



EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF NPE-2019

Dr. Akthar Parveen

Assistant Professor

Department of Education & Training

Moulana Azad National Urdu University

Gachibowli-Hyderabad

ABSTRACT

Early childhood is an important stage in the life of an individual. It is the stage of preparation for school and also the stage of physical, mental, emotional, and social development. The child learns good habits, values, patience, and respect for elders, feeling of cooperation, teamwork, self-esteem, confidence, and enthusiasm for lifelong learning. It aims at the holistic development of the child for lifelong learning and physical wellbeing.

Highlighting the importance of ECCE, UNESCO defines it as the “holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing.”

Early childhood care and education have prominence importance to policymakers, parents, teachers, and the public as well. Present paper through's light on the historical perspective of ECCE and recommendations of National policy of education- 2019 and challenges of implementation in the present context.

Keywords: Early childhood education, National policy on education

Historical perspective of early childhood care and education:-

India is considered as the fastest growing economy in the world now. Post-independence India's priority was education for all. Even though education, as a right came in 2009 India's focus, was on the eradication of illiteracy since independence.

Numbers of educational policies were framed to make education a compulsory right and get satisfactory qualitative education for Indian citizens. During the process of compulsory education, India has faced many socio-economic issues. There is the problem of dropouts, the problem of girl children, and the difference in the quality of education which increased the difference in class and mass people.

All the commissions emphasized Early childhood care and education to develop required life skills in children and solve the problem of universal retention, gender gap and make them aware of a healthy diet and provide a healthy nutritional diet to school children for their healthy and holistic development.

Early childhood care starts from conception until eight years of age. Early childhood the most crucial age in the life of the individual which decides their physical, mental, social, emotional, and moral development. Even though Early childhood care and education are not been defined in the free and compulsory education act it implies that free preschool education is mandatory for toddlers for developing good habits.

Ministry of Women and child development along with various other ministries like MHRD and MSJ&E initiated Early childhood care and education in the form of Anganwadis which have shown positive results. The objective behind the Anganwadis was to stop child mortality and malnutrition and improve their physical and psychological development of the children between the age group of 0 to 6 years.

Rise in enrolment of Anganwadi children

Year	Population in millions
2001-2	16.7
2012-13	35.3

The establishment of Anganwadi schools reduced the gender gap and drop out of school children drastically. Then mid-day meals program was started by the state government to provide basic nutritional meals required for children's healthy growth and development.

Even though India spends an amount of 4.8 GDP it has failed to achieve the objective due to loopholes in the act and problems in implementation.

National policy on Education- 2019-Early childhood care and Education:-

NPE 2019 defines early childhood as a child between the ages group of 3 to 6 years. It aims at providing free, safe, high quality developmentally appropriate care and education by 2025.

The policy states that Neuroscience shows that the child's 85% of brain development takes place before 6 years of age. And it also states neglect and deprivation in early childhood lead to deficiencies in the development of the brain resulting in an adverse effect on the cognitive and emotional development of the child. Hence there is a need for excellent care, nurture, nutrition, physical activity, psychosocial development, cognitive and emotional development for proper brain development leading to the desired learning curve in the toddler's life.

NCERT study on 30,000 children revealed the impact of preschool education and retention in primary school and a strong and direct correlation between exposure to preschool education and retention rates and attendance rates. Even international studies revealed that quality preschool education is strongly correlated to higher incomes, a lower rate of unemployment, low crime rate. Hence there is a need for ECCE to develop good, moral thoughtful, creative, empathetic, and productive human beings.

