

Status of Early Childhood Care and Education in Capital Complex of Papumpare District, Arunachal Pradesh, India



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Abstract

In India Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is generally defined as the care and education of children from birth till eight years. Idea of early childhood care and education was proposed centuries ago by Plato. However, it was first introduced in the country in early nineteenth century. Despite of its centuries old legacy, early childhood care and education in the country is still unorganised and is facing numerous problems. Therefore, the present paper is an attempt to study the status of Early Childhood Care and Education in the Capital Complex of Papumpare district, Arunachal Pradesh, India. Arunachal Pradesh – one of most underdeveloped states in India sits at the bottom line in terms of education in comparison to majority of the states. The present study, thus, will essentially help to get the idea to improve early childhood care and education in the state in particular and India in general.

Keywords: Status, Early Childhood Care and Education, Capital Complex, Papumpare, Arunachal Pradesh.

Introduction

Early childhood care and education outside the home is not a modern idea rather this idea was proposed by Plato centuries ago. However, in India it is said that Christian missionaries were the first to introduce nursery education. St. Hilda Nursery School, Poona (1805) and Loreto Convent, Lucknow (1874) are the two earliest known nursery schools in the country. Today, along with government, several private educational institutions and non-governmental organisations are actively working to spread and improve early childhood care and education in India through Anganwadis, Balwadis, creches, day care centres and other pre-school education centres. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) is a nodal agency at central level that plays the main role in ECCE activities in the country. Since 1975, the ministry has been providing free – of - charge integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in the areas of health, nutrition and education in rural areas, minority groups, slums, and underdeveloped areas through ECCE centres called “Anganwad”. In India Early childhood care and education (ECCE) generally defined as the care and education of children from birth till eight years. It includes early stimulation programmes through crèches/home stimulation for 0-3 years old, pre-school /early childhood education programmes for 3-6 years old and early primary education programmes as part of schooling for 6-8 year olds.

Importance of early childhood care and education has been viewed severally by several people. John Locke viewed that, “the newborn child is like a blank slate upon which experience would write its story. Contact with adults and the outside world would establish the character and mental ability that would be the child’s unique gift or curse throughout life. As childhood shapes later behaviour this period deserves a great deal of attention.” Some previous studies conducted in India in the field of early childhood care and education have revealed that children received pre-school education are more likely to continue elementary education (NCERT, 1993) and have better abilities of writing, sound recognition, object matching and classification (NIPCCD, 2001) compared to those who did not. The learning process for a child commences immediately at birth. Neuroscience shows that over 85% of child’s cumulative brain

development occurs prior to age of 6, indicating the critical importance of developmentally appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in a child's early years to promote sustained and healthy brain development and growth. Indeed, analysis of brain scans of children who encountered various levels of neglect or deprivation in their early years revealed unfortunate deficiencies in the development of critical areas of the brain, and corresponding adverse effects on cognitive and emotional processing. Excellent care, nurture, nutrition, physical activity, psycho-social environment, and cognitive and emotional stimulation during a child's first six years are thus considered extremely critical for ensuring proper brain development and, consequently, desired learning curves over a person's lifetime (Draft National Education Policy, 2019). Realizing the significance of Early Childhood care and education, the authors carried out the present study to fulfil the following objectives:

Objectives

1. To assess the existence of early childhood care and education (ECCE) centres.
2. To study the physical infrastructural facilities of early childhood care and education (ECCE) centres.
3. To study the enrolment of children in early childhood care and education (ECCE) centres.
4. To study the level of awareness of teachers towards early childhood care and education programme.

Delimitations

Table - 1: Showing existing number of educational institutions in the capital complex providing early childhood care and education/pre-primary education

Sl.No.	School	Government	Private	Total	%
1	Higher secondary schools having pre-primary classes	6	12	18	9.89
2	Secondary schools having pre-primary classes	7	18	25	13.73
3	Middle schools having pre-primary classes	26	24	50	27.47
4	Primary schools having pre-primary classes	38	4	42	23.07
5	Govt. aided schools having pre-primary classes	4		4	2.19
6	Unrecognised functioning schools having pre-primary classes	9		9	4.94
7	Schools under process for recognition having pre-primary classes	24		24	13.18
8	Crèches, day care centres and other early childhood care and education centres	10		10	5.49
Grand total = 182					

Source: District Planning Co-ordinator, DDSE office, capital complex, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, 2018.

