Early Childhood Education in Today's Scenario

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ABSTRACT

According to Nelson Mandela "Education is the most powerful weapon for change the world." So, for changing theworld we have to focus on Education ForAll (EFA). We all know there are no proper starting point of education, education startsfrom the time of our birth (western concept). But there is a proper time for our formal education; it starts in the age of 5 years.Early childhood education means education of the child till the age of 6-8 years. Today all over there is a competitive mind, all ofus starting our children's school from 2-3 years of age. It affects their development of cognitive, affective and psychomotordomain. This paper discusses what is early childhood education, benefits of early childhood education, today's problem on early childhood education, trends of early childhood education, impact of today's early childhood education and finally how we overcome from those impacts of early childhood education for our children's better future.

Key Words: Early Childhood, Education.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education consists of activities and experiences that are intended to effect developmental changes in children prior to their entry in to elementary school.

According to Pikunus-"Actually early childhood education means education of early aged (3-5 years) children."

There are many aspects related to early childhood education, here we have listed out many benefits:

Spontaneous: According to spontaneous Idealists children are creative, lively and open-minded. They are humorous and dispose of a contagious zest for life. Their enthusiasm and sparkling energy inspire others and sweeps them along. They enjoy being together with other people and often have an uncanny intuition for their motivations and potential.

Creativity: They are remarkable for their ability to adapt to almost any situation and to make do with whateverisat handtoreachtheirgoals.

Imaginary power: In this age children are very much imaginative in nature. They like to hear fairy stories,king-queenstoriesandmanyotherstories.

Inconstancy: They are restlessness in nature, they are not staying more time in a particular place, they run here and there, they always like to run and play.

Socialization: Humans are very social beings and the main concept of socialization takes root in earlychildhood. In a safe environment away from family, children meet other people of their age, sowing the seedsof 'socialization' and 'friendship' in young minds. This helps to develop self-confidence in your children byeliminatingtheir shynature.

Cooperation: During this phase, children learn to share, cooperate, take turns and so on. These are all part of a secure social life. This is especially beneficial for an only child, who is not familiar with having to share things. In the safe environment provided, the child will learn to cooperate with guidance from professionals.

Holistic Development: As a human being, it is important to have a strong foundation in every aspect of the personality such as emotional, social, mental and physical. Teachers who handle young children are well trained to identify the weaker aspects of a child and to encourage them to improve through practical sessions. Interaction amongst peers is extremely important in this context.

Enthusiasm for Lifelong Learning: Children will develop a hunger for learning if they are taught through fun and exciting activities. This eagerness and enthusiasm for learning will remain with them their entire lives.

Value of Education: The new environment provided in preschool gives children an entirely different perspective on the requirement of education.Grasping knowledge and applying them to their lives demonstrates the value of education.

Respect: The environment in preschool helps children learn to become civil towards one another and they start to understand that the concept of respect is not just limited to people and belongings, but also to their environment.

Teamwork: A person's teamwork capability is based on their respect for others' opinions, listening skills and mentality towards equality. All these qualities should be taught at a young age. Many preschool activities are focused on teamwork and help children improve their attitude towards working as a team.

Concentration: The involvement in preschool tasks and activities demands higher levels of concentration from a child. The repetitive occurrence of the activities helps them to improve their concentration skills.

Patience: In the life of an adult, patience is often tested and children should be trained to handle such situations for the future. Experiences such as sharing the attention of the teacher, waiting for their turn etc. will help childrendevelop patience.

Confidence and Self Esteem: A sense of wellbeing is important for a person to explore their talents. The positive interactions with peers and teachers encourage a positive view of themselves. This is an important impact of early childhood education.

Brain Development: Professionally crafted activities in preschool enhance the development of the brain. Various activities involving analyzing and logical reasoning help them to develop their skills.

Exposure to Diversity: There is so much diversity in the modern world and children need to be taught to appreciate and accept the differences in society.

Now we came to the profile of Indian Children:

- The child population (0–6 years) is 158 million.
- One-third of babies are born with low birth weight.
- Only 42 per cent children (12–23 months) are fully vaccinated.
- 14 per cent are not vaccinated at all.
- India has the largest number of malnourished children in the world.
- 47 per cent of all children below 2 years are malnourished.
- 5 per cent of all children 0–6 years suffer from severe or moderate anemia.
- 25 million children are born every year.
- The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 70 per 1,000 live births.
- 60 million children (< 5 years) live in poverty.
- Of them, only 19.4 million children (3–5 years) are getting preschool education under ICDS.

