

AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS USING TEACHING AID AND TEACHING METHODS REFERENCE IN CUDDALORE DISTRICT

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Abstract: *The relevant information collected through the first part of the questionnaire constitutes the primary data for study and they are descriptive in nature. The pre-primary programme offered in the different pre-primary schools of Cuddalore District is something to be appreciated. Almost all the parents seem to have realized the educational importance and significance of this stage which can be very well seen in the mushroom growth of these schools in Cuddalore District. To satisfy the over-growing educational needs of children of pre-primary education. There is a tendency on the part of the Christian mission and private agencies to start as many schools as possible. It is not enough if the number of schools alone increase. Every conscious effort should be made to increase the quality of education imparted in these schools. The basic ideas expressed by pioneers in the field of pre-primary education should be incorporated in the programmes for these schools and the emphasis should be on the development of body, mind and spirit.*

Keyword: *Teaching Methods, Teaching Aid, School, Primary education*

INTRODUCTION

The word 'Education' means bringing up or leading out or making manifest the inherent potentialities of a pupil. John Dewey speaks of "education as that reconstruction or reorganisation of experience which adds to the meaning of experience and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experiences". An imperative character of education leading to individual growth and social development is now accepted by every one. Investment in education is considered to be most vital by all nations, both, advanced and developing ones Dewey (1976). Such an investment understandably acquires top priority in developing countries.

Pre-School education involves the earliest phase of childhood beginning in Infancy and ending upon entry into primary school at about five, six or seven years of age. The pre-school age (3-6 years) is the most impressionable age in one's life. Rajalakshmi Muralidharan and Uma Banerji (1969) stated that the more the experiences we provide to the child at this stage, the richer the dividend. At no other stage is he able to benefit as much from an enriching environment as he can at the pre-school age Katherine H (1980). The child is provided with group experiences, he is enabled to gain better emotional control, develop proper habits and attitudes and encouraged to investigate, explore and draw his own conclusions. Such preparation in the nursery school helps him considerably in his subsequent years of education Mandakini Khandekhar (1976).

In their writings they have given more stress and importance to the physical development of the children. In addition to that Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Herbert also laid the foundation stone for the kindergarten education in the west E.L. Widmer (1988). They emphasized that child's nature of growth and development should be considered the most important aspect before he could be exposed to a formal Eastern of education. They even compared children to plants unfolding from within and requiring only a favourable environment for their natural and proper growth.

The basic theory, organisation materials and methods of his school were based on the idea of understanding the child through play. But in spite of all his efforts the system did not become popular in Germany. After his death German lady Wadhaausem succeeded in introducing the kindergarten system of pre-primary education in many countries of the world. Next came Maria Montessori (1870-1952) who founded the Montessori system. She designed her own method of teaching small children with the help of specially designed didactic apparatus. She, emphasis was on sense of training and complete freedom for the child. She went round many countries of the world and conducted a number of teacher-training courses in order to popularise her method C.H Rao (1968). Though costly, her method is educationally and psychologically sound. The definition given is Kolkerine H. Read 1980, "a nursery school is a place where children learn as they play with materials and share experiences, with other children and with teachers Betty M (1998).

Typically the maternal schools (for ages 3 to 4 or 5) precede kindergarten (for ages 4 or 5 to 6) but in some countries like Italy a child goes from the maternal school directly to the primary school. In Germany in addition to the kindergarten, there is the 'Schulkindergarten' (School Kindergarten) which is meant for children of school age who are not considered sufficiently matured and which therefore serve as a kind of preparatory school for primary school. In the United States Kindergarten is regarded as a part of primary education.

Robert Owen in (1816) founded the infant school movement in his model community in New Lanark and the school was known as "Institute for the formation of character". The New Lanark School led to the establishment of England's first infant school in London in 1818. This school was set up by James Buchanan and it cared for children aged 1 to 6 years.

In recent years, the study conducted by UCBET reports that children in rural areas in our country lack in almost all the skills connected with school readiness at the age of five when most of them are expected to be entering class I Katherine (1980). We in India, too well realise the fact that many of our Indian homes are not able to provide an enriched and stimulating environment to the children of 3-6 years of age. Because they live in deprived conditions, most of our children are exposed to the handicaps of unsatisfactory and unsuitable environment Green (1977). Hence we tend to agree with the view expressed by the Kothari Education Commission which observes "pre-primary education is of great significance to the physical, emotional and intellectual development of children especially those with unsatisfactory home backgrounds. The tremendous wastage and stagnation that are seen, in classes X and II in India can be reduced considerably and even avoided if the children who join these classes are prepared in advance for formal schooling.