The table -1 shows that out of 182 institutions, -

1. 9.89% are higher secondary schools having pre-primary classes,
2. 13.73% are secondary schools having pre-primary classes,
3. 27.47% are middle schools having pre-primary classes,
4. 23.07% are primary schools having pre-primary classes,
5. 2.19% are government aided schools having pre-primary classes,
6. 4.94% are unrecognized functioning schools having pre-primary classes,
7. 13.18% are schools under process for recognition having pre-primary classes and,

The study had been delimited to:

1. State of Arunachal Pradesh.
2. Capital complex of Papumpare district namely Nirjuli, Naharlagun and Itanagar.
3. Anganwadi, day care centres, primary, middle and secondary schools having pre-primary classes run by government, private and non-governmental organizations.

Methodology

Descriptive-cum-survey method of educational research had been adopted to complete this study. The population of the present study comprised of all the teachers teaching pre-primary stage children and heads of Anganwadi, day care centres, primary, middle and secondary schools having pre-primary classes run by government, private and non-governmental organization. The sample of the study comprised of 21 head teachers and 68 teachers teaching pre-primary stage learners in Anganwadi, day care centres primary, middle and secondary schools of the capital complex, which were selected by adopting simple random sampling technique. Data was collected using self-developed interview schedule and questionnaire. Frequency and percentage had been used to analyse the data.

Results and interpretations

Objective wise results and interpretation are as follows:

Objective - 1

To assess the existence of early childhood care and education (ECCE) centres.

8. Only 5.49% are crèches, day care centres and other early childhood care and education centres.

Objective - 2

To study the physical infrastructural facilities of early childhood care and education (ECCE) centres.

It is important to mention here that analysis of physical infrastructural facilities had been done considering the variables as location and nature of school building, play area and its nature, drinking water facility, sanitary facilities, sleeping facilities, separate corner for science, doll and book, storage space, gardening space, provision for keeping pets and aquarium, availability of audio-visual equipments and number of teachers.

Table - 2: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms of location of building.

Sl.No	Statement	Response category			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
a	Easily accessible to children.	19	95%	1	5%
b	Close to a primary school.	15	75%	5	25%
c	Away from distracting noises and air pollution.	18	90%	2	10%
d	Plenty of resources in its surroundings.	14	70%	6	30%
e	Pre-school centre is located in ground floor.	18	90%	2	10%
f	Away from ponds and river.	16	80%	4	20%

Source: field work, 2018

The table - 2 reveals the following:

- 95% pre-school centres in the study area are located at easily accessible distance from the children.
- 75% of them are located close to a primary school.
- 90% centres/schools are located far away from polluted and noisy area.
- 70% of them have plenty of resources in their surroundings.
- 90% pre-school centres are found to be located in the ground floor.
- 80% do not have any ponds and rivers near to its campus/surroundings.

Table - 3: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms of nature of building.

Sl.No	Statement	Response category			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
a	Rented	7	35%	13	65%
b	Government	10	50%	10	50%
c	Own building	6	30%	14	70%

Source: field work, 2018

The table - 3 reveals that:

- 65% pre-school schools do not have to pay any rent for their school buildings.
- 50% pre-school buildings are government provided buildings.
- 70% pre-schools though do not have their own buildings

Table - 4: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms of play area and its nature.

Sl.No.	Statement	Response category			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Outdoor space					
a	Outdoor space	9	45%	11	55%
b	Cemented & paved	14	70%	6	30%
c	Sunny & shaded	14	70%	6	30%
d	Grass covered ground floor	9	45%	11	55%
e	Safe for children	16	80%	4	20%
Indoor space					
a	Cemented floor with carpet	5	25%	15	75%
b	Well ventilated & adequate light	18	90%	2	10%
c	Blackboard at low level	18	90%	2	10%
d	Mats/durry/ chair/table	13	65%	7	35%

Source: field work, 2018

The table - 4 shows that:

Outdoor space

- 55% pre-schools in the study area reported that they do not have outdoor space for play.
- 70% pre-schools stated that whatever spaces are used in the schools for outdoor play are cemented and paved.
- 70% pre-schools are found as whatever spaces are used in their schools for outdoor play have sunny & shaded provision.
- Outdoor play space/area in 55% of pre-schools do not have grass covered ground floor.
- In 80% pre-schools the area/space used for outdoor play are safe for children.

