



# Reggio Emilia Approach: A New Entrant To The Indian Early Education

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## Abstract

Reggio Emilia Approach, relatively a novel idea of early 21st century. It came to know me after knowing the early childhood education system (Primary and Pre- Primary) of Mallia Aditi International School. It is a fairly new entrant to early education system and has been popular in the past decade. Reggio Emilia approach puts great emphasis on observation and adaptability in its teachers. Reggio Emilia approach revolves around the child's senses to assist with learning. The Reggio approach is a child-centered approach that was developed in an Italian town named Reggio Emilia that's why this approach is also named the same. In India, Reggio Emilia approach has been a new entrant but there is a need of trained teachers for Reggio-inspired schools to fulfill this requirement. Reggio Emilia Foundation has started early years Teachers Training Certificate and Diploma Programs. This paper describes the Indian childhood education, Reggio Emilia approach and how Reggio Emilia approach is much better than Montessori approach and why India should implement the idea of Reggio Emilia approach in early childhood education. This paper also includes the Indian perspectives of Reggio Emilia approach which may give better learning outcomes with the support of parents, teachers, community and the environment constructed by the teacher according to the interests and needs of children.

**Key Words:** Indian Early Childhood Education, Reggio Emilia Approach, Montessori Vs Reggio Approach

## INTRODUCTION

In India, Childhood is considered to be a unique and enjoyable period in an Individual's life. In Indian society children's has always enjoyed a very special status. They are pampered by elders and adults in their family and community, there are so many special occasions which are enjoyed by community in developmental phase of children, In Indian culture these are said to be "sanskaras" Thus childhood period in India is very important. Informal learning in childhood Stage Started from home, Family and community in natural Setting, But Today's need for more Structured Early childhood education Programmers are rapidly emerging.

Early Childhood Education in India is recent development Throughout in Indian History the whole education systems was Contrived to formal Education which was limited to childhood to Adulthood. Now the trend has been changed throughout out past decades. The first and systematic Stage, has been taken in 1937 was also limited to 7- 14 years.

The first Six to eight Year of a Child's life is very important as it lasts Lifetime, is known as early childhood Stage. These Years are acknowledged as most crucial years for lifelong development, as the pace of the development in these years are extremely rapid. It is believed values are inculcated from the family in this stage. So this stage needs much more Care and importance.

In India all these Change are much more associated with changes in the family Structure (Joint to Nuclear), now the children are the solely the responsibility of the parents. Therefore it was also became the need of society which laid the seeds for the introduction to the concept of organized early childhood education.

In the History of Indian Formal Education, early childhood education was organized in half of the ninetieth century when Giju bhai Badheka and Tarabhai modak among of others become Pioneers of this movement.

In 1939, Maria Montessori visited India and Implanted the Foundation of Pre -School education in India, and teachers were trained in Montessori Method of pre- childhood education. Her important books are translated into many Indian languages. Today there are so many Montessori schools all over the India, some school in Delhi and Mumbai are also affiliated with Montessori International.

Early childhood education has been a focus to all major committees and commissions established by the government of India in Pre and post independence period. NPF 2020 has drawn more importance to early childhood education in recent times.

## Reggio Emilia Approach: Early Childhoods education

The Reggio Emilia Approach is an educational Philosophy based on child's image with strong Potentialities for development. It is like other methodologies developed by a teacher named Loris Malaguzzi, along with the parents of the Reggio Emilia city, in Italy after II world war.

According to Reggio Emilia Approach children are not empty vessels, which is to be filled. They are human being strong in potentials, curious, competent, and intelligent and resourceful. This approach is rooted in process not in products, this require treating children like adults.

