



MANAGEMENT OF PRESCHOOLING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: AN EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

Normally, pre-schools are known as those institutions where children between the age group of 2 years to maximum 7 years come for playful environment. Jean Piaget, Froebel, Maria Montessori all the famous psychologists are the great contributors of playful learning. But parents often complain that their children are under different kinds of pressure like home work, unit test, term test, besides activity class. There is a lot of peer pressure among parents also. Parents are compelled to feel that they are depriving their children unless they are putting them in a high-pressure environment. It is against the nature of child psychology as the researches have proved that stress/pressure on children during early childhood decreases self-esteem as well as confidence level. Psychological pressure on children impacts negatively in mental health development also. The very essential element for sound mental health and all round development of children is the play and playful environment. Therefore, present paper aims at – (a) to assess the playful environment in the preschools (b) to study the management behaviour of pre-schools for the development of children. On the basis of the objectives, descriptive survey method has been applied and a self-prepared interview schedule has been made ready to collect relevant data from 09 pre-school educational institutes (Privately managed) in different areas of Guwahati. Data have been collected from 09 Centre Heads of pre-schools and Parents of Children studying in those schools. After analysis and interpretation of data, findings will help to reveal what is the actual playful environment that is prevailing in all these pre-schools in Guwahati? Are they really developing the children in right track in society?

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INTRODUCTION

"An unskilled person will not be aware of the developmental stages of a child. Different skills develop at different times. An untrained person will not know what to expect from a child at a certain age and may attempt to push the child beyond what he or she is capable of. This could have an adverse effect on the development of the child."

- Dr. Mehrotra,

A play school is a place where around 10-20 children in a class spend 2-3 hours each day under the supervision of a couple of teachers. According to child psychologists, the supervisor-child ratio should ideally be around 1:10. Various research studies said that the main focus of playschools should be on-sensory motor development, social development, development

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of age-appropriate behaviour at the right time and they should not aim at development of academic skills like reading and writing. There should be no set goals or any stress on performance upon the children, emphasis should be only on the principle of –"Play, Grow and Learn". Play must be followed as the best context in each child can learn. But very recently, this is not seen to be maintained by any school. It is often complained by the parents that catching the high attention of elite private schools in Guwahati city is becoming the main business of recent time preschools. So, in this background, present study is undertaken to draw afresh attention of all the scholars of psychologists and education and therefore problem has been stated as –

"*Playschools as Advancement in Educational Psychology: An Assessment Study on their Functioning Behaviour*"

Present Status of Pre-schools (Pre-Primary Education) in India: In India, play based education for children of 3-7 years are provided by private schools and government ICDS

(Anganwadi) centres. In addition, there are some preschools which are attached to government as well as private schools. According to the estimate given by the Seventh All India Education Survey (NCERT, 2005), there are 493,700 pre-primary institutions in India, out of which 456,994 are in rural areas. These Schools serve 26.453 million children of which 12.829 million are girls according to DISE (District Information System for Education) data (2007-08). The percentage of enrolment in primary schools with pre-primary facilities is low. It was 10% in 2007-08 compared to 7.7% in 2004-05. The highest percentage of pre-primary enrolment in primary schools is in Madhya Pradesh (19.6) and the lowest of 5.0 % in Bihar. A large variation is also found in access to early childhood care and education across the states. The existing conditions in different models of play school education in the country can be stated with the following chart-

Anganwadi centres

- Marked by-----
- limited infrastructure & learning aids
- Low participation leading to good pupil teacher ratio
- No fixed schedule
- Formal teaching with free play, song, rhymes and outdoor games
- Better social interaction
- Community workers (Teachers) provided with job-training

Private Playschools

- Marked by-----
- Better infrastructure but few learning aids
- High pupil-teacher ratio
- Fixed weekly schedule strictly followed
- Formal teaching with rote memorization and limited inside room activities
- Untrained teachers

But our present paper deals only with the privately managed playschools in Guwahati.

Significance of the Study: Various research studies indicate that Play is nothing but the practice of divergent thinking by children. So, the proliferation of playschool education in the twentieth century can be connected to advances in educational as Jean Piaget in his work revealed the nature of psychological development of a person is determined by his play that occurred in the early years of childhood. The nature and type of play materials used by child impacts on development of divergent thinking along with different problem solving capacities. Therefore, present problem is considered to be very important and an attempt has been undertaken to assess the playful environment in the privately managed preschools in Guwahati.

Objectives

Present study is based on the following objectives-

- (a) to assess the playful environment in the preschools
- (b) to study the management behaviour of playschools for children development

Research Questions

Are the pre-schools providing children a playful environment?
How skilled are the teachers in playschools?

Review of Related Literature

Only one research study has been reviewed that is- Manhas and Qadiri, F (2010) carried a "A Comparative Study of Pre School Education in Early Childhood Education Centres in India". The study highlighted on "Anganwadis" and Preschool centres with regard to their infrastructural facilities, nature of teaching in early childhood and the developmental activities in the centres. Besides it, various policies, reports have been studied by the investigator for drawing conclusion of the study, references of which have mentioned at last.