Medical Science says 70% of brain development completed of a child in first five years. Then brain development became slow time to time. So first few years, up to eight years is very much important for children. In this time children's creative power developed. Their brain developed. So they need freedom with care but parents send them in the school from the age of 2-3 years. This time not time for children to go school. **Article 21(A) RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT** of our Constitution also says that state should provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years. In the **Article 51(A)** eleven **FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES** present for all the citizen of India. The last duty to parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child between the age of six and fourteen years.

Everywhere we see our duty to our children to give education but after certain age, the age of six. But now everywhere we have hurry. So, we send our children to school in the age between 2-3 years. So, they faced many problems in their very early age.

TODAYSPROBLEMONEARLYCHILDHOODEDUCATION

Today there are so many problems we faced on early childhood education, some of those problems discuss below:

So many expectations of parents: Today there is nuclear family; there are only one or two children of parents. So, parent's expectations so much from their little children. Sometimes parent's try to enforce on their little children to fulfil their unfulfilled dreams. So, they admit their children in the school at a very early age.

They are forced to engage in reading books: Little children are not interested to read books, they are interested to

play, run and enjoy life but their parent's forced them to read books.So, they are getting bookish and abstract knowledgefromveryearlyage,finallytheylostthemselvesinoverburden.

Children are overloaded with huge bags: Maximum time we see there are so many subjects have to study them. Inschool every day there are 6-7 classes, so they have to carry so many books and exercise books to the school. They have to carry overloaded bags everyday.

Unhealthy competition: Children become the part of unhealthy competition to fulfil their parent's expectations. Parent's think if their children are not studying properly then their friend's children become comes to the first in the class. So, their prestige becomes hampered.

TRENDS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

ECE experts to weigh in on some of the trends they are noticing in early childhood education today. It's how we find new ways forward

A new focus on phonics in literacy instruction
"A trend I'm observing—and cheering for—in the field of early childhood education is the focus upon explicit, systematic phonics in literacy instruction," says Dr. Christina Williams, owner of Book Bums. "In the past two years, more experts and more literacy-focused community groups are acknowledging that big publishing companies have been promoting inadequate curriculum."

Williams explains that research findings have long shown a gap in how ECE materials and educators teach our code-based language to young learners. "One of the reasons for the trend toward phonics instruction is the reporting of Emily Hanford," she explains.

Much of Hanford's research centers on the unquestioned assumptions educators and educational materials have about teaching reading. With ECE experts re-examining phonics instruction, Williams sees changes coming not only for young learners—but also for educators.

Educating with nature
"Scandinavian approaches like the 'Forest Schools' movement are starting to have an impact in North American ECE settings," Drew says. It's no wonder. Who wouldn't be interested in trying to bring some of that light, greenery and fresh air into a school day?

But Drew points out that the trend is more than a surface appreciation of nature. "These sorts of spaces are great sandpits for development—children learn about natural environments, develop fine and gross motor skills, and build a connection to their local ecosystem."

Closing the achievement gap
The achievement gap refers to the differences in academic achievement of different social and economic groups. This is measured through a variety of metrics, including grade point averages, standardized test scores, dropout rates, college enrollment and college graduation metrics. The gap is measured between low-income and high-income households, white and minority students, males and females, students whose first language is English and students for whom English is a second (or third) language, among other factors.

Technology in child development
Technology is an ongoing trend in ECE—as it is in pretty much every industry. It's a constant balance for ECE experts to decide how to teach with technology, while also teaching digital resilience as they know children are likely to interact with devices at home.

Like it or not, technology and device usage by young children is a fact of life for large number of children. Children are owning devices and using the internet at a young age—and are spending much more time in front of small screens.

IMPACT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Now we try to discuss the impacts of early childhood education. Among so many impacts of early childhood education some of those impacts are discussing below-

Impact on Child's natural growth: Because of the overloaded bags in the back of the children, their natural growth is getting hampered. They feel pain in back, their backbone become bend after some years, their physical development become hampered.

Impact on mental and cognitive development: Children getting engaged in reading books and doing home tasks, so they are not getting time for their mental cognition. Day to day they become mechanical. Their cognitive development becomes hampered.

It can stop their divergent thinking ability: Students are always busy in reading books; they are not getting so much time for imagine something. Teachers are teaching code-based language to young learners. Students feel bored in indoor activities and they need some natural space. So, their divergent thinking ability is also affected.

Impact on child's creativity: Because of getting bookish knowledge children become mechanical, they not have enough time for imagine something, they always force to focusing on their study. Sometime today children are not permit to play with their friends in playground. So, their creative power become tends to extinction.

Lack of self-confidence: Students confidence will slow down. Students will feel that they are lacking behindfrom other children.

Failing to keep up with learning sessions: Little children will not be able to learn properly. At a very young age they will not be able to cope up with their teacher because students do not understand bookish language.

