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### **Abstract**

Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India has issued draft National Education Policy 2019 which has provided due importance to early childhood education. Early childhood education is important because the education being provided to children at early age would instil the qualities which would have long lasting impact in their behavioural approach and personality. Anganwadi and pre-school are the two means through early education can be provided to the children. In this paper, we have discussed how effectively early childhood education can be provided. Further, we have taken interview of 40 parents to understand their point of view in early childhood education. The conclusion of this paper is that early childhood education is important for overall growth of child and is also preferred by parents.

**Keyword:** *Early Childhood education, growth, behavioural approach, anganwadi, pre-school*

### **Introduction**

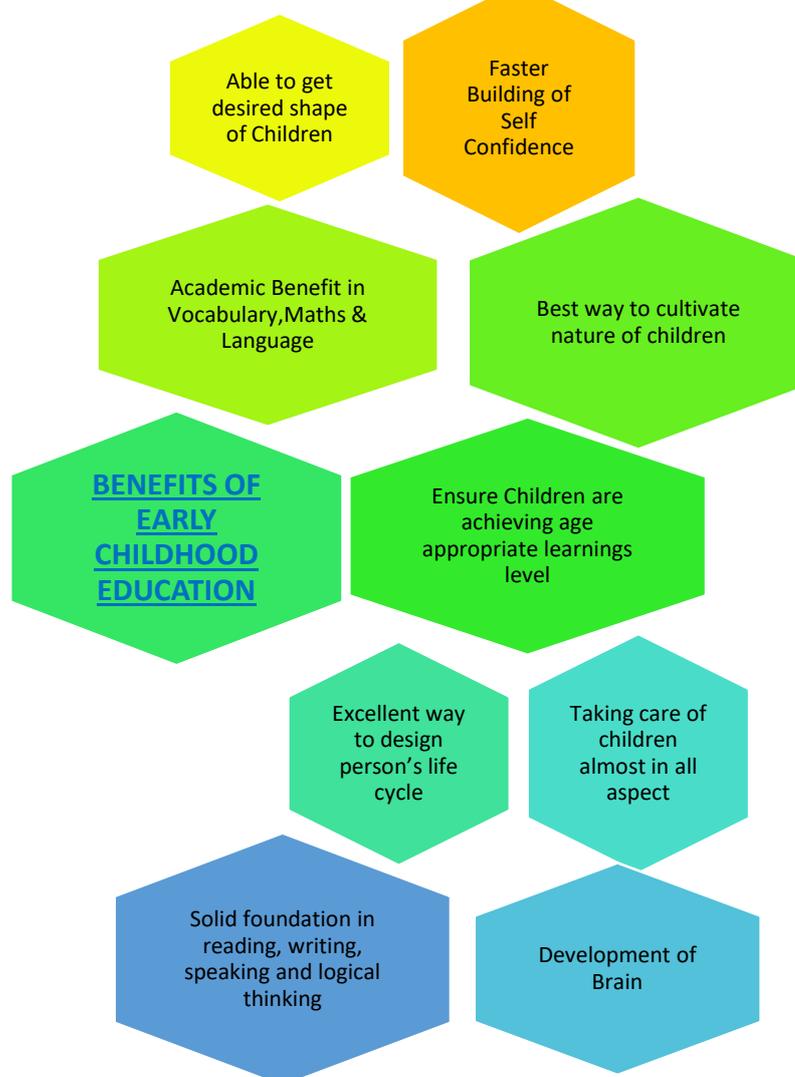
It is rightly said that children are like soft clay when you are doing pottery. You can mould the pot into any shape or form you want when the clay is soft and wet. Sometimes you may have to apply some pressure to get the desired shape but once the clay is hard or baked in an oven, it is almost impossible to change its shape. Same is the case with children. A child would become the way he has been brought up during his childhood, especially the early childhood period. Therefore, it is very critical to systemize right education with right methodology at right time to reap the intended results.