Research Methodology used in the Study

Present study is qualitative in nature. Descriptive survey method has been applied in the present study since it tries to assess the existing playful environment of the playschools in Guwahati. Data have been collected from 09 playschools of different brands like Kid Zee, Kid Veda, Edukids, Kid -Care in Guwahati as per the convenience of the investigator. 36 Parents samples have been selected through convenient sampling procedure taking at least 3 from one school. A self structured Interview schedule was applied to collect the relevant data where total 20 test items have been included. Besides interview schedule, data were also collected through continuous observation of children in playschools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assessment of Playful Environment in Playschools

Following findings related to playful environment in pre-schools are deduced-

- (i) Not a single Centre Head completed any course related to Human Development and childhood studies or course in child psychology.
- (ii) No playground for outdoor games in all the sampled schools
- (iii) Play takes place only in one room within the four walls with a few toys, plastic boats, plastic horses etc.
- (iv) Time of play is only one period of 30 minutes in one week as per routine of preparatory and nursery class.
- (v) 90% parents expressed that children do not enjoy going to schools. Almost all the parents were of the view that their children always complain that they will not go to school except a few who are the only children of working mothers.
- (vi) All the parents revealed that children of playschools get up early on the morning on Sundays and holidays but they don't leave their bed up to 8 a.m. on the school running days which reflects stressful environment in the school.
- (vii) Students are never taught any story in mother tongue, very little scope is there in using mother tongue for which the environment cannot be enjoyable to children.
- (viii) All schools have TV for cartoon show to children when a particular class teacher is absent.
- (ix) Only 3 Kid Zee schools were found to be spacious with a little provision of play outside the classroom.

Management Behaviour of Pre-schooling Educational Institutions: Following findings are deduced regarding the management behaviour of the pre-schooling educational institutions

**Table 1. The status of Playful environment and Management Behaviour of Pre-schools
(Data Collected from parents and Centre Heads)**

	Summary of the Statements	% of Respondents
1.	Completed course on Child development/Psychology	Nil
2.	Children rarely enjoy going to school	90% (Yes)
3.	Status of Trained up teachers	44%
4.	Parents' opinion -Playschools are examination oriented	98%(Yes)
5.	Provision of Cartoon show in TV	100% (yes)
6.	Uses of Mother Tongue for story telling in school	Nil
7.	Full emphasis on Knowledge rather than play (Parents' Opinion)	80% (yes)
8.	Parents' satisfaction status on Activity class of children	20%
9.	Playschools give more emphasis on profit making rather than children's development according to parents	80% (Yes)
10.	A Child's future is expected to be mentally sound after studying in playschool	50%

- (i) Only 44% teachers in playschools were found to be trained up. Center heads select teachers without training also.
- (ii) 75% schools are running only with 3/4 helpers, other 25% schools have 8-12 helpers to care of the children.
- (iii) All the schools emphasize on daily home work and class work on the basis of their curriculum
- (iv) All the playschools are examination oriented giving priority on marks.
- (v) Course based examinations are giving too much stress on the children during the early childhood period.
- (vi) Playschools are giving full emphasis on knowledge rather than play. The ratio between play and bookish knowledge is 20:80. This was expressed by all the parents.

(Contribution towards the social behaviour of children)

- (vii) Self-help skills are developed in playschools like-toilet behaviour, putting clothes, hand wash behaviour, etc
- (viii) Children develop the skill to face the world as they are more self-confident and independent. They improve interpersonal skills and better vocabulary power.
- (ix) Playschools are giving opportunity to celebrate different festivals of India through play and trying to develop the mutual tolerance among the children of different religions, castes & creeds.
- (x) Children in playschools are also learning the values of sharing and caring along with developing the friendship attitude among all.
- (xi) Teachers in playschools are always ready to maintain the discipline inside the school campus.
- (xii) Children are taken to visit different parks, old age home etc. to develop social behaviour among them.
- (xiii) Students are taught the importance of cleanliness, sanitation through different activities and checking nails, teeth, ears, etc. in all the schools.

Suggestions to Playschools: On the basis of parents opinion and review of related literature following measures are suggested to the playschools in Assam-

- (i) There should be one Regulatory Body at the State level to monitor the quality and functioning behaviour of the privately managed playschools.

- (ii) Playschools must have separate language and listening room along with a separate motor skills room and a drama and theatre room.
- (iii) In the drama and theatre room, rhymes should be enacted and children must participate in role-play exercise.
- (iv) In the motor skills room, children should be allowed to pour a bucket with water taking water from another bucket.
- (v) Motor development must be encouraged through sand activity and objects grasping play.
- (vi) Compulsory training should be the conditions of teachers' appointment in play schools.
- (vii) Design a flexible play based common foundational curriculum including different activities for children inside and outside classroom.

Educational Implications of the Study

Present study has the following educational implications –

- (i) If one Regulatory Body is established to monitor the privately managed Playschools like Kid-Veda, Kid Zee, Edukids, Kid Care etc. then the stress on children and parents will be reduced.
- (ii) It will help to develop the school going behaviour among children.
- (iii) Psychological health of children is expected to improve
- (iv) It will help the policy makers to include pre-primary education as a part of Right to Education Act-2009

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