MATERIALS METHODOLOGY

Methodology layout helps the investigator to proceed with the proposed research in a systematic way. It helps to select construct suitable tool for data collection. This chapter is primarily concerned with the details of the process followed to achieve the objective of the study. This chapter also presents the design of the study use for present investigation.

It is a survey research. The purpose of the research design is descriptive and also evaluative, since it aims at finding out the existing conditions of the pre-primary schools and to collect information regarding infrastructural facilities available in schools and the instructional methods used and assess them in relation to the basic principles of pre-primary education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The enormous growth of the pre-primary schools and the popularity of these schools were mainly responsible for inducing the researcher to make an evaluative study of the pre-primary schools existing in his native place, for that purpose he defined the topic as follows: "An Evaluative study of pre-primary schools with particular reference to Cuddalore District".

SOURCES OF DATA

The relevant information collected through the first part of the questionnaire constitutes the primary data for study and they are descriptive in nature. The ideas and information collected by the second part of the questionnaire and these were collected in an informal way from the teachers working in these schools constitute the secondary data for the study.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

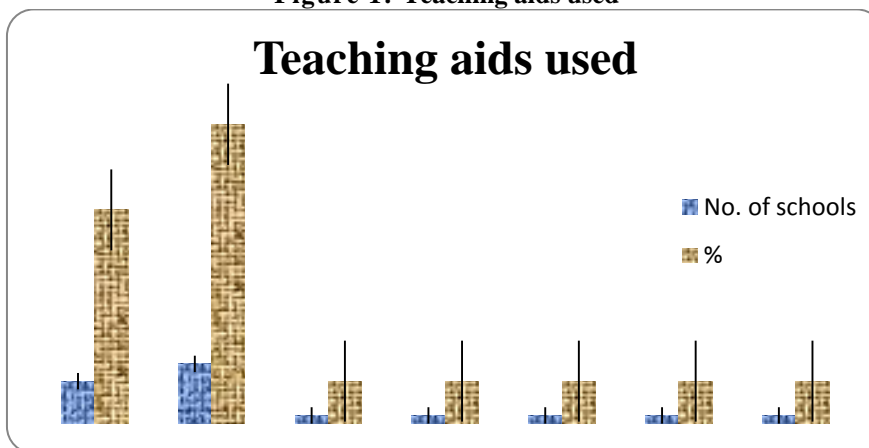
From the Table No. 1 it is inferred that only of the schools have all the teaching aids which are prescribed for teaching languages to the children. In 35% of the schools all the above mentioned aids except flash cards are used to teach. In only one school in addition to the above mentioned aids, aids like flannel board, bulletin board and magnetic board are also used. How ever in another school (fig 1) Montessori apparatus is also used along with the usual teaching aids. Only very few aids are used in five schools. Though some schools use a variety of teaching aids. They are not sufficient for the children. Then the use of the aids is reduced to the minimum in teaching of subjects in pre-primary schools.

The following are the methods which are commonly used to teach languages: object teaching, story telling, flay way methods, black board work and action songs are the methods commonly used in teaching of languages. More useful and more effective activity namely dramatization is not nominally used in the regular teaching of the language.

Table 1: Teaching aids used

| S. No. | Teaching aids | No. of schools | % |
|--------|---|----------------|-----|
| 1. | Alphabets cut-out, blocks, pictures, charts, flash cards | 5 | 25 |
| 2. | Alphabets cut-out, blocks, pictures, charts, story charts | 7 | 35 |
| 3. | Pictures, charts, flash cards, story charts | 1 | 5 |
| 4. | All the teaching aids and also flannel board, bulletin board and magnetic board | 1 | 5 |
| 5. | Alphabets cut-outs, blocks, flash cards, story charts, Montessori apparatus | 1 | 5 |
| 6. | Alphabets cut outs, pictures, charts, flash cards, story charts | 1 | 5 |
| 7. | Alphabet cut-out letters, magnetic board | 1 | 5 |
| 8. | All the teaching aids, cut outs, pictures and slides | 1 | 5 |
| 9. | Alphabets cut-out letters and blocks | 1 | 5 |
| 10. | Alphabets cut-out letters, pictures, charts and story charts | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 20 | 100 |

