediately after independence. Five large specialized institutes, the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), were founded towards the conclusion of the plan era in 1956. In order to manage funding and improve the quality of higher education in the nation, the University Grants Commission (UGC) was established.

Agriculture, the resettlement of landless farmers, transportation, and communications were the primary areas of study. Education was also a major topic of discussion, but providing sophisticated education to the young people of independent India was seen as an urgent need.

Second Five- Year Plan (1956 – 1961)

Social welfare conditioning was expanded under the alternative strategy. To extend weal care to women and children in pastoral regions, states were active in the realm of legislation enactment and association of introduction services for education and rehabilitation of the

impaired. Centers for maternal and infant health were established by the year 2100. These facilities also provide periodic lesson courses for the education of maternal and child health aid.

In the alternative five-year plan, primary education is given more attention, abecedarian education is broadened, secondary education is diversified, council and university education standards are improved, facilities for specialized and vocational education are expanded, and social education and artistic development initiatives are implemented.

The ages of 6-11, 11-14, and 14-17 were prioritized while purchasing furniture for schools. Due to its emphasis on public sector growth and rapid-fire innovation, the alternative five-year plan was unable to devote significant resources to primary education. Industrialization. The first hydroelectric power plants and swordsmiths appeared.

Third Five years Plan 1961-1966

The short Sino-Indian War of 1962 highlighted faults in the economy and moved attention to defensive vigilance and the Indian Army, while the Third Five-Year Plan emphasized husbandry and improvement in wheat production. India and Pakistan went to war in 1965 and 1966. In 1965, there was another major setback.

Affectionation arose as a result of the conflict, and price stability took second place.

In pastoral communities, several basic seminaries were established. The primary school curriculum change was a government initiative. In this five-year plan, the government has begun to

prioritize primary education alongside secondary and higher education.

Boards of secondary education in each state and electric utilities were established. Secondary and tertiary educations are now the purview of each states.

The years 1966–1969 were the doomed years. The war was the primary factor in the slow development of this time period. Devaluation of the Indian currency was announced by the government in an effort to boost exports. Even though elementary schooling was given a boost by this strategy, it was limited by the question of cost-effectiveness. The administration was unable to implement any of the proposals because of the ongoing war.

Fourth Five Years Plan (1969–1974)

The proposal called for the establishment of a public institution for the blind, a public institute for the deaf, and a public institute for the mentally retarded. This strategy benefited the mentioned lines and planned casts significantly. Children from low-income families were given admission priority. This strategy saw the establishment of 270 orphanages and 14 foundling homes. The artificial development budget was cut because of fears that the war with Pakistan and the Bangladesh independence struggle might go on longer than expected. Demand in the nation prevented the desired pace of expansion from being realized.

Since India's youth previously lacked guidance toward higher education and professional advancement, prioritizing higher education in this plan is essential. However, the plan's focus on elementary and secondary education is encouraging, and it has led to some positive changes for girls' access to higher education.

Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974–1988)

In terms of child development, the fifth strategy turned a crucial corner. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) was established in 1974 as part of the governmental policy for children at that time. There was a transition from a focus on the welfare of the kid to one on the child's growth and development. The ICDS program provided primary care services like as health screenings, immunizations, and referrals. Providing children under the age of six with supplemental feedings, as well as informal preschool instruction and health and nutrition education. Women who were pregnant or nursing who lived in the poorest communities inspired the establishment of the Anganwadi Center.

After India's independence, the country's national and state governments provided literacy classes for the physically disabled for the first time. In this strategy, the abecedarian education program is prioritized. In particular, classroom building was mandated in underdeveloped regions, and the number of registered tutors was raised. To help individuals get off to a better start in life, the Minimum Needs program (MNP) was established to provide for basic necessities. This five-year strategy may be cited as a foundation for elementary education and the growth of young children. This is the first five-year plan to focus on fostering human potential from its very beginnings, in the form of early childhood education and care.

Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-1985)

The Sixth Plan saw the continuation and growth of initiatives launched in previous plans. The National Policy on Education

from 1986 encouraged all children, but notably girls, to enroll and remain in religious schools. There was also heavy push for non-traditional learning opportunities. Providing subsidies to non-profit organizations has helped pre-schools start in educationally backward nations. It was advocated that the idea of universalizing abecedarian education be given considerable consideration, particularly in the States that are educationally backward and for reaching the socially deprived who represent the majority of the non-attending children and of the drop-outs.

Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90)

Child care, preschool education, safe drinking water, environmental sanitation, hygiene, and family planning were only some of the areas where the seventh five-year plan put a strong emphasis on enhancing early nonage survival and development.

Both the Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act of 1986 and the National policy on Child Labor were enacted by the Government of India in 1987.

Many different volunteer organisations were asked to take care of the non-formal education, which included not just weal conditioning but also nutrition, health care, and skill development.

There was a notable expansion of programs and services under the Seventh Plan ('90s-'92). The youngsters with physical impairments' well-being as a whole was taken into account. Each state with a sizeable disabled population took part in the planning and implementation of this initiative.

Besides the four National Institutes for the Disabled, two other organizations, the

Institute for the Physically Handicapped (Delhi) and the National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research (Cuttack), provided a wide variety of services for the rehabilitation of the Impaired and standardized force training in virtually every country that implemented such programs.

Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-1997)

Early 5-year plans didn't provide sufficient results in terms of abecedarian education for children aged 2 to 6. Therefore, further measures were required to tie up loose ends in the eighth five-year plan. Priority was given to all initiatives that support young people's growth and development. There was considerable thought given to the family and the neighborhood.

Health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation, and infrastructure were the government's top priorities. With the goal of elevating all people, regardless of gender, by abolishing artificial boundaries between them

For their own safety, security, and well-being, the government aimed to provide equitable opportunities. The broad aspirations of 'Health for All,' 'Education for All,' etc. were reflected in the Action Plans, together with the minor aspirations of the Plans of Action. Gross enrollment at the primary level might reach 10,09 crores by the end of 1991–1992, while enrollment in the upperprimary level could reach 3,44 crores. The government is making more efforts to boost enrollment in elementary and preschool programs.

Status of Children in our Five-year Plans health, nutrition, education, wisdom and technology, employment and weal programmes were linked in such a way that effective inter-sectoral assistance was

formed. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights, and Full Participation) Act, 1995, was a watershed moment in the fight for the rights of the 73 Impairment. The RCI Act of 1992 established the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) as a legislative organization with the goal of "raising and homogenizing the syllabus and icing invariant norms of training of professionals for the weal of the Impaired" (Sinha, 2020).

Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)

The Ninth Five-Year Plan placed a premium on child care and early education because of the long-term benefits they provide to a country's human resource pool.

The plan sought to prioritize the young child, with a focus on the girl child, as part of the country's development agenda by creating a National Charter for Children to ensure that no child is left without access to basic necessities like education, food, and healthcare, and by ensuring their survival, protection, and development "through the effective perpetration of the two National Plans of Action—one for the Children and the other for the Girl Child. "The focus of the country's Ninth Five-Year Plan was on improving the lives of children, particularly girls and young women. In addition, the government had many plans to improve access to health care, such as reproductive, maternal, and child health services and a 100% immunization rate for all vaccine-preventable diseases. Efforts were being made during the Ninth Plan through various policy and programmatic interventions, in all child-related fields, to fulfill these promises and goals. Through

the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), great efforts have been made to "strengthen the approach of converging the introductory services of health, nutrition, and preschool education to promote the young child's holistic development" (Sinha, 2020).

Tenth Five-year plan (2007-2011)

The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme, for instance, was created in response to the growing need for daycare facilities for families with working parents during the tenth five-year plan. The total number of working mothers in the informal economy is estimated to be 21 crores, and about seven lakh crèches are needed to meet their needs. In 2006, about 23,000 crèches received official permission to operate. The needs of children living on the streets were also taken into account when designing the Integrated Programme, which aims to prevent child poverty by providing shelter, food, medical attention, an education, a safe place to play, and security from exploitation and abuse.

The goal is to reach 2 million kids with messages on their safety. The safety of young workers is another concern. The need to provide for the safety of these kids is great.

