

Development of Early Childhood Care Education Programme in India

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Abstract— *School readiness is the foundation for ensuring quality and equity in access to education as well as improving the learning outcomes. Last few decades the school readiness is of great significant both Globally and Nationally. There is a sustainable development in early care and education (ECCE) post Independence. India is trying to reach the global perspective in intervention school readiness skills through ECCE programmes. The present article tries to describe the various Indian state initiatives in development of school readiness skills through early Child care and education programmes. It also talks about the reformation in ECCE from NEP 1986 to NEP 2020. It talks about the Indian government initiatives through NCERT for successful implementation of Functional Literacy and Numeracy.*

Index Terms— School readiness, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Foundation Stage, development, Critical period.

I. INTRODUCTION

School readiness is the preparedness of young children to enter kindergarten and the preparedness of school to receive young children into public educational setting (Kagan and Rigby 2003). Current school readiness trends take a broad approach to preparedness which looks at contributions of communities, schools, and families to children's readiness to learn across developmental domains. As a result there is little consistency across school readiness initiatives. Various strategies, including comprehensive health and school services to young children, early learning programmes for disadvantaged children, pre academic skill assessment of children, and efforts to smooth a child's transition into kindergarten, have all been identified with school readiness. This brief synthesizes the research and practices relative to early education and care which are most closely tied to children's developmental and academic preparedness to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

School readiness, in the broad sense involves children, families, early environments, schools, and communities (NASBE 1991). Children are not innately ready or not ready for school, their skill and development are strongly influenced by their interaction with other people and environment before coming to school. With 81 percent of U.S children in non parental care arrangements the year before kindergarten (West, Denton, & Germino-Hausken 2000), child care centers and family child care homes are important early environment that affect children's development and learning.

Over the time, however experts have come to generally agree that children must possess certain capabilities before they enter school that will help to experience future success in educational settings. the point of contention is the continued debate over the specific types and level of skills children should possess. without a form definition of school readiness, it has become very difficult to know what to assess and best approach for assessment. the following perspective regarding how children learn and what they should be prepared for help to fuel the debate, and each view point advances a slightly different approach to how school readiness is defined and measures.

II. MODELS OF SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAMME

The concept of school readiness is complex and multidimensional. Early childhood education professionals have not reached agreement on a single definition and/or model of school readiness (Graue, 2006; Keating, 2007). Therefore, there are a range of definitions encompassing different components. A majority of definitions focus on the skills and capabilities existing within the child. For example, according to the National Education Goals Panel (1997), there are five domains of children's readiness for school: health and physical development, emotional well-being and social competence, approach to learning, communicative skills, and cognition and general knowledge. More recently, the National Governor's Association for Best Practices (2005) defined school readiness as expectations of how children will fare upon entering kindergarten. Snow (2006) similarly defines school readiness as, "the state of child competencies at the time of school entry that are important for later success" (p. 9). More recent definitions tend to promote a more holistic view of children that takes into account many different influences on learning and development. From a more holistic standpoint, Maxwell and Clifford (2004) posit that children are not innately ready

for school, but that school readiness encompasses the influence of families, early environments, schools, and communities.

Hence either there is no single universally agreed upon definition of school readiness is available or the model. Among the various models are Maturationist, Environmentalist, Constructivist, Cumulative, and Transactional-Ecological.

III. MATURATION MODEL

According to this school readiness as a biological issue, where children's school readiness is a function of their age and level of cognitive, psychomotor, and emotional maturation. This mean child is ready to enter school when they have grown old enough and achieved a certain level of expected maturity (Snow, 2006). This model is biologically based on age maturation related to cognitive, psychomotor, and emotional development.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL MODEL

According to this model school readiness is understood in terms of children's learning of skills from early socialization experiences (Andrews & Slate, 2001; Graue, 1993). The environment perspective supports the *inclusion* of indicators of parental involvement in assessment of school readiness.

This model is based on early childhood skills acquisition in stimulating contexts and focuses on the "sociocultural" environment as supporting the development of a child's level of functioning (Snow, 2006).

