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Practices And Challenges Of Implementing Pre-Primary Education In Prayagraj

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Abstract: The successful implementation of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is vital for lifelong learning and holistic development. Guided by NEP 2020, this study examines the practices and challenges of pre-primary education in Prayagraj through a descriptive design using a checklist-based survey of 50 teachers and 50 parents from 25 institutions. Data were categorized into Outdoor and Indoor Facilities covering indicators like playgrounds, toilets, drinking water, medical rooms, teaching methods, and digital tools. Results show that while basic facilities such as toilets and drinking water exist, gaps remain in shaded play areas, medical infrastructure, and fencing. Indoor environments have adequate lighting but lack digital aids, rest spaces, and ECCE-aligned curricula. Parents largely validated teacher findings yet showed low awareness of NEP 2020 and minimal participation. Major challenges include inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, limited training, and large class sizes. However, good practices like creative teaching aids and community involvement were observed. The study urges capacity-building, district-level policy execution, and parental awareness programs to bridge the gap between NEP 2020 goals and ground realities.

Index Terms - Pre-Primary Education, Early childhood care and education (ECCE)

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is not merely the transmission of knowledge but the foundation of a nation's social, economic, and cultural progress. The early years of life, from birth to six, are crucial, as over 85% of brain development occurs during this period. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) plays a vital role in shaping children's cognitive, emotional, and social growth.
ECCE covers the education and care of children from birth to eight years, focusing mainly on ages three to six. It includes play, interaction, art, music, and storytelling—aiming not only to prepare children for school but to ensure holistic development. Recognizing its importance, India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 integrated ECCE into the formal education system under the 5+3+3+4 structure, emphasizing play-based learning, teacher training, community participation, and universal access to quality early education by 2030.

Despite policy efforts, implementation remains uneven. Many areas face inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of trained educators, and low parental awareness—particularly in rural and semi-urban regions. Prayagraj district offers a representative context for studying these challenges due to its socio-economic diversity and mix of government and private schools. Preliminary findings suggest awareness of ECCE's importance but highlight gaps in training, materials, and community involvement.

Globally, countries like Finland, Sweden, and Singapore showcase effective, inclusive, and play-based ECCE models. Learning from such practices can strengthen India's early education system. Theoretical insights from Piaget, Vygotsky, and Erikson further stress active learning, social interaction, and nurturing environments for young children.

This study explores how these principles and policies are being implemented in Prayagraj. It identifies the practices adopted by pre-primary schools, challenges faced by teachers, and the role of parents and the community. The findings aim to inform policymakers, educators, and researchers, contributing to India's goal of achieving equitable and quality early education under NEP 2020.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology refers to the systematic framework used to conduct a research study. It encompasses the overall strategy, methods, procedures, and tools employed to collect, analyze, and interpret data in order to address specific research objectives and answer research questions. It is not merely a set of techniques but a rational approach that justifies *why* a particular method is used and *how* it will lead to valid and reliable outcomes.

In the context of the present study "Practices and Challenges of Implementing Pre-Primary Education in Prayagraj" the research methodology guides the researcher in:

- Identifying the appropriate design for studying educational practices.
- Selecting relevant participants (parents and teachers) who are directly involved in ECCE.
- Employing appropriate tools (such as checklists and observation schedules) to systematically collect data from the field.
- Choosing data analysis techniques (like percentage analysis) that can reveal patterns and trends effectively.
- Ensuring that the entire process is scientific, unbiased, ethical, and replicable.

A well-structured methodology ensures that the findings of the study are credible, objective, and applicable, especially when addressing practical challenges in the real-world implementation of educational policies like NEP 2020. It provides a roadmap from the formulation of the problem to the presentation of conclusions and recommendations, making it an essential component of academic research.

2.1 Research Design

The present study is based on a descriptive survey research design. This design is best suited for exploring the existing practices and challenges in the implementation of pre-primary education in Prayagraj. The descriptive nature allows the researcher to collect data from a wide range of respondents in their natural educational setting without manipulating variables. It helps in understanding the realities of ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) as practiced on the ground, in line with NEP 2020 expectations. The study aims to gather first-hand information from teachers and parents to understand the implementation status of pre-primary education in accordance with the NEP 2020 guidelines.

2.2 Population of the Study

All pre-primary schools of Prayagraj that provide pre-primary education. These institutions serve as the foundation for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in the district. The study focuses on schools that are actively engaged in delivering pre-primary education and cater to children in the 3–6 age group through structured early learning programs. These schools form the basis for selecting respondents who have direct experience with the implementation and reception of ECCE.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

A total of 25 pre-primary schools from Prayagraj were selected using Simple random sampling, from these school a total of 100 respondents were selected comprising 50 teachers and 50 parents also through simple random sampling. The sample was selected to ensure representation across schools while maintaining a manageable scope for in-depth analysis. The sample is selected using the simple random sampling technique, ensuring that each individual in the defined population has an equal chance of being included. The sample will comprise:

- Parents of children enrolled in pre-primary schools from urban and semi-urban areas.
- Teachers of differerent pre-schools. This stratification ensures a diverse and representative sample, helping generalize findings across the Prayagraj district.

2.4 Tools for Data Collection

A structured checklist is developed by the researcher for data collection, based on the principles and recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The checklist and questionnaire included items related to physical infrastructure, classroom environment, curriculum implementation, teacher qualifications, and parental involvement.

To gather reliable and multi-dimensional data, the following tools is used:

- Checklist: A structured checklist prepared by the researcher is used to evaluate aspects like infrastructure, availability of learning materials, teacher qualifications, hygiene standards, and compliance with NEP 2020 guidelines.
- Observation Schedule: Through non-participant observation, classroom practices is recorded using a systematic schedule. This includes types of activities conducted, interaction style, use of language, and presence of play-based learning.

These tools of research were structured on the aforesaid quality indicators to look into different aspects of early childhood care and education as utilization of infrastructural facilities and teaching learning process.

2.5 Procedure of Data Collection

The researcher personally visited each of the 25 selected schools. Teachers and parents were contacted and informed about the purpose of the study. The checklist was administered through direct interaction and observation to ensure accurate data recording.

- Ethical Consideration:
  - Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.
  - Data is collected with informed consent, and no personal identifiers were recorded or disclosed.

The study adhered to ethical research practices to protect the rights and dignity of participants.

2.6 Statistical Techniques

The collected data is classified category-wise according to the checklist. Each response was converted into frequency counts and percentages to identify trends and patterns across different indicators of pre-primary education quality. These were then interpreted in light of NEP 2020 standards.