In recent scenario it has been seen that the child education is taking shift towards Early Child Education. Here the word “Early Child Education” refers to a primary vehicle for an indicator of children’s mental growth which enables children to progress along the developmental sequence from preoperational thought in the preschool years to concrete creative thinking which also results in to children’s physical, emotional and social development.(First Edition of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) text (Bredekamp,1987).

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## Literature Review

This paper captures discussion on three moot questions regarding the early childhood education viz. (1) Why early childhood education is important. (2) What are the elements of early childhood education and (3) How quality early childhood education can be provided.

### Why early childhood education is important

As per one study, over 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6 which shows the relevance of education since the very beginning and tender age of the child (Draft National Education Policy 2019). But of course, this education should not be related to science or space or mathematics or history or any particular subject. Rather this education should include basic aspects like talking, playing, listening to music, stimulating all other senses particularly sight and touch, proper nutrition, cleanliness, self-help skills, moral development, physical development etc. which a child would imbibe in his psyche and will channelizing his energy in that direction. Every minute detail comprehended during early childhood will culminate into personality, behavioural approach and mindset of the child once he grows up.

Therefore, early childhood education carries lots of weightage and importance for the betterment and upliftment of a society. A study conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) titled “The impact of pre-school education on retention in primary grades” (1992) on 30,000 children illustrated strong and direct correlations between exposure to pre-school education and retention rates, attendance rates and most significantly learning outcomes in primary school and beyond.

Early childhood education has not only direct co-relation with higher income, lower rate of unemployment and crime but also for the growth of national economy of any country. An investment of Re. 1 in early childhood education will yield a return of Rs. 10 for the country (Draft National Education Policy 2019).

### **What are the elements of early childhood education?**

Having understood the significance of early childhood education, it is imperative to first analyse what are the constituents of early childhood education. Early childhood education can be segregated into two baskets – (1) During the age prior to 3 years; and (2) From 3 to 6 years.

Age prior to 3 would primarily include health and nutrition of both mother and child, cognitive and emotional stimulation through talking, playing, moving, listening to music and sounds and stimulating all other senses particularly sight and touch, understanding the basic language, etc.

While age 3 to 6 would definitely include health and nutrition but will also include self-help skills, cleanliness, handling the anxiety, bonding with other people, adopting to external environment, moral development, physical development, communicating thoughts to parents and others, completing a task, forming good habits, leaning basic manners, etc. (Draft National Education Policy 2019).

### **How quality early childhood education can be provided**

As discussed above, it is essential to provide quality education in the early childhood (i.e. upto the age of 6), it is even more crucial a device a proper system which is self-sustainable, sector-agnostic, multi-faceted and achieves the objectives set forth for providing education. Majority of early childhood education is provided in form of Anganwadis and private pre-schools.

These two organizations can help to provide critical nutrition, health awareness, basic education, and most importantly – a bridge to reach to the doors of primary school for the children. Since the child would be undergoing basic learnings during this phase, it is imperative to create and implement such programs or systems which can enhance the leaning capabilities of children during early age and the same can be effectively provided through anganwadis and private pre-school. However, these organizations have not yielded results to their full potentials and therefore, it is necessary to restructure and reform these organizations.

Certain avenues / measures through which anganwadis and pre-school can optimally contribute, are as under:

- **Training to the Teachers:** Proper trainings may be first given to the teachers who are going to teach to the students to ensure that there is uniformity and effectiveness in their techniques
- **Lower Teacher to Student Ratio:** There should be lower teacher to student ratio to ensure that each teacher provide personal attention to every children, to observe their behaviour and to guide them to their proper development
- **Methodology of teaching:** Methodology adopted by teachers plays biggest role in development of children. There are various techniques / methodologies which if used properly can give effective result e.g. activity based teaching, teaching through video / audio clippings, visit to real places, plays, adding element of music in teaching etc.
- **Education material / Equipment:** Just methodology would not yield intended result if proper education material / equipment are not provided. To give proper understanding to the kids, it is important to use proper material / equipment.
- **Periodical overview of quality of education:** It is necessary to supervise quality of education being provided on periodic basis to identify the area of improvement and to take appropriate measures.