Indoor Space

- 75% pre-schools in the capital complex do not have cemented floor with carpet for pre-school children.
- 90% pre-schools reported that indoor spaces in their schools do have provision of adequate light,

well ventilated and blackboard fixed at low level, and

- 65% pre-schools are found having provision of mats/durry/chair and table for indoor play.

Table – 5: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms of drinking water facility

Sl. No	Statement	Response category			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
a	Pure drinking water	15	75%	5	25%
b	Source of drinking water	13	65%	7	55%
c	Place for washing purposes	11	55%	9	45%

Source: field work, 2018

The table - 5 reveals that:

- 75% pre-schools in the capital complex have pure drinking water facility in their schools.
- 65% pre-schools stated that they have their own source of drinking water facility in their schools.
- Washing places are available in 55% of pre-schools.

Table – 6: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms of sanitary facilities.

Sl.No	Statement	Response category			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
a	Clean toilet with water	14	70%	6	30%
b	Soap/towel	14	70%	6	30%
c	Separate toilet for teachers & students	14	70%	6	30%
d	Separate toilet for male & female teachers	13	65%	7	35%
e	Separate toilet for girl & boy students	14	70%	6	30%

Source: field work, 2018

The table - 6 is indicative of the followings:

- 70% pre-schools in the study area do have clean toilet equipped with water, soap and towel in their schools.
- Separate toilet for teachers and students are found available in 70% of pre-schools.
- 60% pre-schools do not have separate toilet for male and female teachers in their schools.
- 70% pre-schools do not have separate toilet for girl and boy students in their schools.

Table – 7: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms of sleeping facilities.

Sl.No	Statement	Response category			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
a	Mat	8	40%	12	60%
b	Folding cots	2	10%	18	90%
c	Cozy bed	5	25%	15	75%
d	Mattress & pillow	8	40%	12	60%
e	Clean bed sheet	8	40%	12	60%

Source: field work, 2018

The table - 7 reveals the following:

- 60% pre-schools in the study area do not have mat facility for children in their school to sleep.
- 90% pre-schools are found not equipped with folding cot facility.
- 75% pre-schools do not have cozy bed for children.
- 60% pre-schools do not have mattress and pillow facility.
- 60% pre-schools are found do have clean bed sheets.

Table – 8: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms of separate corners for science, doll and book.

Sl.No	Statement	Response category			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
a	Science	9	45%	11	55%
b	Dolls	11	55%	9	9%
c	Books	14	70%	6	30%

Source: field work, 2018

The table – 8 reveals that:

- Majority of pre-schools (55%) in the capital complex do not have science corner for children.
- 55% pre-schools have dolls corner for children in their schools.
- 70% pre-schools are found having books corner.

Table – 9: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms of storage space.

Sl.No	Statement	Response category			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
a	Storage space for paper and crayons	14	70%	6	30%
b	Storage space for teaching learning materials	15	75%	5	25%
c	Locker & shelf	12	60%	8	40%

Source: field work, 2018

The table- 9 is indicative of the following:

- 70% pre-schools in the capital complex are found equipped with storage space for paper and crayons in their schools.
- 75% of pre-schools do have space for storing teaching-learning materials.
- Locker and shelf facility are found available in 60% of pre-schools.

Table – 10: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms of gardening space.

Sl.No	Statement	Response category			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
a	Plants & flowers	15	75%	5	25%
b	Big trees for shade	12	60%	8	40%
c	Nature walks	13	65%	7	35%

Source: field work, 2018

The table – 10 reveals the following:

- Majority of pre-schools (75%) in the study area do have gardening space for plants and flowers.
- 60% schools have big trees for shade in their schools' garden.
- 65% schools have space in their schools' garden for nature walks for children.

Table – 11: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms provision for keeping pets and aquarium.

Sl.No	Statement	Response category			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
a	Keeping pets & aquarium	3	15%	17	85%

Source: field work, 2018

The table – 11 shows that majority of pre-schools (85%) in the study area do not have provision of keeping pets and aquarium.

Table – 12: Showing physical infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres of capital complex in terms availability of audio-visual equipments.

Statement	Response category			
	Yes		No	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Audio-visual equipments(CD player /TV/tape recorder/slide projector)	13	65%	7	35%

Source: field work, 2018

The table-12 reveals that audio-visual equipments in the form of CD player/TV/Tape

recorder or slide projector are available in majority of pre-schools (65%) in the capital complex.