Data is analyzed using percentage analysis, allowing the researcher to present the distribution of responses and highlight specific trends or patterns. For example:

- Percentage of centres with adequate infrastructure
- Percentage of classrooms implementing play-based learning.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Percentage analysis:

OUTDOOR FACILITIES

Table 3.1: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Teachers on Outdoor Facilities (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Playground availability	45	5	90%	10%
2	Drinking water source (Filter/RO-UV)	46	4	92%	8%
3	Toilet facility (child-friendly)	42	8	84%	16%
4	School transportation	38	12	76%	24%
5	Availability of utility staff	40	10	80%	20%
6	Food facility (Canteen/Pantry)	36	14	72%	28%
7	School infrastructure (painted, toys, etc.)	45	5	90%	10%
8	Medical facilities (first aid/infirmary)	39	11	78%	22%
9	Playground equipment (swings, slides)	43	7	86%	14%
10	Guardian waiting area	34	16	68%	32%
11	Fencing or boundary for child safety	41	9	82%	18%
12	Outdoor play area with shaded/ sunny spots	36	14	72%	28%
13	Safe surface materials (grass/sand/soil)	35	15	70%	30%

The data obtained from teachers regarding outdoor facilities in pre-primary schools of Prayagraj reveals that a significant majority of institutions possess essential infrastructure to support safe and effective outdoor learning. Notably, 90% of teachers affirmed the availability of playgrounds and child-friendly environments, supported by 92% reporting filtered drinking water and 84% indicating accessible toilet facilities. However, about 24% of schools were found lacking in school transportation, suggesting the need for enhanced connectivity solutions. While infrastructure components such as painted walls, play equipment, and medical provisions were present in most schools, gaps were noted in the availability of shaded outdoor areas, guardian waiting zones, and safe surfacing materials. These findings indicate that while the general outdoor environment is conducive for early learners, targeted improvements in peripheral safety and parental convenience could further enhance the overall quality of pre-primary education delivery.

Table 3.2: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Parents on Outdoor Facilities (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Playground availability	46	4	92%	8%
2	Drinking water source (Filter/RO-UV)	45	5	90%	10%
3	Toilet facility (child-friendly)	40	10	80%	20%
4	School transportation	36	14	72%	28%
5	Availability of utility staff	39	11	78%	22%
6	Food facility (Canteen/Pantry)	35	15	70%	30%
7	School infrastructure (painted, toys, etc.)	44	6	88%	12%
8	Medical facilities (first aid/infirmary)	38	12	76%	24%
9	Playground equipment (swings, slides)	42	8	84%	16%
10	Guardian waiting area	32	18	64%	36%
11	Fencing or boundary for child safety	40	10	80%	20%
12	Outdoor play area with shaded/ sunny spots	35	15	70%	30%
13	Safe surface materials (grass/sand/soil)	34	16	68%	32%

The parental feedback regarding outdoor facilities closely mirrors the teacher responses, reinforcing the credibility of the findings and highlighting shared perceptions across stakeholder groups. With 92% of parents acknowledging the availability of playgrounds and 90% affirming clean drinking water, it is evident that schools are prioritizing child-friendly infrastructure. The figures for toilet accessibility (80%) and school transportation (72%) reflect a slightly lower but consistent view, underlining areas for modest enhancement. Other parameters such as medical readiness, play structures, and physical safety measures received positive recognition from 70–84% of the respondents. However, aspects like guardian waiting areas and shaded outdoor zones were seen as relatively weaker components, drawing attention to the infrastructural gaps that can affect both comfort and safety. Overall, parents affirm the general adequacy of outdoor environments in most schools, though nuanced improvements could lead to a more holistic early childhood setting.

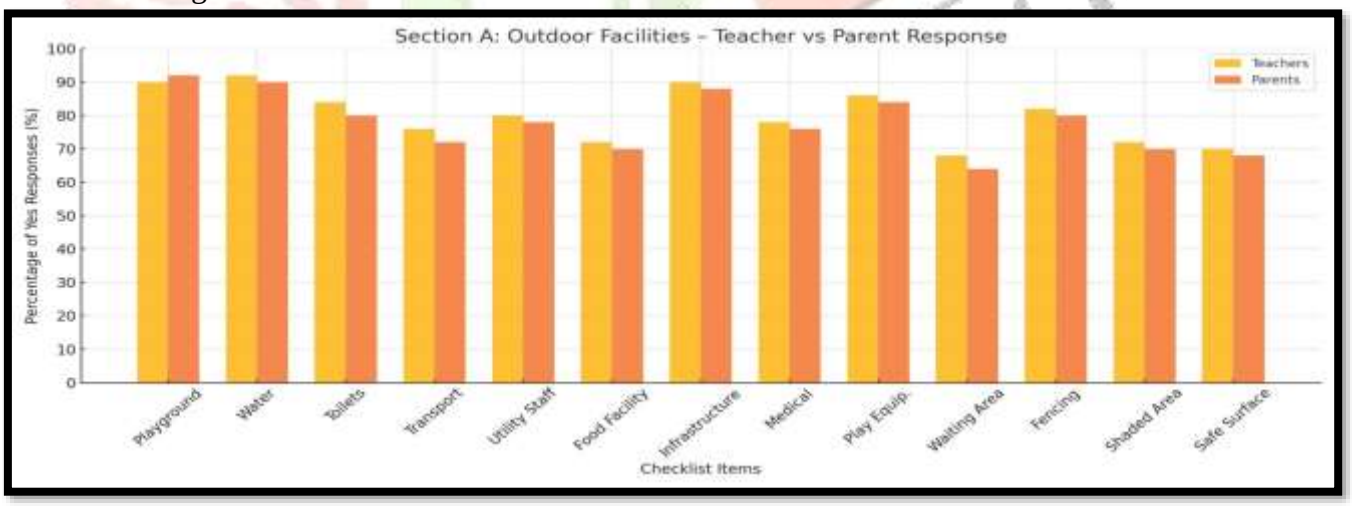


Figure 3.1: Comparison of Teacher and Parent Responses on Outdoor Facilities

The above bar graph visually represents the comparative analysis of responses from teachers and parents regarding the availability of outdoor facilities in pre-primary schools of Prayagraj. Both stakeholder groups show a high level of agreement on the presence of key infrastructure. For example, over 90% confirmed the presence of playgrounds and clean drinking water, and around 80–86% agreed on the availability of toilets, fencing, and playground equipment. However, relatively lower scores were reported for shaded areas, waiting zones for guardians, and safe outdoor surfacing materials. These areas need improvement to ensure a more comprehensive and child-friendly outdoor environment. Overall, the consistency in responses

affirms that the schools are making significant efforts in maintaining basic outdoor infrastructure, though some supplementary features could further enhance the learning environment.