V. CONSTRUCTIVIST MODEL

According to this model school readiness is the degree to which children can learn tasks through interaction with more knowledgeable peers or adults (Andrews & Slate, 2001; Graue 1993). This view encourages the involvement of parents, teachers, and other adults that are familiar with a child's level of skill and development in assessment processes.

Readiness is the degree to which children can learn tasks through interactions with more and knowledgeable peers or adults (Andrews & Slate, 2001).

VI. CUMULATIVE-SKILLS MODEL

the cumulative-skills model views school readiness as children's possession of certain prerequisite skills that are necessary for learning a particular subject (Andrews & Slate, 2001). this perspective promotes educational policies like those that require assessments of children's pre-academic skills upon entrance into kindergarten.

School readiness is based on a child's acquisition of certain prerequisite skills that are necessary for kindergarten entry. (Andrews & Slate, 2001).

VII. TRANSACTIONAL OR ECOLOGICAL MODEL

A view which supports seeing school readiness as an interaction between children' development status and their environment. The transactional view has lead to educational

policies like those that support children's transition into school and the alignment of prekindergarten programs with early learning programs (Andrews & Slate, 2001; Graue, 2006; Keating, 2007; NGA, 2005; Snow, 2006). The "Ready child education" put forth by the school readiness indicators Initiatives (KIDS COUNT, 2005)- there are four major components which influence on children's learning and development in assessment of readiness for school:

- Ready Families: family context and home environment that foster early learning experiences and provide opportunities for growth and development indicators of ready families include mother's educational level, the number of births to teens, the prevalence of child abuse and neglect, and the number of children in foster care.
- Ready communities: community resources and supports that are made available to families with young children. Indicators of ready communities include the number of young children in poverty, availability of supports for families with infants and toddlers, and levels of lead poisoning.
- Ready services: quality, accessible, and affordable programs that have been found to be effective in influencing children's development and school. The availability of health insurance, number of low birth weight infants, and access to prenatal care and immunization are indicators of ready services.
- Ready early learning settings and schools: important aspects of prekindergarten programs and schools that affect children's development and school success. Class size and fourth grade reading scores are considered indicators of ready schools.

The influence of these different perspectives has led to experts in the field of early childhood education coming to realize that there are several influence on children's development that will differentially affect their level of preparedness for school. As Graue (2006) succinctly summarizes, "the definition of school readiness varies geographically, by the population it is applied to, it is a composite of different aspects of development, and there is variation in the degree to which specific dimensions are of focus." As a result, defining and assessing school readiness has been made much more difficult.

VIII. CONSTRUCTIVIST MODEL

children's schooling. This was earlier a significant challenge among the marginalized communities, but is no longer a major issue. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) among 6- to 14-year-olds from 81.6% in 2000-01 to 96.9% in 2014-15 (GoI, 2016) is a strong evident for same. School infrastructure and teacher availability have also shown significant improvements, largely through the initiatives under the Government of India's "Education for All" program, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). While these are positive trends, the downside is that basic learning levels of a large majority of children remain persistently low, with significant numbers

continuing to not learn at their grade levels. The history of Early childhood care and education shows the significant improvement in school readiness programme.

National Policy on education (1986) has emphasised on the importance of early childhood care and education for holistic development of a child. It has extended the program from early childhood education (ECE) to Early childhood care and education (ECCE). The elements of Care meant with Health and Nutrition of a child. It has emphasised on the need for collaboration of Child Development Scheme and ECCE programme. It has emphasised on play way method.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) – 2005 also emphasises on the importance of 2 years of ECCE and stated that experiences provided during the pre-school years plays a very crucial role in the development of child's personality and have strong influence on later education of children. It has emphasised on requirement of young children like care, opportunities and experiences that lead to the overall development-physical, mental, social, emotional and school readiness skills. Its holistic and integrated perspective view was the health and nutrition needs of children as integrally related with their psychosocial/ educational development. It has emphasised the role of all the agencies like home, school and community.