Figure 1: Teaching aids used

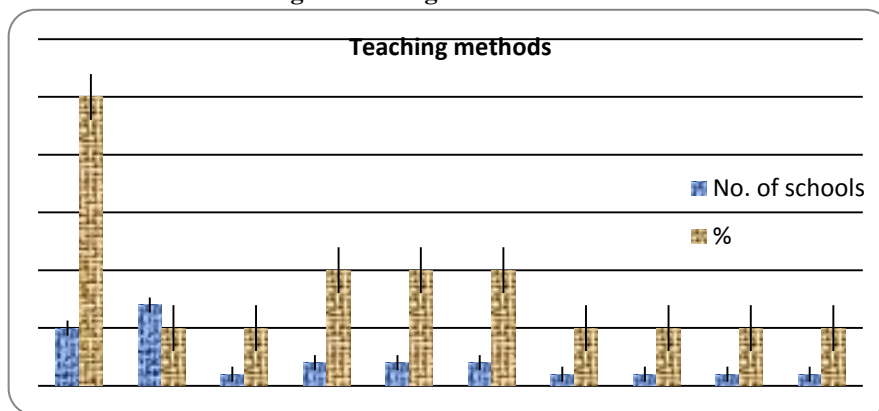


From the table No.2 it is seen that, 25% of the schools are in the habit of using all the methods that are advocated for teaching of languages. The other 75% of the schools use as many as six methods out of seven methods listed in the questionnaire. From (fig:2)the informal discussions it was found that in the pre-primary schools children are usually taught counting from 1 to 100, counting in 10s upto 100 and additions and subtractions upto 10. In some schools children are taught only counting upto 10 to 20, whereas in other schools additions and subtractions upto 50, in addition to counting from 1to 10 or more. Bead frames and bead boxes are very helpful in teaching counting to the children. Geometrical shapes and solids are helpful in developing in children, concepts of different forms, relative sizes and dimensions.

Table 2: Teaching methods used

| S. No. | Teaching methods | No. of schools | % |
|--------|--|----------------|------------|
| 1. | All the methods | 5 | 25 |
| 2. | Storytelling, black board work, play way drills and action songs | 7 | 5 |
| 3. | Object teaching, storytelling, black board work action songs and play way methods | 1 | 5 |
| 4. | Object teaching, storytelling, drill, play way methods, action songs, and black board work | 2 | 10 |
| 5. | Storytelling, play way methods and board work | 2 | 10 |
| 6. | Object teaching, storytelling, play way methods action songs, drill and black board work | 3 | 15 |
| 7. | All the methods Montessori methods | 2 | 10 |
| 8. | Object teaching, storytelling, action songs and black board work | 2 | 10 |
| 9. | Storytelling, drill, dramatization, action songs, and black board work | 1 | 5 |
| 10. | Storytelling, play way method, action songs and black board work | 1 | 5 |
| 11. | Storytelling, drill, play way, action songs and black board work | 1 | 5 |
| 12. | Object teaching, storytelling, dramatization, action songs, and black board work | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 20 | 100 |

Fig:2 Teaching methods used



DISCUSSION:

Based on the analysis of data, an attempt is made to evaluate the effectiveness of the pre-primary education imparted in the pre-primary schools of Cuddalore District. It is found that in 65% of the school both English and Tamil are taught. In two schools English is the only language taught. 25% of the schools teach three languages English, Tamil and Hindi. In 95% of the schools, the medium of instruction is English. Only one school has Tamil as the medium of instruction.

Teaching of the language begins with she teaching blacks made up of card boards and. wood are used for the purpose. Picture charts, flash cards and story charts are also used in toe teaching of languages, flannel boards magnetic board and Montessori apparatus are also used but very few schools use them. The methods commonly used to teach, language are (1) object teaching (2) story telling (3) play way methods black board work and action songs. Dramatization may be as effectively used in teaching a language. All schools lay atree3 on the teaching of action songs and rhymes which naturally ensures happy end active participation by the children. From the informal discussion and observation the common methods used to teach arithmetic in pre-primary schools are black board work, object teaching, drill method and play way activities.

In general, it was found that in all the schools, the poorly trained teachers restrict the optimum use of these methods. They stick to any one of the ordinary methods of teaching. They do not know the efficacy of the different methods used in teaching of arithmetic. In addition, the teaching of arithmetic is not an ordinary work. The optimum potential of the pupil's mind should be utilized properly for the teaching of arithmetic. Hence, all the prescribed methods must be used for teaching Rose Mukerji (2007). So to teach arithmetic morning hours are the most suitable and proper care should be taken to teach arithmetic.