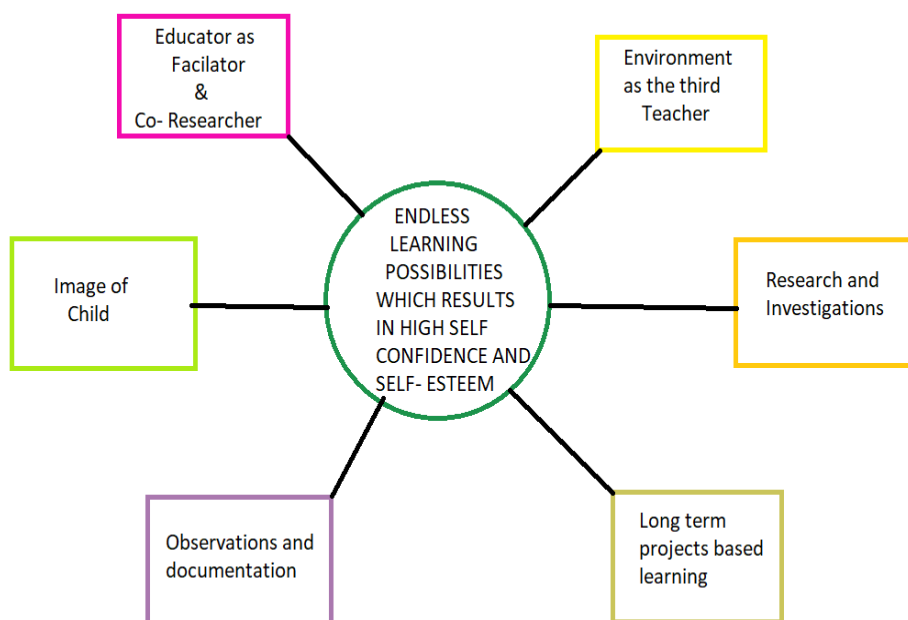
Reggio Emilia approach is a collaborative learning, classroom, is more flexible and open ended. Teachers are seems as partners and guides. Reggio is based on self Guided Curriculum permitted us flexibility and the capacity to explore, research and adapt to the local flavor and conditions.

### PRINCIPLES OF REGGIO EMILIA PHILOSOPHY

- ❖ Children must be capable to learn through their experiences gained by senses and motor abilities.
- ❖ Children must have goal directed learning and also they must control over direction.
- ❖ Children are interrelated with other children, parents, objects or materials in the classrooms.
- ❖ Children have infinite ways to express themselves in terms of language and other expressions.
- ❖ The central idea of this Philosophy is a powerful image of the child. It develops critical thinking, creativity in child in that way child express itself in infinite ways This Philosophy was adopted by many countries for their childhood education system for effective development of creativity in young children.

(Source: Wikipedia)

# ESSENTIALS OF REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH



## Interrelationships based education

There is an Interactive web between children Parents and Teachers, they work together to Create and explore the spirit of early childhood and be happy. They all have important role within the school. Their roles all as follows:--

### Role of teacher

The Teacher is observer, supporter, guide and documenter and also does researches in this approach. Teachers solve the Problem of child by interacting them, also observe child’s weakness and Strengths and positively motivate them. Teachers also record their observations for display as well as for revisiting. The Teachers supports children and present their work to other community members.

Teacher with the support of other staff members or workers contributes to the study. Educational contents, practices and objectives. All this is done through an open discussion among coordinators, parents advisory committee and other staff members.

## Role of Parent

The Reggio Methods is a Collaboration of between parents and Children .The involvement of Parents make them aware about Children's Learning. Parents take Interest and child does better in learning Process.

The Reggio method parents are very important component of the school .they are the active member in the learning Process of their Children. Parents involvement also make children very comfortable and easy going thought their Learning Process. Parents are the first teachers of child before entering the school learning Process .Reggio approach facilitates the parents to involve in learning process of their children in school, they are also encouraged to volunteers to help in classroom and also incorporate the approach at home.

## The Environment

The Environment is also very essential Component of the Reggio Emilia approach. The concept is that Children are placed in favorable environment with simulating conditions where they work with materials. In Reggio Emilia approach in classroom environment acts as the third teachers. In Reggio approach classroom act as a living organism, where living Interactions between parents, teachers and Children are furnishing in natural setting. Environment is one of the most important components acts as living organisms.

## Image of the child

In Reggio approach children are central component of the learning process they are very curious, have strong potential for knowledge, they connect with parents and teachers in the environment to learn with their own interest. It is the teacher who is aware of the child interest and constructs the environment according to their interest so that child responds and learns appropriately. Children have endless ways to express them and own powerful image. In this way child learn according to his/her interest in Reggio approach.