INDOOR FACILITIES

Table 3.3: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Teachers on Indoor Facilities (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Game and play instruments (Toys / Clay / Puzzles / Abacus)	44	6	88%	12%
2	Medium of instruction – a) English	35	15	70%	30%
	b) Hindi	15	35	30%	70%
3.	Teaching method – a) Play & Activity Based	25	25	50%	50%
	b) Inquiry Based	15	35	30%	70%
	c) Traditional	10	40	20%	80%
4	Availability of mid-day meal	32	18	64%	36%
5	Instructional materials (Board / Chalk / Marker / Textbooks)	45	5	90%	10%
6	Digital learning aids (Smartboard / Projector / Computers / LED)	38	12	76%	24%
7	Timetable – a) Fixed	30	20	60%	40%
	b) Flexible	20	30	40%	60%
8	Stationery availability (Books / Colours / Drawing Kits)	42	8	84%	16%
9	Student count per class – a) 0–10	5	45	10%	90%
	b) 10–20	15	35	30%	70%
	c) 20–30	20	30	40%	60%
	d) 30–40	10	40	20%	80%
10	Entertainment activities (Puppetry / Drama / Music / Movies)	36	14	72%	28%
11	Proper classroom size & ventilation	43	7	86%	14%
12	Lighting (natural & artificial)	46	4	92%	8%
13	Dedicated kitchen/food area	28	22	56%	44%
14	Sleeping/rest area	26	24	52%	48%
15	Staff-Student Ratio: a) 1:10	12	38	24%	76%
	b) 1:20	18	32	36%	64%
	c) 1:30	14	36	28%	72%
	d) 1:40	6	44	12%	88%

Teacher responses regarding indoor facilities indicate that the majority of schools are well-equipped in terms of essential classroom resources and learning aids. 88% reported the presence of games and play instruments, and an overwhelming 90% confirmed the availability of basic instructional materials like chalkboards and textbooks. The medium of instruction shows a clear preference toward English (70%) with the remaining 30% using Hindi. Teaching methodology is diverse, with 50% using play-based approaches, 30% inquiry-based, and 20% traditional, showing a balanced distribution. Mid-day meals are available in 64% of schools, and 76% reported digital learning tools in place. While 60% follow a fixed timetable and

40% a flexible one, the class size distribution reflects that most schools maintain between 10 to 30 students per class. Lighting, ventilation, and access to stationery were widely available, although only about half the schools provided resting areas or food handling spaces. . Student count data shows overcrowding issues, with only 10% of classrooms having fewer than 10 students. Staff-student ratios are also skewed, with only 24% indicating a 1:10 ratio. Overall, while infrastructure and learning aids show positive trends, there are concerns regarding personalized attention and teaching diversity.

Table 3.4: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Parents on Indoor Facilities (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Game and play instruments (Toys / Clay / Puzzles / Abacus)	43	7	86%	14%
2	Medium of instruction – a) English	33	17	66%	34%
	b) Hindi	17	33	34%	66%
3.	Teaching method – a) Play & Activity Based	24	26	48%	52%
	b) Inquiry Based	16	34	32%	68%
	c) Traditional	10	40	20%	80%
4	Availability of mid-day meal	30	20	60%	40%
5	Instructional materials (Board / Chalk / Marker / Textbooks)	44	6	88%	12%
6	Digital learning aids (Smartboard / Projector / Computers / LED)	37	13	74%	26%
7	Timetable – a) Fixed	28	22	56%	44%
	b) Flexible	22	28	44%	56%
8	Stationery availability (Books / Colours / Drawing Kits)	41	9	82%	18%
9	Student count – a) 0–10	04	46	8%	92%
	b) 10–20	16	34	32%	68%
	c) 20–30	20	30	40%	60%
	d) 30–40	10	40	20%	80%
10	Entertainment activities (Puppetry / Drama / Music / Movies)	35	15	70%	30%
11	Proper classroom size & ventilation	42	8	84%	16%
12	Lighting (natural & artificial)	45	5	90%	10%
13	Dedicated kitchen/food area	27	23	54%	46%
14	Sleeping/rest area	25	25	50%	50%
15	Staff-Student Ratio: a) 1:10	10	40	20%	80%
	b) 1:20	16	34	32%	68%
	c) 1:30	18	32	36%	64%
	d) 1:40	6	44	12%	88%

Parental feedback closely aligns with teacher reports on indoor facilities. 86% confirm the presence of play-based materials and 88% validate the availability of essential instructional resources. Regarding the medium of instruction, parents slightly differed with 66% identifying English and 34% Hindi as the main language of teaching. A similar spread was found in teaching methods with play-based learning recognized by 48%, inquiry-based by 32%, and traditional by 20%. Availability of mid-day meals (60%), digital aids (74%), and structured timetables (56% fixed and 44% flexible) were acknowledged with only minor variation from the teacher group. Classroom sizes were generally small to mid-sized, with the 10–30 student range being most common. While the lighting and ventilation standards remain high at 90%, facilities like dedicated food preparation areas and rest zones were less consistently reported, reflecting broader infrastructural limitations in many pre-primary schools. There is also a strong demand for entertainment activities and stationery, both scoring above 70%. Staff-student ratios remain a concern with only 20% acknowledging the 1:10 ratio. Overall, parents emphasize infrastructure readiness but indicate a gap in teacher-student individual attention and methodological variety.