Closing the student's achievement gap: Students achievement gap is measured between low-income and high-income households, white and minority students, males and females, students whose first language is English and students whose second language is English. Assessment of student learning is a crucial element of a successful education, as it can help educators identify learning needs early on. But it is also one of the primary metrics schools have to determine if they are succeeding with their young learners.

IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

Discovering resources that meet the needs of students can greatly enrich the current material they are learning. Even with the proven effectiveness of technology in the classroom, educators are left with a few questions: What role should technology play in our classrooms? What should we teach our students about using technology?

One of the most important elements to consider is *how* children are interacting with the technology, ensuring that new tools are developing positive behavior. Technology—or screen time—also comes in many forms.

According to the **Common Sense Census**, these are the four main forms:

- Passive consumption: Watching TV, reading and listening to music
- Interactive consumption: Playing games and browsing the Internet
- Communication: Video-chatting and using social media
- Content creation: Using devices to make digital art or music

When it comes to the question of how much technology to incorporate into lesson plans, Common Sense Media recommends no more than one hour per day.

AWAYFORWARDFROMIMPACTSOFEARLYCHILDHOODEDUCATION

Always where a problem there is a solution also, we have to find out that solution. In this case we have discuss some of solutionwhichcangivesour childrenabetter childhoodand helpsthemtoallrounddevelopmentinfuture.

Give them freedom: We all know freedom is most necessary thing for children development. The father of naturalismRousseau and other naturalist like Rabindranath Tagore says let the child free in the nature. Freedom is the main sloganofnaturalistdiscipline.

Use of play way method: Playing is the most lovable things for all the children. They want to play. So, if let them playthey willbehappy. This will be helping their physical and cognitive development.

Learning by concrete example: According to Piaget's cognitive developmental theory children are able to thinkingabstract thing only in formal operational stage (after the age of 12 years). So, in early childhood gives them only concrete examples for their better understanding.

Joyful learning: If learning becomes joyful then everyone wants to learn. But it is sorry tosay that oureducationsystem has too many things to be changed. Our education system depends on rote learning method. We have to focus onjoyful learning. If learning becomes joyful then children's all-round development will be occurred. Then we have not forced

children's for learn, they learnautonomically.

Learning without burden: Yaspal committee report published on 15th July, 1993 with the titled 'Learning withoutBurden'. Main focuses on children how learn? This report suggests that learning must be burden free. NCF (NationalCurriculumFramework,2005)alsosuggestthesame thing.Nowwehaveto applyitforourbetter future.

Improve self-confidence: Time to time many activities should be done for students so they can build up their confidence. Teacher should also listen to the problems of students and try to solve them.

Learning sessions should be improved: Learning sessions should be according to the children. It should be interactive so that children can gain more interest in learning something. Lesson plan should be made according to children interest.

Measurement of achievement gap should be improved: Achievement gap of students should be measured according to their performance in exams and various other activities.

Limited use of technology should be taught: Technology should be used by students in a progressive manner.It should be used for limited time period so that students can have their proper all-round development.

CONCLUSION

Early childhood education consists of activities and experiences that are intended to effect developmental changes in children prior to their entry into elementary school. In early childhood some characteristics are present like spontaneous, creativity, imaginary power, curiosity, socialization, cooperation, holistic development, respect, team work, confidence etc.

But today's children are facing many problems in their childhood, because of so much expectation of parents. They are forced to engage in reading books, children are overloaded with huge bags, unhealthy competition and because of new trends in society like- natural space they require is out of reach for many schools, educators are teaching code-based language to young learners, the achievement gap is measured between low-income and high-income households, white and minority students, males and females, students whose first language is English and students whose second language is English and children are owning devices and using the internet at a young age and are spending much more time in front of small screens. So, these problems have a big impact on child's natural growth. It affects mental and cognitive development, it can stop their divergent thinking ability, it also affects child's creativity, students'self-confidence will slow down and they will have no interest in learning something. So we have to overcome from this problem by giving freedom to children, help them in joyful learning, learning without burden, use of play-way method, try to improve self-confidence of students, learning sessions should be made according to children interest, more and more outdoor activities must be included in the curriculum, achievement of students should be measured according to their performance, student should be taught the effectiveness of technology and we have to realize that our children need more their parents then the school.

Recent studies reveal the importance of early childhood education as it can influence the mental, emotional and physical development of a child. Hence for increasing the quality of the education of your child, ensure early childhood education. So always make sure that they start off early so it doesn't become a problem in the future. "There is an increasing awareness that the early years are the most vital years of life," Drew says. While early childhood educators and psychologists have been talking about this for a long time—public awareness. An important characteristic of the most effective ECE professionals is the commitment to always continue educating themselves regarding the trends, changes, studies and conversations in the industry. Finally, and most importantly all the parents have to understand that their little children need them more than the school.

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