Table – 13: Status of teachers of early childhood care and education (ECCE) centres in capital complex of Papumpare district, Arunachal Pradesh.

Total	Male		Female		Trained		Untrained	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
284	80	28.16	204	71.83	208	73.23	76	26.76

Source: field work, 2018

The table- 13 indicates that out of 284 working teachers in early childhood care and education centres of capital complex, majority i.e. 71.83% are female teachers and 28.16% are male.

Again majority of teachers 73.23% are trained and only 26.76% are untrained teachers.

Objective – 3

To study the enrolment of children in early childhood care and education (ECCE) centres.

Table - 14: Enrolment of children in early childhood care and education centres of capital complex.

Total	Boy		Girl		APST		Non-APST	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1283	641	49.9	642	50	834	65.00%	495	38.53

Source: field work, 2018

The table - 14 reveals that total enrolment i.e. 1283 pre-school children in early childhood care and education centre of capital complex 50% are girls and 49.9% are boys. Further, the table – 3.13 also shows that out of total, majority of pre-school children (65%) in the study area are APST and only 38.53% pre-school children are non-APST.

Objective – 4

To study the level of awareness of teachers in capital complex of Papumpare district, Arunachal Pradesh towards early childhood care and education programme

Table – 16: Showing level of awareness about early childhood care and education programme among teachers in capital complex of Papumpare district, Arunachal Pradesh.

Sl.No	Statement	Response category					
		Yes		No		Undecided	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	The teacher-student ratio at pre-primary level should be.....	14	20	41	59	14	20
2	Play-way method is one of the best methods for teaching pre-primary children.	67	97	1	1.4	1	1.4
3	The teacher should use audio-visual aids to teach pre-primary children.	65	94	3	4	1	1
4	Practice of 3Rs is an integral part of ECCE programme.	45	65	7	10	17	25
5	The teacher should use continuous and comprehensive evaluation system to evaluate pre-primary children.	59	84	7	12	3	4
6	Teacher at pre-primary should plan their daily activities.	65	75	1	1	2	3
7	The teacher should use mother-tongue as a medium of instruction to teach pre-primary children.	34	49	28	40	07	15
8	Both indoor and outdoor play material should be available in the ECCE centres.	66	96	2	2	1	1
9	Frequent parent-teacher contact activity should be an integral part of ECCE programme.	59	85	7	10	3	4
10	The eligibility education qualification to become teacher to teach the pre-primary children is	12	18	50	72	7	10
11.	Black board in ECCE classes should be at the height of the children's eye level.	59	85	14		0	-
12	Regular health check-up of children by the physician is an integral part of ECCE programme.	60	87	5	7	4	6
13	The food items for children at ECCE centre should be milk, egg, rice and fruits.	59	86	4	4	6	9
14	Toilet training should be an integral part of ECCE programme.	60	87	0	-	9	13
15	Canning practice is banned at pre-primary level of education.	45	65	11	15	13	19
16	The distance of the ECCE centre from nearby locality should be.....km away.	13	19	46	67	10	15

17	Location of ECCE centre should be on the ground floor.	64	93	2	3	3	4
18	ECCE centre should be located far off from ponds, rivers, heavy traffic and pollution.	65	94	1	1	3	4
19	The play centre at ECCE should be..... mtrs.	52	75	15	22	2	3
20	The play centre at ECCE should be well ventilated and adequate light.	66	95	0	-	3	4
21	Rooms in ECCE should be well carpeted.	62	90	0	-	7	10
22	Rooms in ECCE center should be furniture free.	42	61	20	29	7	10
23	The teacher at pre-primary level should be preferably lady teacher.	55	80	10	15	4	6

Source: Field work, 2018

Interpretation

The table – 16 shows the following:

1. Majority of teachers teaching pre-primary classes (59%) are not aware that teacher-pupil ratio at pre-primary level should be 1:20.
2. 97% teachers are aware that play-way method is one of the best methods for teaching pre-primary children.
3. 94% teachers know that teachers should use audio-visual aids to teach pre-primary children.
4. 65% teachers know that practice of 3Rs is an integral part of early childhood care and education programme.
5. 84% teachers in the study area are aware that continuous and comprehensive evaluation method should be used to evaluate children at pre-primary level.
6. 75% teachers know that teachers teaching pre-primary level should plan their daily activities.
7. 49% teachers are aware about the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at pre-primary level.
8. 96% teachers know that both indoor and outdoor play material should be available in the early childhood care and education centres.
9. 85% of them are aware that parent-teacher contact activity should be an integral part of early childhood care and education programme.
10. It is a matter of great concern that majority of teachers (72%) teaching pre-primary classes in capital complex of Papumpare district are not aware that minimum qualification as per NCTE norms to become a pre-school teacher is Class-XII with diploma certificate in pre-school.
11. 85% teachers are aware that black board in early childhood care and education classes should be at the height of the children eyes level.
12. 87% teachers know that regular health check-up of children by the physician is an integral part of early childhood care and education programme.
13. 86% teachers know that milk, egg, rice and fruits should be the essential components of food items for pre-primary children.
14. 87% teachers are aware that toilet training should be an integral part of early childhood care and education programme.
15. 65% teachers know that canning practice should be prohibited at pre-primary level.
16. 67% teachers do not know that a locality should be approximately half kilometer from an early childhood care and education centre.

17. 93% teachers know that location of early childhood care and education should be on ground floor.
18. 94% teachers are aware that early childhood care and education centre's location should be far away from ponds, rivers, heavy traffic and pollution.
19. 75% teachers know that play area at early childhood care and education centre should 300/450 square meters so that 25 children in the school can play together and run around safely and 95% of them are aware that it should be well ventilated and there must be adequate light.
20. 90% of teachers know that the rooms in early childhood care and education centre should be well carpeted and 61% of them are aware that rooms should be furniture free.
21. 80% of teachers know that teachers at pre-primary level preferably should be ladies.

Discussion and Conclusion

The capital complex that includes Itanagar, Naharlagun and Nirjuli is considered as one of the advanced areas not only in Papumpare district but across the state in terms of basic amenities like health, education, transportation, communication and electricity. However, the study revealed that the number of crèche and day care centres in the study area is very less i.e.5.49% only and majority of institutions giving early childhood care and education are middle schools having pre-primary classes i.e. 27.47%. The drawback of such institutions is that when pre-primary classes are attached to other educational institutions such as primary, middle or secondary schools, the pre-primary section gets less focus than it deserves. Absence of clean bed sheet and pillow, grass covered outdoor space, cemented floor with carpet and science corner in ECCE centres may not create feeling of reluctance among children to stay back there in the ECCE centres but lack of basic infrastructural requirement such as separate toilets for male and female teachers and students, exhaust fan in the toilet's windows and mattress would obviously create lack of interest not only among students but also among parents to send their children to ECCE centres. Pets and aquarium can serve as effective stimulus for attracting children to come regularly in ECCE centres and keep them interested in, but, sadly these provisions are found not available in majority of ECCE centres. Being tribal state, it is natural to find higher number of APST enrolment and it is found as expected, comparison between the number of APST and non-APST children shows that enrolment rate of APST children is higher

than their non-APST counterparts in the ECCE centres. Their enrolment also indicated the growing awareness of parents toward the importance of education irrespective of gender difference, because the enrolment rate of girl children are found higher than their male counterparts. For harmonious development of personality equal emphasis on cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain of an individual learner is very essential. But the present study revealed that though variety of educational activities are conducted in pre-schools centre, in the name of outdoor activity only playing large and small ball and jumping and skipping are found conducting in the schools. And sadly, no training is provided to the children in music, dance and singing. Large number of female teachers in the existing ECCE centres of capital complex is very encouraging but at the same time lack of awareness among majority of teachers towards basics of early childhood care and education programme such as pupil-teacher ratio at pre-primary level, eligibility of person to become pre-primary teacher, distance of pre-primary centres from the near locality and measures of play area at early childhood care and education indicates unprofessional attitude and lack of seriousness among heads, teachers and parents.

Suggestions

1. Expansion of crèche and day care centres in the capital complex.
2. Establishment of early childhood care and education centre as a complete unit in itself. It means it is better establish separately without attaching to other educational institutions like primary, secondary or higher secondary schools.
3. Provision of outdoor space needs to be made mandatory in all the ECCE centres. otherwise it will bring lopsided development in the learners.
4. Establishment of separate toilets for male and female teachers and students in the entire ECCE centre.

5. Improvement of physical infrastructural facilities like folding cot and cozy bed sheets, separate science corner, provision of keeping pets and aquarium, grass covered outdoor space and exhaust fan in toilet's windows of all the early childhood care and education centres.
6. Send the in-service teachers regularly to some training programme.
7. Recruit trained teachers.

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