### **Statement of problem**

The present study is conducted in Ahmedabad. The study is conducted to find that whether Early childhood education is preferable by parents? What are the facilities available for the children and how the development of children is taking place?

### **Objective of Study**

1. To understand the contribution of Early Childhood Education in development of children
2. To understand the parents' perspective on Early Childhood Education

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study was objective in nature and based on interview of parents.

#### **Sample Design**

Sample was selected on random basis i.e. Simple Random Sampling. Data was collected from 40 respondent. We took data of each parents' one child only and out of that 20 were girl child and 20 were boy child.

Data was collected through primary survey followed by interview of parents.

The secondary data have been collected from websites.

### **Measuring Tools**

The data collected were presented in table and these tables were systematically with the statistical technique like percentage analysis.

### **Result and Discussion**

**Table 1.1**

**Parents interested in Early Childhood Education**

<b>Child Age</b>	<b>Total No. Of parents</b>	<b>Interested in Early Childhood Education (In numbers)</b>	<b>Interested in Early Childhood Education (In Percentage)</b>
0-3	20	14	70%
3-6	20	18	90%

Source: Author's own calculation

As provided in Table 1.1, out of 20 parents whose child were between the age 0-3, only 70% were interested to send their children for early childhood education and 30% were not interested to send their children for early childhood education while another 20 parents whose children were between the age 3-6, 90% of them were interested in sending their children for early childhood education and 10% were not interested to send their children to early childhood education.

**Table 1.2**

**Children going to Anganwadi and pre school (Out of 32 Children)**

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Anganwadi (No.)</b>	<b>Anganwadi (%)</b>	<b>Pre School (No.)</b>	<b>Pre School (%)</b>
Children's attendance	08	25%	24	75%

Source: Author's own calculation

As provided in Table 1.2, Out of all the children, 25% children are going to anganwadi while 75% are going to pre-school.

**Table 1.3****Parents preference of medium of language (Out of 32 Interested Parents' preference)**

Particulars	English medium (No.)	English medium (%)	Vernacular language (No.)	Vernacular language (%)
Parents' preference	22	68.75%	10	31.25%

Source: Author's Own Calculation

As per Table 1.3, 68.75% of parents are inclined to send their child in English medium school while 31.25% are inclined to send in vernacular language school.

**Table 1.4****Mix of boy child and girl child taking education (Total 20 girl child and 20 boy child)**

Particulars	Boy child (No.) (Out of 20)	Boy Child (%)	Girl Child (No.) (Out of 20)	Girl Child (%)
Children	17	85%	15	75%

Source: Author's Own Calculation

As per Table 1.4, Out of all the boy children, 85% of them were going for education and 15% of them were not going for education while in case of girls, only 75% were going for education and 25% were not going for education.

**Table 1.5****Preference of parents in sending their children to category of schools (Out of 32 Interested Parents in Early Childhood Education)**

Particulars	Expensive school (No.)	Expensive school (%)	Not very expensive school (No.)	Not very expensive school (No.)
Parents' preference	20	62.5%	12	37.5%

Source: Author's Own Calculation

As discussed in Table 1.5, It can be observed that 62.5% of parents want to send their child in expensive school while balance 37.5% want to send their child in not very expensive school.

**Table 1.6****Percentage of parents devoting time in early education of their children**

Particulars	Devoting proper time	Not devoting proper time
Parents	73%	27%

As discussed in Table 1.6, 73% of parents devote proper time in education of their children while balance 27% are not able to devote special time.

## CONCLUSION

Early childhood education carries utmost importance for the growth of the childhood. If proper measures are initiated, then early education can reap intended benefits. Majority of parents also prefer early childhood education.

**“A child miseducated is a child lost” (Quotes: John F. Kennedy)**

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