Recommendation of NPE-2019 on ECCE

Before three years of age:-

1. Health and nutrition of both the mother and child.
2. Cognitive and emotional stimulation of the infant through talking, playing, moving, listening to music and sounds
3. Stimulating sense of touch and sight
4. Exposure to language, numbers, and simple problem solving

From 3 years to 6 years of age:-

1. Continuous health care and nutrition
2. Developing self-help skills, motor skills, cleanliness, handling of separation anxiety,
3. Being comfortable with one's peer, moral development
4. Physical development through movement, exercise,
5. Expression and communication thoughts and feeling to parents and others
6. Learning to Sit for a longer time to complete the task
7. Forming all-round good habits
8. Supervised play for lifelong skills like cooperation, teamwork, social interaction, compassion, equity, inclusiveness, communication, cultural appreciation, playfulness, curiosity, creativity, and ability to successfully interact with teachers, parents, fellow students, and staff.
9. Learning alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colors, shapes, drawing, painting, indoor and outdoor games, play puzzles, logical thinking, visual arts, craft, drama, puppetry, music movements.

A curricular and pedagogical framework for ECCE:-

Framework for ECCE consists of two parts, the first part of the framework of guidelines is meant for Parents and Anganwadi teachers. This framework is intended for children of 0-3years to develop percussion instruments, low-cost learning aids, simple melodic instruments, baby rattles, and colourful hard candies for cognitive stimulation.

The second part of the educational framework is for 3-8 years of children for Anganwadi teachers and parents. It consists of activity-based, play-based, discovery-based, learning to teach first and second-grade children basics like alphabets, numbers, communication languages, colours, shapes, sounds movements, games, drawing, painting music and local arts.

It also includes training for socio-emotional skills such as curiosity, patience, teamwork, cooperation, interaction and empathy for school preparedness. The above objectives can be achieved through exercises, puzzles, colouring books, drawing, stories, rhymes, songs, games, etc.

Infrastructural facilities for ECCE:-

- Providing excellent infrastructural facilities along with educational material
- Additional quality centres will be constructed to cater to the needs of the children
- Anganwadi workers will be trained in techniques of cognitive stimulation for infants
- Anganwadi centres will become strong health and nutrition components.
- To build up stronger school communities co-locating Anganwadis with primary schools.
- Composite schools will be established supported by health, nutrition, growth monitoring services for preschool children.
- Building stands alone pre-schools where Anganwadi and primary were not able to meet the requirement of children
- Socioeconomically deprived localities will be given first preference.
- Designing learning-friendly environments
- A committee of cognitive scientists, early childhood educational experts, artists, and architects will be framed to make the environment truly inspiring
- Welcoming and stimulating environment with safe drinking water, toilets, bright classroom with flexible seating arrangement, safe learning materials, environmentally friendly, locally sourced materials.
- Preparing high-quality educators for ECCE through stage-specific professional training mentoring and career mapping.
- Conducting six months of special training for ECCE teachers.
- To ensure the required quality standards regulating and accreditation system for ECCE will be instituted.
- generating demand for ECCE by bringing awareness in policymakers, parents, teachers and community members
- Propaganda through public services, messages, media campaigns for parents to support their children's early childhood learning
- Extension of RTE act to ECCE

Generally, inequality in education arises due to the following causes

1. inequality in educational opportunities
2. inequality in educational attainment
3. inequality in occupational attainment
4. inequality in returns of education

Educational policies tried to reduce the inequalities in educational opportunities but failed to successfully attain the other three aspects due to methods of teaching, mindless rote learning, learning without comprehension.

Amartya sen rightly points out that India has failed to provide a strong base in the form of pre-primary education to its citizens solely concentrating on higher education.

New education policy 2019 must focus on the problems in the process of implementation of ECCE such as competing with private preschools, infrastructural facilities training of Anganwadi teachers, bringing awareness among the parents to join their children in Anganwadis for the better future of their tiny tots.

There is a need to train the teachers to work with commitment, honestly, sincerely, with empathy to serve tiny tots without misusing the facilities provided to them.

References:-

1. <https://www.google.com/search?source=hp&ei=S5jaXZWxAYTSvgT3356YDg&q=national+policy+on+education+2019&oq=national+policy+on+education+2019&gshttps://nickledanddimed.wordpress.com/2017/03/22/a-critical-analysis-of-indias-education-policy-determining-objectives-outcomes-and-flaws/>
2. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/early-childhood-care-and-education>
3. <https://unicef.in › What wedo › Early-Childhood-Education>