In all the twenty schools surveyed, the item such as animal a, birds, insects, trees, plants and vegetables are included for nature study, field tripe, object teaching, visiting school garden and school museum etc. are the methods advocated in the teaching of nature study Faster (2000). A good environment and the absence of gardens reduce the optimum utility of these methods for nature study in the schools. Object teaching is the common method found in all the schools for nature study. In some 45% of the schools, the children are denied the opportunity to learn nature through direct observation.

In the pre-primary schools the children are given opportunities to express their skills in the creative, art and cultural activities Maria (1973). The following are the creative, art and culture activities that are commonly practiced in the pre-primary schools, i.e., drawing, colouring, clay work, finger painting, brush painting, paper work, music, dance, puppetry and rhythmic movements Joe. (1968). All the twenty schools provide drawing and colouring as the common art of activities and music and dance as the cultural activities. Specific time has been allotted to drawing and coloring end these activities are practiced under the guidance of a teacher. It is a found that in most of the pre-primary schools the child la not given opportunities for self-expression.

In all the 20 schools, certain basic items are taught to improve their general knowledge. Though conversation and group discussion we can teach general knowledge in the most effective way. Some schools also use charts models and songs to give them a good knowledge of ideas of things. All the schools use written and oral tests to assess the ability of the children. To assess the different aspects of development of the children, the schools are in the habit of keeping records such as admission register, marks register, progress report, cumulative records etc. The progress report of the each child is sent to the parents of development of their child. 45% of the schools send these reports once in a month; other schools are in the habit of sending these reports once in a term Rao (1968). In 25% of the schools the reports are sent to the parents once in a month along with the cumulative records of quarterly, half-yearly and annual exam marks.

With regard to the different forms of parent-teacher contacts that exist in pre-primary schools, it was found out that the teachers do not generally visit the houses of children frequently; but a majority of the parents visit the schools often. When the researcher qualified the amount of parent-teacher relationship it was found that 50% of the schools have the maximum score for the parent-teacher contact. Only in 4 schools it is very low Betty (1998). The success of an educational programme especially at the pre-primary stage depends chiefly on the extent of teacher-parent relationship Good (1990). Parents should be encouraged to actively participate in the programmes that are organized in a pre-primary school for the purpose of getting their maximum co-operation. Only with their help, any change or improvement can be easily introduced in a pre-primary school.

It is inferred from the results obtained in the study that the nursery schools are fully aware of the different objectives of nursery education and they are bent upon realizing these objectives which will ultimately lead to proper Physical, intellectual, motor, aesthetic developments and development of good habits, free expression of thoughts etc. Thus the programme of the nursery school has taken into account the different developmental tasks and needs of children of the early childhood Sharma, I.R (1968). The programme offered in the nursery schools are based on the important principles of planning such as the principle of age, needs of local community, philosophy of the particular system of pre-primary education, availability of the play materials in the school, season of the year, nature of building and availability of the faculties, flexibility etc Stone,(1990). As far as the planning of the programmes concerned we can conclude that the programme is well planner.

CONCLUSION

The pre-primary programme offered in the different pre-primary schools of Cuddalore District is something to be appreciated. Almost all the parents seem to have realized the educational importance and significance of this stage which can be very well seen-in the mushroom growth of these schools in Cuddalore District. To satisfy the over-growing educational needs of children of pre-primary education. There is a tendency on the part of the Christian mission and private agencies to start as many schools as possible. It is not enough if the number of schools alone increase. Every conscious effort should be made to increase the quality of education imparted in these schools. The basic ideas expressed by pioneers in the field of pre-primary education should be incorporated in the programmes for these schools and the emphasis should be on the development of body, mind and spirit.

The class room should be more spacious and adequate in size. There should be facilities for proper lighting and ventilation. Teaching staff appointed should be fully qualified and training for pre-primary education should be considered more important than P.G. qualification. The management of the schools should be more interested in appointing the, fully qualified teaching personnel and should attract good teachers by giving them an attractive salary.

Nowadays there is a tendency on the part of any educational system to consider it as a business firm. Education should never be considered a business. People who think of education in terms of business should think of doing a better business. Such an idea will result in a number of social evils; profit motive should never be formed among the people who start nursery school. People who are desirous of shaping a good society and preparing better citizens alone should be permitted to start such nursery school education. In this regard, the government and the public should be more cautious.

Every effort made should lead to some improvement in the quality of education imparted in these pre-primary schools. The pre-primary schools seem to attract only children from the upper and middle classes of society, people belonging to the economically low groups should be made to realize the educational significance of this stage of pre-primary education and some scheme may even be started to attract Children of these low strata of society to join these schools and government must come forward to help children desirous of receiving pre-primary education by giving them some financial assistance.

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