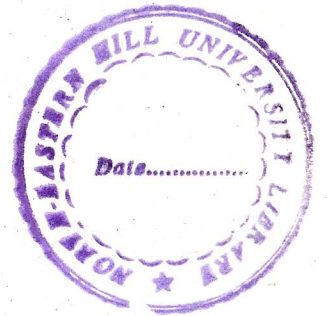


**A STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES
AT THE PRE-PRIMARY STAGE AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON
COGNITIVE, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF
CHILDREN IN DIMAPUR, NAGALAND**

By

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**THESIS SUBMITTED
IN FULFILMENT OF THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION**

**NORTH EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY
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JULY, 1999

I, Temjennaro Jamir, hereby declare that the subject matter of the thesis titled "A study of the educational programmes at the pre primary stage and their influence on cognitive, social and emotional development of children in Dimapur, Nagaland" is the record of work done by me and that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to any body else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other university/institute.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.0 Context of the study:

Children constitute the most valuable human resource of any nation and, a nation's future lies in their proper development. The childhood period is apparently the most decisive period, where a man's character and affectivity in developing a child's full potential is outlined. The destiny of mankind is moulded at this age, and the impressions that are made on the child's mind, last throughout his life.

Acknowledgement of the importance of the early years, as exerting a profound influence on its future development, has been recognized all over the world. Arnold Gesell was among the first to recognize the importance of early childhood in human development, Gesell (1925, p4)

"We must grant, at the outset, that the preschool period exceeds approximately the first seventy months of the scriptural allotment of seventy years - only one clock hour, reckoning the entire span of human life as a day. But during that hour the major portion of the total stream of development flows under the bridge"

The foundations of habits, which shaped the adult character and personality, are formed during this period. Frued (1917) indicated that, the major traits of personality are established early in childhood, and that subsequent personality development was merely an extension of elaboration of these traits.

The early years in a child's life are crucial for their learning. They learn a great deal, and what they learn has great significance's in their later learning. Hunt (1964) and Deutsch (1964) indicate that early learning influences later learning, and that educational potential of the early years is too great to waste. Hebb's (1949) emphasis on "primary learning" based on early perceptual experiences and Harlow's (1950) Principles of

"learning to learn" both affirm the idea that early learning facilitates later learning and forms the foundation upon which the subsequent learning is based.

The early childhood years are the best period to mould children's lives, when they are without inhibition and external control. If the child is provided with an adequate environment and early-formalized experiences, his creativity level and problem solving capacity can be developed considerably. Bloom 1964, Hunt, 1961, also suggested that early intervention could make a critical difference. It is a period, for optimum development in various aspects viz.; intellectual, emotional, social and physical. Benjamin Bloom (1964) identified the early years as the period of most rapid growth in human characteristics and optimum period of development. During this period, any deprivation or stimulation is most active causing either obstruction or acceleration in the development process Dittman (1968) reveals, the importance of the early years and the necessity for education from the beginning; deprivation leaves lasting and costly effects,

Education of child begins at early stage. Home is viewed as the proper context of learning, the parents as proper teachers and the earliest stage of childhood as the period for beginning education. It is the family that provides the immediate pattern of physical, social and emotional support and stimulation. It has been rightly stated, " that as a rule the family is the setting for socializing the child. His entire early development is a result of his experiences within the family context, though it is subject to modifications as he grows older and interacts more and more with people outside the family. "The child's stimulating home environment and relationship with the parents help in moulding his attitude and behaviour. Early childhood education, therefore is a part of the child rearing

experiences provided naturally for all children. Mac Donald (1969) has correctly indicated early childhood education as a form of deliberate social intervention.

Many homes, however, are not always able to provide the best conditions and experience for the development of children. For such children, pre-primary education supplements the home, as it is an integration of education in and out of the school. Goldstein (1972) and Prossor (1973) have advocated that, pre school education is not so necessary for the middle and upper class children but it is a must for poor children and the underprivileged children who are mostly nurtured in 'restricted' environment.