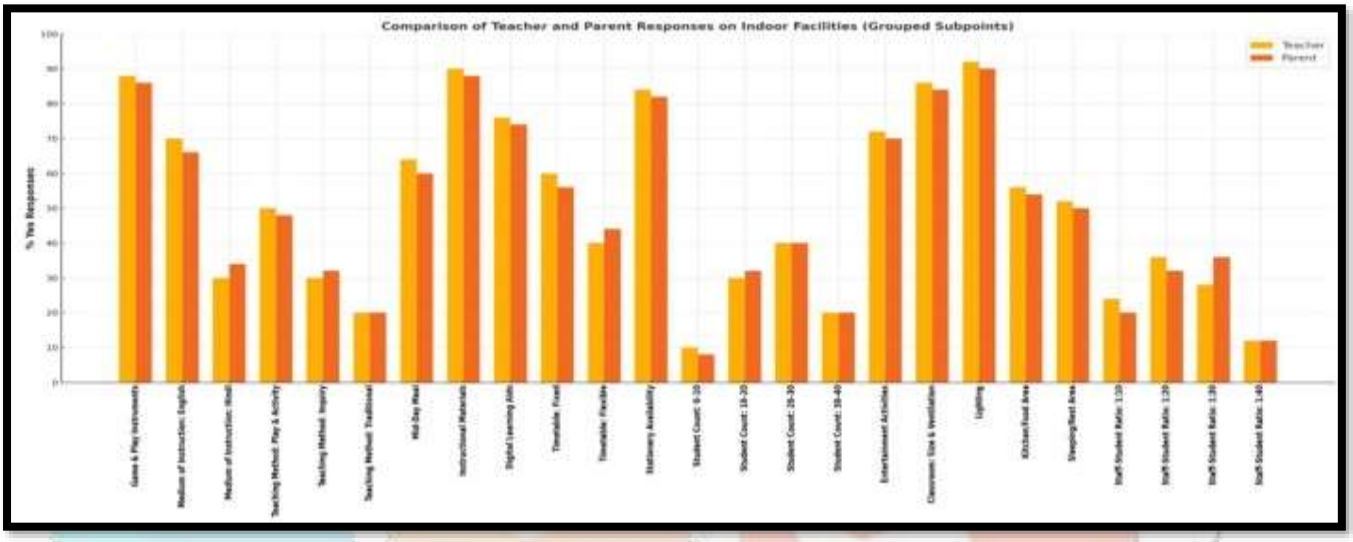


Figure 3.2: Comparison of Teacher and Parent Responses on Indoor Facilities

The bar graph illustrates the comparative response levels of teachers and parents for various indoor facilities in pre-primary settings. Instructional materials were rated highly by both groups—90% by teachers and 88% by parents. Lighting was marked at 92% by teachers and 90% by parents, indicating strong satisfaction in this area. Game and play instruments were also well-supported, with 88% of teachers and 86% of parents confirming availability. Teaching methods such as Play & Activity were rated 50% (teachers) and 48% (parents), while Inquiry-based methods received 30% and 32% respectively. Timetables show a division, with fixed schedules favored by 60% of teachers versus 56% of parents. Flexible timetables were less favored, with 40% (teachers) and 44% (parents). Student count concerns are visible—only 10% of teachers and 8% of parents reported classes with 0–10 students. Staff-student ratio 1:10 was rated positively by 24% of teachers and 20% of parents. These variations, though subtle, reflect nuanced differences in how educators and caregivers perceive indoor readiness.

TEACHING LEARNING MATERIAL AND CURRICULUM

Table 3.5: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Teachers on Teaching Learning Material and Curriculum (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Presence of structured curriculum/syllabus	44	6	88%	12%
2	Curriculum suited to child's age	42	8	84%	16%
3	Activity-based curriculum implementation (Art, Music, Dance, Block Play, Sand/Water Play, Nature Study)	40	10	80%	20%
.4	Availability of printed textbooks/workbooks	46	4	92%	8%
5	Use of storybooks and rhymes	45	5	90%	10%
6	Inclusion of drawing/colouring material	43	7	86%	14%
7	TLMs aligned with curriculum goals	41	9	82%	18%

Teacher responses to the provision of teaching learning materials (TLMs) and curriculum in pre-primary schools indicate that a majority of institutions have structured learning systems. Nearly 88% of respondents confirmed the existence of a formal curriculum, and 84% stated that it was age-appropriate. A strong emphasis was placed on activity-based learning, with 80% indicating active implementation. In terms of physical materials, 92% reported availability of printed workbooks and textbooks, while 90% acknowledged the regular use of storybooks and rhymes, enriching language skills and imagination. A significant 86% included drawing and coloring activities as part of daily instruction, and 82% believed that TLMs were well-aligned with curriculum objectives. Overall, the findings suggest a broad adherence to child-centric and creative early education practices.

Table 3.6: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Parents on Teaching Learning Material and Curriculum (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Presence of structured curriculum/syllabus	43	7	86%	14%
2	Curriculum suited to child's age	41	9	82%	18%
3	Activity-based curriculum implementation (Art, Music, Dance, Block Play, Sand/Water Play, Nature Study)	39	11	78%	22%
4	Availability of printed textbooks/workbooks	45	5	90%	10%
5	Use of storybooks and rhymes	44	6	88%	12%
6	Inclusion of drawing/colouring material	42	8	84%	16%
7	TLMs aligned with curriculum goals	40	10	80%	20%

Parent responses closely reflect the inputs received from teachers regarding the teaching learning materials and curriculum followed in pre-primary schools. A high percentage (86%) of parents were aware of structured curricula in place, and 82% agreed that the content was appropriate for their child's age. Parents also validated the activity-based nature of teaching, with 78% supporting this method. The presence of printed materials was acknowledged by 90% of parents, while 88% mentioned that storybooks and rhymes were part of regular schooling. Drawing and coloring as daily creative outlets were recognized by 84% of parents, and 80% found the materials used by teachers to be aligned with the stated learning goals. These responses confirm a strong parental satisfaction with the educational approaches adopted in the pre-primary segment.

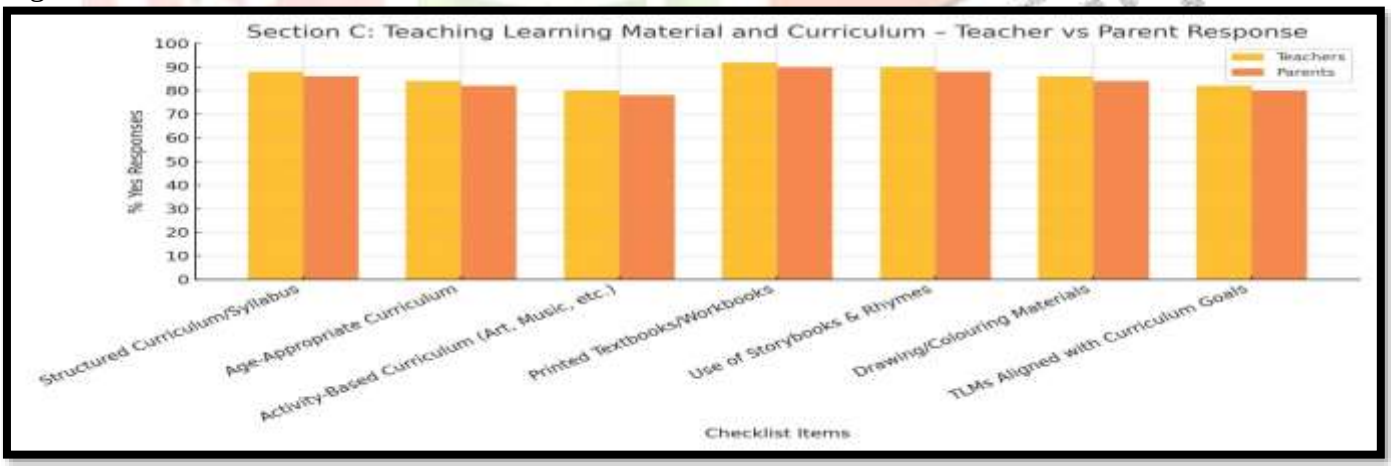


Figure 3.3: Comparison of Teacher and Parent Responses on TLM & Curriculum

The bar graph displays a comparison between teacher and parent responses regarding the availability and quality of teaching learning materials (TLMs) and curriculum in pre-primary schools. A high percentage of both teachers (88%) and parents (86%) acknowledged the presence of structured curricula. Likewise, curriculum suitability for children's age was recognized by 84% of teachers and 82% of parents. The implementation of activity-based learning, including art, music, dance, and nature play, received strong support with 80% and 78% affirmation from teachers and parents respectively. Printed textbooks and workbooks were widely available, with 92% of teachers and 90% of parents confirming their use. Furthermore, the incorporation of storybooks, rhymes, drawing materials, and curriculum-aligned TLMs received consistently high approval. This data underscores that early education programs in Prayagraj are

centered around creative, structured, and age-appropriate pedagogies appreciated by both educators and parents.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND CHILD ENGAGEMENT