The government discovered a plethora of unofficial groups that actively upheld these practices. With the help of NGOs, the government could reach roughly 6,500 kids. The government's Shishu Greh initiative, which provides homes for youngsters, has also been a huge help to the kids. In order to help those in need, the government provided substantial funding to nongovernmental organizations.

Eleventh Five Year Plan

"India's Educational Plan" was the official name for India's 11th five-year plan. The eleventh plan's primary focus was on using education as a means to achieve explosive development. The 11th Five Year Plan provides a systematic strategy for improving the education system as a whole. India will rise to prominence on the back of free and open access to education and cutting-edge research and development in the field of artificial intelligence. India is on track to join the ranks of the world's leading countries in terms of technology and intellect over the next few decades because to the country's dedication to education and its focus on building a solid foundation of knowledge. The 11th Plan is tasked with increasing public investment on education to 6% of GDP, as stated in the strategy plan. The Constitutional mandate to provide all children under the age of 14 with a free and obligatory primary education of adequate quality. It is the responsibility of the government to provide a decent education to all children, regardless of their families' financial circumstances.

Elementary Education

The SSA aims to drastically decrease, if not completely eradicate, the dropout rate for both boys and girls across all socioeconomic strata. In 2003–2004, this was close to 31% nationally and significantly higher in certain states.

It's great that the government has recognized the need of providing a basic education to all children and is taking steps to make that a reality for as many youngsters as possible. Alongside this, however, it is of the highest need to devise

a system or appropriate a measure that gives top priority to the students who are not continuing their education or who are dropping out before finishing it. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has given this a high priority, and it seems to have paid off so far.

Recently, family remittances have increased thanks to the Employment Guarantee Scheme. Crèches for children in the workplace have made it easier for women to enter the workforce, and they have drastically decreased the burden on young girls who would otherwise be expected to care for younger siblings. The time has come for women to exercise their abecedarian right and enrolls in and completes courses at the academy. The midday mess idea was also used by the faraway government to increase alphabetic literacy. This is the monetary equivalent of providing lunch for all the seminary students. And there were two goals in doing this. Those women who were deemed unsuitable to take on any other task were assigned the duty of preparing nutritious and hygienic meals for the children of the aristocracy.

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAAN.

However, poor completion rates have resulted from significant structural gaps and sluggish ability to undertake big civil workshop projects in several States. For this reason, it will be necessary to keep some civil workshop budgets intact over the 11th Plan period.

Reducing the percentage of children who do not attend school by 5 percentage points every year is one of the outgrowth pointers used in reporting the success of SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAAN's outgrowth budget.

Education is given top billing as the primary tool for attaining super development in the 11th Plan, which was adopted at a meeting of the National Development Council in December 2007.

Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017)

Improvements to Existing Educational Facilities 20.155. Although private sector sodalities would be permitted, the government would have a preeminent role in developing health tutoring capacity. Investment would be made to transform existing CHCs and District hospitals into learning hubs where patient care is provided alongside medical, nursing, and paramedical education and training. The NHM's incitement fund will be used to urge individual states to do this. State-level organizations already providing supplemental education, such the State Institutes of Health and Family Welfare, would also be fortified. To boost capacity by 250 seats, the existing government medical institutions and central government institutions would be bolstered at the same time. Significant efforts will be maintained to ensure the continuity of existing institutions in order to provide more graduate-level education opportunities. Building a training facility under the Eleventh Plan is on the list of things to do in the far future.

New Interventions in the 12th Plan --

This has been shown to significantly contribute to a solid foundation for learning for all children, and the Preschool Education NAC has made a clear recommendation that children as young as four years old be provided with ECCE gests through the ICDS in the AW with a new worker, and that a year of preprimary class be attached to every primary

academy to guarantee academy readiness for all children.

Thirteenth Five- Year Plan (2017-2021)

Indian thrift was taken for granted in the design of planning from 1947 to 2017. In pastoral communities, several basic seminaries were established. Secondary and tertiary education are now the responsibility of individual countries. Most recently, from 2017 to 2022. There will not be a Twelfth Plan for the next five years.