## Project

Projects are according to child's interest and teacher's observation for a child. Projects are not decided priority. The projects are selected carefully according to every child and may vary form a few days to few weeks. The central idea of the projects emphasis on "learning by doing" which helps to understand the concept. The teachers with small few groups of children work on projects and rest of the class continues to involve itself in other selected activities of their interest.

## Documentation

In Reggio Emilia approach documentation is an essential element which is the basis to study the learning curve of a child. How children learn, their learn style their memorizing style, how they grasp things are all important components of the documentation. It is done regularly in continuums to the learning process on

daily basis. Infact documentation is a reflection of a child's interaction with his/her peers, adults, teachers and parents.

Documentation is the basis of the curriculum and it also provides a rationale for its course since teaches develop insights into the thought process and actions a child. Teachers observe every activity of child's behavior, materials which the child uses, understanding and identify the strengths of a child and all areas which need to be revisited and require support and practice. On the basis of the observations teacher make documents by means of conversation, videos, notes etc.

## **The concept of Multilanguage**

It is highly important part of Reggio Emilia approach. It is symbolized metaphor as 100 languages of children". This means children can express themselves in infinite number of ways.

Children are encouraged use a variety of tools, as they learn painting dance, stories, poetry etc. All this provokes curiosity and encourages natural expression.

Reggio Emilia approach is an emergent and novel approach for today's scenario. It has some difference with Montessori approach which is popular in India through past decades. Let's see the difference between them as follows:-

### **The Reggio Emilia approach vs. The Montessori approach:-**

- Both approaches are originated from Italy and also promote self guided learning they both focuses on kindergarten education but Montessori can also found up to school of adolescents, but beyond all these Reggio approach has some characteristics which made it different from Montessori approach.
- The environment of Reggio Emilia approach is very flexible and open ended than Montessori. It includes much constructed favorable conditions. Which promote children to learn according to their interests.
- In Montessori approach, curriculum is more constructed but in Reggio approach curriculum is flexible and accordingly to the interest of children it is designed to encourage children's potential.
- Reggio Emilia classrooms are more flexible and open ended where as Montessori classrooms are more structured.
- Teaches are partners in Reggio approach and does researches for better learning outcome, but they act as instructor in Montessori approach.
- Reggio Emilia groups children in traditions style of age ranges while Montessori groups the multiple ages.

- In Reggio Emilia approach parents, community members are part of classroom interactions they are facilitators in learning process but in Montessori approach they act as supporter outside the classroom.
- Reggio Emilia approach develops critical thinking and creativity in children but in Montessori approach children learn freely with their own pace.
- In Reggio Emilia approach children have their self image and strong potential but Montessori approach thinks child as a whole.

(Source: Wikipedia)

## Indian Perspectives of Reggio Emilia Approach

Both approaches have some similarities and differences also, so to choose one of them is sometimes difficult to decide. But if we go through the present system of early childhood education, we see it is very difficult to adjust in more constructed environment and with curriculum because, every child has his/her own strong potential and have self image. Teachers can't treat them as a whole. Parents are not involving in the process of learning of their children and they are not aware of the learning of child, this creates also a big problem for teacher. Teachers feel difficulty to make relationship with parents and community in Montessori system. The curriculum and classroom environment is rigid and children learn freely with their own pace, they involve as instructor not as partner in Montessori approach. All above draw backs insists us to change the present system of early childhood education and go through the Reggio approach, as Reggio approach gives more flexibility to teacher to construct environment and curriculum, s/ he will also be the part in learning process as partners, not as instructor, parents, community members are also the part of the learning, process in Emilia approach so, I think it is better to opt Reggio approach in present early childhood education of India.

## Conclusion

Many researches showed that Reggio Emilia approach is a collaborative approach which engaged children longer in the learning process and results in depth process than a Montessori learning techniques. In Reggio Emilia approach the curriculum is very flexible and children are exposed to choose according to their interest, children learn collaboratively to their environment. Reggio approach is effective to develop critical thinking and creativity in child, it focuses on listening, observing and respecting children and their potential. In Reggio approach children learn with their experiences not by instruction which is more effective for better learning outcomes. In this approach children learn in their natural social structure, so it also helps to socialize children in the very beginning which inculcate better moral values. Children learn through their experiences and interests which also helps them to construct their own knowledge and structure their ideas and information. So India should use this educational approach in early childhood education in practices.

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