Table 3.7: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Teachers on Classroom Activities and Child Engagement (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Circle time or group interaction activities	42	8	84%	16%
2	Use of storytelling and puppetry	40	10	80%	20%
3	Rhymes and action songs practiced regularly	46	4	92%	8%
4	Art and craft sessions	43	7	86%	14%
5	Free play or unstructured playtime	39	11	78%	22%
6	Outdoor physical activities or Field trips or excursions (Zoo, Museum, Exhibitions)	44	6	88%	12%
7	Observation and participation activities (Activities for thinking, reasoning and experimenting)	41	9	82%	18%

Teacher responses in relation to classroom activities and child engagement reveal a well-structured and child-centric pedagogical approach in most pre-primary schools. A significant 84% confirmed the practice of circle time or group interaction sessions, which are crucial for building communication and social skills among young learners. Storytelling and puppetry, known for enhancing imagination, were reported by 80% of teachers, while 92% stated that rhymes and action songs were integral to classroom routines. Art and craft activities were present in 86% of schools, fostering creativity and fine motor skills. Although slightly lower, 78% of teachers acknowledged regular unstructured play sessions, indicating a balance between guided and free-form activities. Outdoor physical activity was widely adopted (88%), and 82% of the institutions emphasized participatory and observation-based learning, essential for early cognitive development.

Table 3.8: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Parents on Classroom Activities and Child Engagement (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Circle time or group interaction activities	41	9	82%	18%
2	Use of storytelling and puppetry	39	11	78%	22%
3	Rhymes and action songs practiced regularly	45	5	90%	10%
4	Art and craft sessions	42	8	84%	16%
5	Free play or unstructured playtime	38	12	76%	24%
6	Outdoor physical activities or Field trips or excursions (Zoo, Museum, Exhibitions)	43	7	86%	14%
7	Observation and participation activities (Activities for thinking, reasoning and experimenting)	40	10	80%	20%

Parents largely agreed with the teachers on the types of classroom activities their children participated in. 82% were aware of group-based circle time and 78% confirmed the use of storytelling and puppetry. Rhymes and action songs were very prominent, as noted by 90% of the parents, showing strong musical engagement in the curriculum. Similarly, 84% reported exposure to art and craft activities, while 76% mentioned that children had opportunities for unstructured play. Physical development was also a priority, with 86% parents noting the inclusion of outdoor activities. Moreover, 80% acknowledged that schools encouraged participatory learning, indicating a holistic and interactive teaching strategy. Overall, parent

insights reinforced the notion that schools strive to maintain a vibrant and engaging classroom environment for early learners.

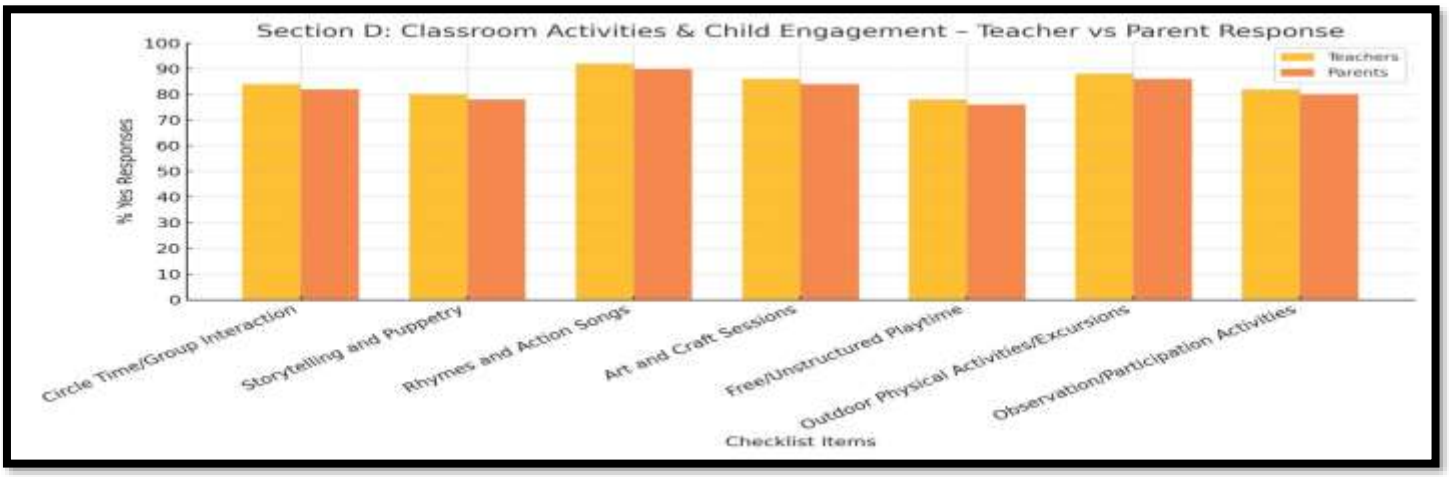


Figure 3.4: Comparison of Teacher and Parent Responses on Classroom Activities

The bar graph illustrates the comparison of teacher and parent responses on classroom activities and child engagement in pre-primary schools. Both teachers and parents reported high participation in rhymes and action songs, with teachers at 92% and parents at 90%, indicating strong emphasis on musical learning. Circle time and group interaction were affirmed by 84% of teachers and 82% of parents, reflecting strong social engagement practices. Storytelling and puppetry are used widely as creative tools, with 80% and 78% confirmation respectively. Art and craft sessions are common in 86% of teacher responses and 84% of parents. While free play received slightly lower percentages (78% for teachers, 76% for parents), it still remains a valuable part of the learning day. Outdoor and physical activities were acknowledged by over 85% from both groups, showing a good balance of indoor and outdoor engagement. Lastly, observation-based activities were endorsed by 82% of teachers and 80% of parents, supporting experiential learning approaches.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Table 3.9: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Teachers on Parent Participation and Community Involvement (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Regular parent-teacher meetings (PTMs)	46	4	92%	8%
2	Parent involvement in school activities/events	43	7	86%	14%
3	Parent feedback mechanism exists	41	9	82%	18%
4	Use of communication tools (WhatsApp/diaries)	44	6	88%	12%
5	Community visits or exposure activities	37	13	74%	26%
6	Cultural and festival celebrations with community	42	8	84%	16%

Teacher responses reflect an encouraging degree of parent participation and community involvement in pre-primary schools. An overwhelming 92% confirmed the conduct of regular PTMs, highlighting consistent dialogue between parents and educators. A high 86% reported parental involvement in school activities and events, which supports a collaborative environment for child development. Mechanisms for parent feedback are in place according to 82% of teachers, while 88% affirmed the regular use of communication tools such as WhatsApp groups or school diaries. Although community visits and exposure activities had slightly lower responses (74%), celebrations involving the wider community were observed by 84% of schools, indicating that institutions actively seek to connect learning with cultural and social experiences.