Since the dissolution of the Planning Commission, no longer are official plans developed for the economy, while Five-Year Defense Plans are being created.

Most recently, from 2017 to 2022 There will not be a Twelfth Plan for the next five years.

National Policy of Child (NPC)

The National Plan of Action and the National Policy for the Child, 1974 Act of Dedication to Children 1992 It has been declared State policy to guarantee a child's complete physical, mental, and social development by providing necessary services beginning at conception and continuing throughout childhood. Within a reasonable period, all children in the country will have access to these programs, as the State steadily expands their reach. The adoption of programs to offer nutrition assistance to eliminate nutritional deficits in children and informal pre-school education have been recognized as key initiatives. India's National Plan of Action (NPA) A Commitment to the Child was inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989, and each state was urged to create its own State Plan of Action for Children (SPAC) based on

status indicators for child development and the resource situation in the state. Concerning the safety, well-being, and development of children, the SPAC addresses a wide range of topics. Time-bound objectives and strategies for each SPAC focus area have been established to direct progress toward those objectives. Plan for National Nutrition in 1993 The National Nutrition Policy gives pre-schoolers the greatest emphasis in terms of both policy articulations and programmatic interventions because of their status as a nutritionally sensitive and high-risk population. Direct nutrition intervention for particularly vulnerable individuals, as well as environments produced for enhanced nutritional status, are envisioned as means of combating malnutrition. The projected National Nutrition Mission (NNM) is nearing completion of its membership and scope of work. NHP 2002: The Nation's Health Care Strategy The NHP aims to reduce the infant mortality rate to 30 per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality rate to 100 per 100,000 by the year 2010. This includes children aged 0 to 6 as part of the target population. In conclusion, NHP 2000 states that governments and private sector programme planners will have to design separate schemes tailored to the health needs of women, children, the elderly, tribals, and other socio-economically under-served sections under the umbrella of the macro-policy prescriptions in this document. According to the National Population Policy (NPP) of 2000, focusing on children's health is a clear approach for population stability. Investment in the early childhood development of children from populations

with a high proportion of first-generation college students is a priority in both the National Policy on Children and the National Policy on Education and Programme of Action. Taking into account the interconnectedness of a child's health, nutrition, social, cognitive, and emotional growth. High focus will be given to ensuring that ECCE is integrated appropriately with the Integrated Child Development Services program. To help ensure that all children, regardless of their parents' socioeconomic status, have access to a quality primary education, day care facilities will be made available in low-income neighborhoods. Play and the child's uniqueness will be at the center of ECCE's curriculum. The 3Rs and other formal approaches will be avoided for the time being. There will be extensive participation from the neighborhood in these initiatives. (Das, 2003).

CONCLUSION

Today's preschools do an excellent job of imparting information and skills, but they fall short when it comes to encouraging the children to work together to create a meaningful and joyful existence. The child's upbringing, which should have produced optimism, has failed to do so. The educators are free to use any media they deem most effective for imparting knowledge. The child's growth is the ultimate objective, and they work hard to see it through. The distance criterion is of paramount importance to the parents of children aged 2 to 6. Preschool, in their eyes, should be located more conveniently to their homes. Therefore, the proximity to a suitable preschool should be one of your first considerations. The level of education received is also crucial. Parents will travel

greater distances to enroll their children in a preschool with a solid educational program. When weighing the two primary factors of distance and quality, parents care less about the fee structure and more about the former.

The daycare situation has shifted as of late. Because so many daycares and preschools promote themselves actively, parents no longer pay much attention to such efforts. Preschools and their parents have a common understanding of the value of individuality. The requirements for each kid are distinct. Preschools have begun accommodating these children by assigning them specially trained instructors to assist them overcome their challenges. The parents are pleased and asked for the same treatment. Parents still enroll their children in preschools that lack the specialized equipment. Parents also seldom request speech-language treatment, perhaps because it is too costly for most childcare facilities. In addition, parents seldom request physiotherapy services. Occupational therapy is the same way. This is also the kind of service that parents seldom request. Preschool services, such as those provided by a psychologist, community health professional, or social worker, are not in high demand among parents.

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