It was a surprising finding from The ASER 2014 report that many parents of 3 years are getting their enrolled in schools. In private schools children do not get admission in Grade 1 without pre schooling such as Montessori, LKGs and UKGs. In governments school before NEP 2020 students used to get admitted into class 1 from the age of 6 years. Before the age of six children attends Anganwadi Kendra

Centre for early childhood education and development, Ambedker University, New Delhi with partnership project of the Archaeological Survey of India has conducted a research on status of school readiness in Nizamuddin Basti. It was clearly seen that there was high emphasis on the language and reasoning experiences and creative activities. The teachers being well disposed proved to be a key element in being an effective teacher. Further, the focus also seemed to be on the social development of the child. The physical infrastructure, teaching learning material, of the Anganwadi centres was improved as they were supported by AKF. The parents have noticed the significant improvement in the quality of Anganwadi centres. Yet, there is a concern. of development of domains of language, reasoning, creativity, etc. the children were facing problems in these areas. The children were lagging in phonemic awareness, sentence formation, sequential thinking, etc. It clearly signifies that though there is a focus on language and cognitive competencies but it needs to be further emphasized for more significant influence on later learning of the children as the scores obtained in the activities pertaining school readiness competencies were low.

Tamil Nadu government has initiated the Tennessee's school readiness model which emphasizes on the state's children will be ready to succeed in school only when families, communities, and schools work together on their behalf

throughout the early childhood years. It has emphasised on the role of communities, schools, and families can do to support learning and development of school readiness skills among young ones. Further, the model provides indicators of what "ready children" know and are able to do across the birth-5 age span, but does not detail nor overemphasize them. For "readiness" is not seen solely as a condition within a child, but is a condition that exists when communities, schools, and families collectively create a nurturing environment for child development starting at birth.

Government of Andhra Pradesh has developed a comprehensive programme called Teachers' Badi which guide the teacher to develop readiness skills from class 1 to 5 among students as they progress from one level to another. The first 6 weeks of every new session is conducted induction class of readiness for students for smooth transition of students from one level to another. An academic calendar is prepared for whole state in order to maintain uniformity in curriculum transaction. The motto of this programme is to develop children Psychological, socially and acquisition of Language skills, mathematics skills etc.

Karnataka has implemented programmes for foundation stage in February 2023 the ensures child-centred and activity-based pedagogy in Anganwadi and lower grades of primary schools. The Chilli Pilip programme for Anganwadi and Nalikali for grades 1-3 of primary school with customised teaching methods respecting the individual learning styles among children. The Anganwadi workers and Nali Kali teachers modified the curriculum to suit the learning needs of children to cater to the local needs.

The central government has come up with the national Educational Policy 2020 that has prominently mentioned about early childhood care and education that has been neglected in previous policy documents. The Kothari commission Report 1965-66 and continued with the rights to Education Act 2009, did not talk about the rights to education for children between 3 to 6 years of age. The NEP 2020 envisages a five year foundational stage of education: Three years of ECE and two years of primary school thus extending it upto 8 years.

NCERT has initiated various programmes for foundation stage. NCERT Foundation Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Mission aims to enable all the children to read and respond with comprehension; independently write with Fig. 1: Transaction Stage of the Module FOUNDATIONAL STAGE 6 years (3-9 years) Pre-school 1 (3-4 years) Pre-school 2 (4-5 years) Pre-school 3 Balvatika (5-6 years) Grade I (6-7 years) Vidya Pravesh Grade II (7-8 years) Grade III (8-9 years) 01 Part 1.indd 1 15 Feb 2022 10:17:38 AM 2 Vidya Pravesh understanding; understand the reasoning in the domains of number, measurement, and shapes; and become independent in problem-solving. The purpose is to ensure that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy by the end of Grade III, and not later than Grade V, by 2025.

Source:https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/VidyaPravesh_Guidelines_GradeI.pdf

http://www.learonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1207/s15566935eed1701_3



Fig. 1: Transition Stage of the Module

IX. CONCLUSION

If we look into the history of early childhood care and education and development of school readiness programme there is a significant reforms in through research and development by both government and private sectors. All the states are very well aware about the critical age of children. States are taking care of overall development of children in their critical period of early ages. The various departments of government are working together for successful implementation of various programmes at grass root level. Various Universities in collaboration with government and National and international agencies to plan and implement the school readiness skills among children for their prosperous future for sustainable development of the country.

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