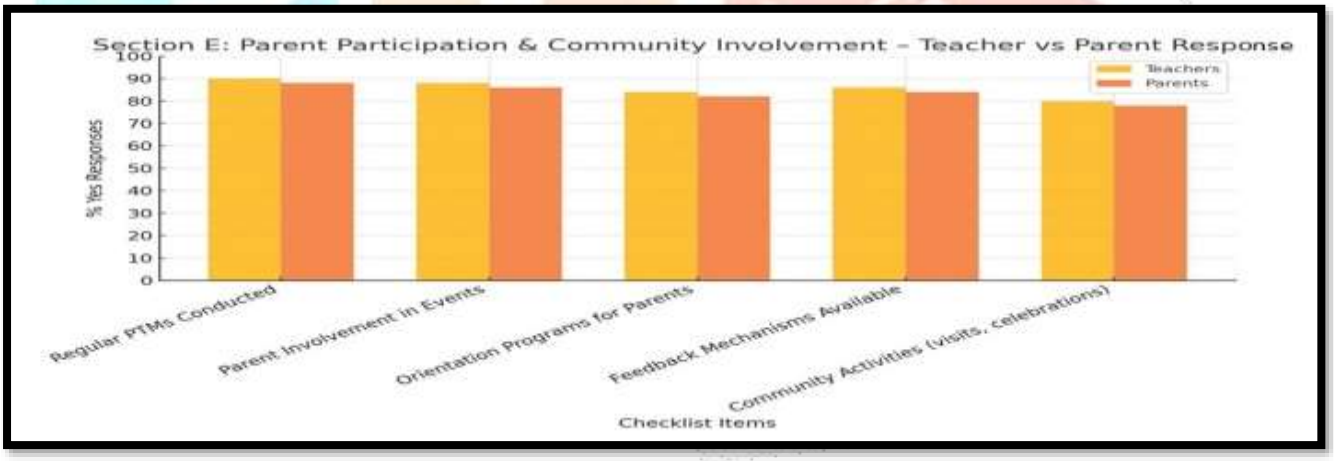
Table 3.10: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Parents on Parent Participation and Community Involvement (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Regular parent-teacher meetings (PTMs)	45	5	90%	10%
2	Parent involvement in school activities/events	42	8	84%	16%
3	Parent feedback mechanism exists	40	10	80%	20%
4	Use of communication tools (WhatsApp/diaries)	43	7	86%	14%
5	Community visits or exposure activities	36	14	72%	28%
6	Cultural and festival celebrations with community	41	9	82%	18%

The data from parents aligns well with the teachers' perspectives on their engagement in school processes and the community. 90% of parents acknowledged regular PTMs, and 84% reported their involvement in school activities. An effective feedback system was recognized by 80%, and 86% confirmed that schools maintained regular communication through tools like WhatsApp or diaries. Community engagement through visits received a slightly lower response rate at 72%, though 82% of parents observed that their children participated in cultural celebrations organized in school. This consistency in feedback from both teachers and parents underlines the effectiveness of participatory practices in strengthening school-home-community relationships.

Figure 3.5: Comparison of Teacher and Parent Responses on Parent Participation

The bar graph presents a comparison between teacher and parent responses regarding parent involvement and community participation in pre-primary education. Both groups agreed that regular parent-teacher



meetings (PTMs) are well conducted, with 90% of teachers and 88% of parents acknowledging this. Participation in school events, orientation programs, and feedback mechanisms also received high endorsement, reflecting a culture of engagement and open communication. Community-based activities like celebrations and visits were supported by 80% of teachers and 78% of parents. The slight variations across individual parameters suggest a generally consistent perception, affirming the importance of collaborative involvement in enhancing the school environment and fostering child development.

HEALTH, HYGIENE AND NUTRITION

Table 3.11: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Teachers on Health, Hygiene and Nutrition (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Regular health check-ups	41	9	82%	18%
2	Handwashing facility with soap	44	6	88%	12%
3	Clean drinking water available	45	5	90%	10%
4	Separate child-friendly toilets	42	8	84%	16%
5	Personal hygiene taught to children	43	7	86%	14%
6	Nutritious meals or snacks provided	39	11	78%	22%

Teachers reported positively on the health, hygiene, and nutrition-related infrastructure and practices in pre-primary schools. 82% confirmed that regular health check-ups are conducted, contributing to the early detection and management of health issues in children. 88% acknowledged the availability of handwashing facilities with soap, an essential preventive hygiene measure, while 90% stated that clean drinking water is consistently provided. 84% of teachers affirmed the presence of child-friendly toilets, ensuring accessibility and comfort for young children. In addition, 86% of teachers reported that personal hygiene practices are regularly taught in classrooms. On the nutrition front, 78% confirmed that schools provide either meals or healthy snacks, suggesting a growing awareness about the role of nutrition in early childhood development.

Table 3.12: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Parents on Health, Hygiene and Nutrition (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Regular health check-ups	40	10	80%	20%
2	Handwashing facility with soap	43	7	86%	14%
3	Clean drinking water available	44	6	88%	12%
4	Separate child-friendly toilets	41	9	82%	18%
5	Personal hygiene taught to children	42	8	84%	16%
6	Nutritious meals or snacks provided	38	12	76%	24%

Parental feedback largely confirms the positive practices related to health, hygiene, and nutrition as reported by the teachers. 80% of parents noted that schools conduct regular health check-ups, and 86% were aware of handwashing facilities being provided for children. Availability of clean drinking water was reported by 88% of parents, and 82% acknowledged the existence of child-friendly toilets. Additionally, 84% of parents stated that their children are regularly taught personal hygiene practices at school, reinforcing habits learned at home. Although slightly fewer (76%) confirmed the provision of nutritious meals or snacks, the data overall highlights that schools are taking consistent measures to promote the physical well-being of their students.

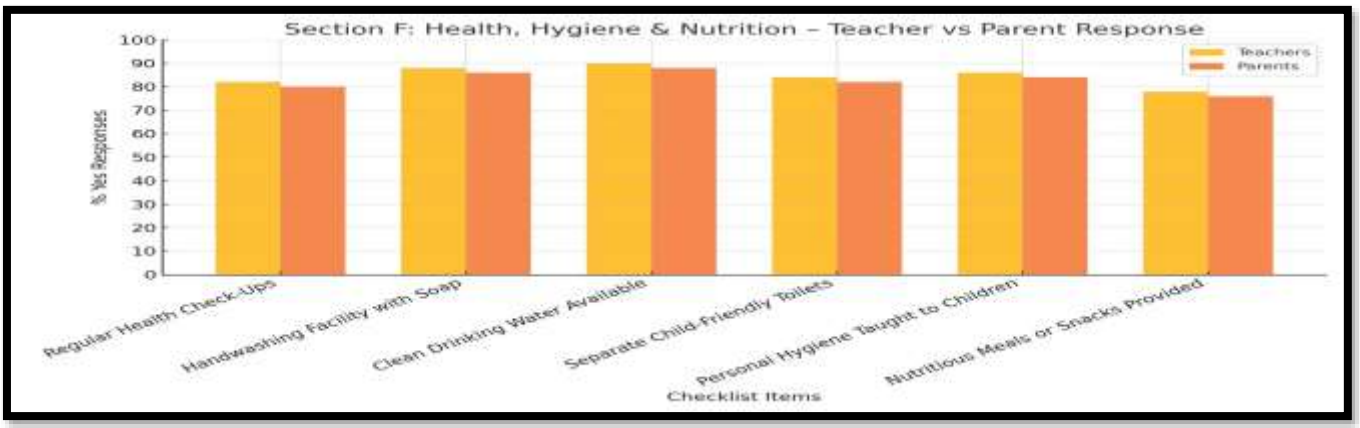


Figure 3.6: Comparison of Teacher and Parent Responses on Health, Hygiene and Nutrition

The bar graph compares teacher and parent responses regarding health, hygiene, and nutrition practices in pre-primary schools. A majority of teachers (82%) and parents (80%) confirmed the conduction of regular health check-ups, ensuring children's well-being is monitored. Availability of handwashing facilities was affirmed by 88% of teachers and 86% of parents, highlighting effective hygiene practices. Clean drinking water was reportedly available in most schools, with 90% of teachers and 88% of parents acknowledging this provision. About 84% of teachers and 82% of parents reported the presence of separate child-friendly toilets, a crucial element for student comfort and sanitation. Personal hygiene instruction was confirmed by 86% of teachers and 84% of parents, reflecting a shared emphasis on cleanliness education. Lastly, nutritious meals or snacks were reported by 78% of teachers and 76% of parents, indicating a strong awareness of the importance of nutrition in child development.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Table 3.13:Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Teachers on Admission Criteria(N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Age at admission – a) 2.5 yrs. to 3.5 yrs.	25	25	50.0%	50.0%
	b) 3.5 yrs. to 4.5 yrs.	15	35	30.0%	70.0%
	c) 4.5 yrs.+ to 5 yrs.	10	40	20.0%	80.0%
2	Admission process – a) Informal interaction	30	20	60.0%	40.0%
	b) Interview	12	38	24.0%	76.0%
	c) Written test	8	42	16.0%	84.0%

Teacher responses regarding admission criteria reveal that most institutions begin admissions between 2.5 and 4.5 years, with 25% admitting at 2.5–3.5 years and 15% at 3.5–4.5 years. Only 10% reported enrolling students above 4.5 years. In terms of the admission process, informal interaction is dominant (60%), while interviews (24%) and written tests (16%) are less common, reflecting a shift toward child-friendly, stress-free admission practices.

Table 3.14:Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Parents on Admission Criteria (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Age at admission – a) 2.5 yrs. to 3.5 yrs.	26	24	52.0%	48.0%
	b) 3.5 yrs. to 4.5 yrs.	17	33	34.0%	66.0%
	c) 4.5 yrs.+ to 5 yrs.	7	43	14.0%	86.0%
2	Admission process – a) Informal interaction	28	22	56.0%	44.0%
	b) Interview	14	36	28.0%	72.0%
	c) Written test	8	42	16.0%	84.0%

Parent responses closely mirror those of teachers, with 26% enrolling children at 2.5–3.5 years and 17% at 3.5–4.5 years. Fewer (7%) enroll at 4.5+ years. The preferred admission approach among parents is informal interaction (56%), with some (28%) reporting interviews and 16% mentioning written tests. This confirms that parents and schools are gradually favoring more developmentally appropriate admission practices in early childhood education.

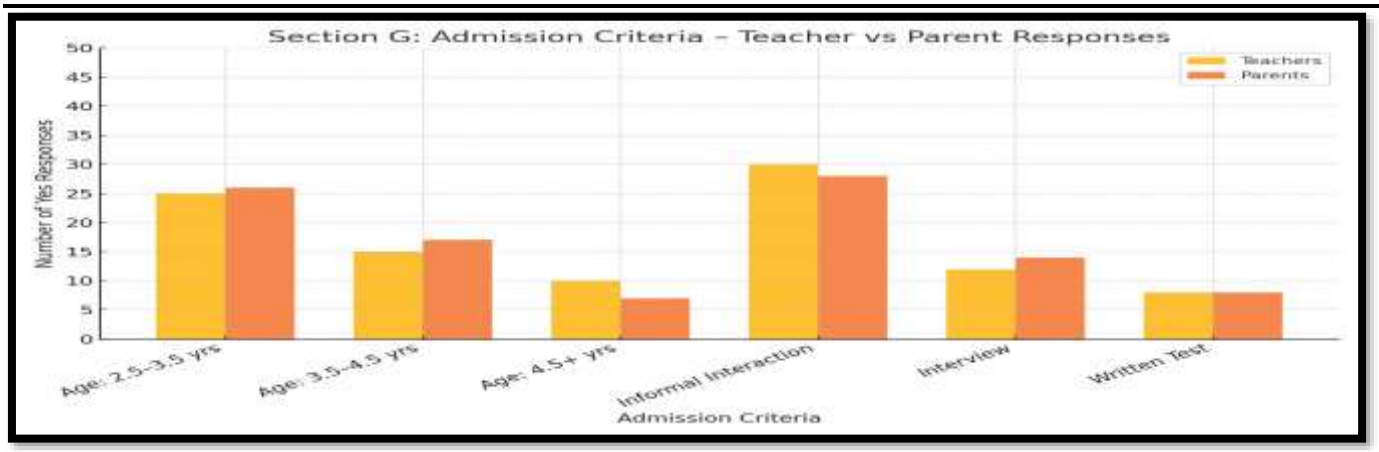


Figure 3.7: Teacher Vs Parent Responses on Admission Criteria

The bar graph provides a detailed comparison of 'Yes' responses from teachers and parents on various admission criteria. For the age group 2.5–3.5 years, teachers reported 25 responses (50%) and parents 26 (52%). For 3.5–4.5 years, the percentages were 30% for teachers and 34% for parents, and for the 4.5+ years category, teachers reported 20% and parents 14%. Regarding admission process methods, 60% of teachers and 56% of parents favored informal interactions. Interview as an admission method was preferred by 24% of teachers and 28% of parents. Written tests were supported by 16% of teachers and 16% of parents. These figures reflect broad alignment in opinions between both stakeholder groups, particularly in advocating for early-age admission and informal assessment procedures.

CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Table 3.15:Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Teachers on Challenges Faced (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Lack of teaching materials	32	18	64%	36%
2	Overcrowded classrooms	28	22	56%	44%
3	Low parental involvement	34	16	68%	32%
4	Limited training opportunities	30	20	60%	40%
5	Behavioral challenges among children	35	15	70%	30%
6	Lack of infrastructure	31	19	62%	38%

Teacher responses provide insights into the persistent challenges they face while managing pre-primary education. 64% reported inadequate access to teaching materials, indicating resource-related constraints. Overcrowded classrooms were a concern for 56%, impacting the teacher's ability to manage and give personalized attention.

A substantial 68% noted low parental involvement, reflecting a gap in home-school collaboration. Furthermore, 60% pointed to insufficient training and professional development opportunities. Behavioral management emerged as a significant issue with 70% facing difficulties in handling young learners. Finally, 62% highlighted infrastructure limitations as a hindrance to delivering quality education.

Table 3.16: Frequency and Percentage of Responses from Parents on Challenges Faced (N = 50)

Sr. no.	Checklist Item	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
1	Lack of teaching materials	31	19	62%	38%
2	Overcrowded classrooms	27	23	54%	46%
3	Low parental involvement	33	17	66%	34%
4	Limited training opportunities	29	21	58%	42%
5	Behavioral challenges among children	34	16	68%	32%
6	Lack of infrastructure	30	20	60%	40%

Parent perspectives also reveal significant challenges in the functioning of pre-primary institutions. 62% of parents observed a lack of adequate teaching materials, and 54% were concerned about crowded classrooms. A slightly lower but notable 66% acknowledged their own low level of involvement in school affairs, which parallels teacher concerns. 58% of parents expressed awareness of limited teacher training programs, and 68% pointed out behavioral issues among children, similar to teacher findings. Infrastructure-related concerns were reported by 60%, underscoring the need for infrastructural and policy improvements in the pre-primary education ecosystem of Prayagraj.

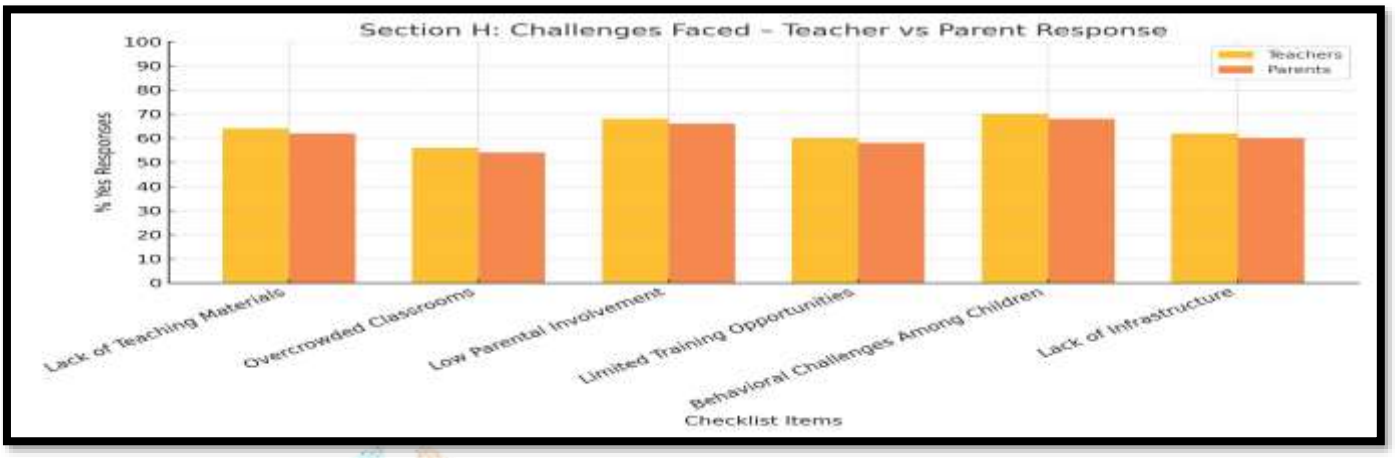


Figure 3.8: Comparison of Teacher and Parent Responses on Challenges Faced

The bar graph highlights the comparison of teacher and parent responses on the challenges encountered in pre-primary education. A considerable portion of both groups identified the lack of teaching materials (64% teachers, 62% parents) and overcrowded classrooms (56% teachers, 54% parents) as significant issues.
Low parental involvement was notably recognized by both teachers (68%) and parents (66%), indicating a shared concern about limited home-school interaction. Limited training opportunities were acknowledged by 60% of teachers and 58% of parents, reflecting a gap in professional development. Behavioral challenges among children were reported by 70% of teachers and 68% of parents, making it the most cited challenge.
Lastly, infrastructure problems were recognized by 62% of teachers and 60% of parents. This data emphasizes the multifaceted hurdles affecting the quality of pre-primary education and the consensus between stakeholders regarding the areas requiring urgent attention.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that while Prayagraj has made progress in establishing pre-primary educational infrastructure and increasing awareness of ECCE norms, several gaps persist in both physical facilities and pedagogical practices. There exists a dual challenge of inadequate resources and inconsistent implementation of training and curricular guidelines. Both teachers and parents, as primary stakeholders, acknowledge the importance of early education but express concern about quality standards, staff adequacy, and institutional support. By ensuring that ECCE policies are well-supported with financial, infrastructural, and training-related investments, pre-primary education can fulfill its mission of laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning, equity, and inclusion. Effective ECCE practices will not only improve school readiness but will also serve as a cornerstone for achieving national educational goals in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and NEP 2020. The study revealed that while fundamental infrastructure such as drinking water, child-friendly toilets, and playgrounds is mostly available, there are still gaps in the provision of medical rooms, shaded outdoor spaces, and dedicated rest zones for children. Many schools also lacked a kitchen or pantry area, despite serving meals. While learning materials and digital tools are present in a majority of schools, their integration into everyday teaching is not universal. Although a portion of schools had begun to adopt play-based and inquiry-led teaching styles, traditional blackboard-based instruction remains dominant due to constraints such as lack of training, classroom size, and limited time. Parents generally echoed the teachers' perspectives, validating the findings. However, a lack of parental awareness regarding pedagogical approaches, ECCE principles, and the NEP 2020 framework calls for improved school-parent engagement.

The study confirms that although progress has been made in introducing ECCE principles in Prayagraj's pre-primary education system, the implementation is uneven and falls short of the holistic vision outlined in NEP 2020. There is a clear gap between policy and practice, particularly in the domains of infrastructure, pedagogy, and parental engagement. Bridging these gaps requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving schools, educators, local authorities, NGOs, and parents. Teacher capacity-building, improved infrastructure funding, curriculum reorientation toward child-centered approaches, and structured parental awareness programs are essential. This study highlights critical challenges while also offering direction for improvements. Strengthening ECCE at this foundational stage will ensure equitable access, joyful learning, and sustainable long-term educational outcomes. By aligning ground-level practices with NEP 2020 aspirations, Prayagraj can become a model district for early education reform. The present study concludes that while there is momentum toward effective implementation of pre-primary education, consistent efforts in training, infrastructure, and stakeholder engagement are crucial. Strengthening ECCE practices will require collaborative involvement from educators, policymakers, and parents alike to build a solid foundation for early learning.

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