During the twenties, research in child development stressed the importance of early years in later growth, influenced the thinking concerning the responsibility for care and education of the young child. In addition, subsequent, to the industrial revolution the effects of urbanization, modernization and other cultural changes, have almost universally been adverse to breaking down of extended family and the beginning of a trend with an increasing number of women joining the work force. Further, impetus to pre -school education was provided by the McMillian sisters who started nursery education for the slum children in England with a view to nurture the whole child socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually (McMillian, 1919). The Head Start programme launched by the US Federal Government as a part of "war on poverty", to Improved the child's health and in meeting their social, emotional and physical needs also helped to spread the pre- school education movement the world over (Spodek,Saracho and Davis, 1991)

The years, since the launch of the "Head Start" movement and other programmes for the poor children, have been marked by intense activity in early childhood education.

It has helped to pay more attention to the growing needs of children, to view pre- school education as an essential service in our society, and also to focus attention on the need to build a strong foundation during the formative years. The International Commission on Education (1972) emphasized that education of pre- school children is an essential pre- condition to any educational and cultural policy. In the regional meeting of experts (UNESCO, 1979), the need for early childhood education was advocated with the arguments on its promotional role for ensuring social justice and equality, biological, physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth of the child, and for the fulfillment of potential abilities of children.

Of late early childhood education has become increasingly important in India. Soon, after Independence Universalisation of education to all children until 14 years of age was advocated in the subsequent years, the idea contained in the Universal Declaration on Human Right that, "Everyone has a right to Education" (Francois, 1968) became a concern in India too. As education is the vital link in total development, educational development became a matter of concern. To make this educational imperative a reality, Early childhood education emerges as a priority area, in realizing the immediate goal of universalisation by facilitating enrol ments, retentions and encouraging the child for formal schooling.

The growing awareness of the significance of early childhood in the sphere of human development has gained momentum in India and the need to provide care and education for the young child is increasingly felt. Realizing this facts, a variety of institutions have been started by the private organizations and individuals on the lines of the philosophy and practices suggested by Montessori, Froebel, and the Mc Millian

sisters and these have become popular all over India. A new type of school, based on Indian culture and keeping in view the Indian requirements, and known as “basic school” was evolved in subsequent years. There are also Anganwadis /Balwadis started all over India to cater to the needs of children in rural and slum areas in the country.

Formal education in Nagaland started in the late 19th century with the coming of the American missionaries. Since, the formation of the state of Nagaland in 1963, the number of Schools in the state has shown tremendous increase (Sema, 1986). The constitutional obligation of providing free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years is the guiding spirit for providing necessary care and education. In the state, early childhood education is implemented through various agencies viz. the SCERT, Social security and welfare Department and the School education Department. Thus keeping in view the objectives and assumptions of early childhood education, the government of Nagaland signed an agreement with the UNICEF in 1985 to implement early childhood project. The early childhood project trains the pre- primary teachers and Anganwadi workers (Nagaland1994). The ICDS scheme, which is a centrally sponsored scheme, provides nutrition and health education, supplementary education, non- formal pre- school education and referral services (Nagaland, 1988).

In Nagaland, pre- primary education has been in operation for sometime, and though there has been a gradual increase in the number of schools, yet it cannot be said to cater to the needs and interests of all children. In the field of pre- primary education, till now in Nagaland, no evaluative research study has been done. Besides, there is a feeling that the education programmes offered in many existing pre-primary classes are not organized on scientific lines due to various reasons.

It is, therefore, thought fit to undertake research on the various aspects concerning pre-primary education.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

" A study of the educational programmes at the pre- primary stage and their influence on cognitive, social and emotional development of children in Dimapur, Nagaland."

1.2 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

Pre-primary education- Education imparted to the infants before they enter into the primary school is generally known as pre- primary education. This will include institutions like nursery, Montessori classes and Anganwadis.

Development; In the present study, development will cover social, emotional and cognitive parameters of the child's growth and development.

Social development: " Social development" according to Ralph McCaw (1965), is the learning of behaviour required by the social expectation of the culture. It involves learning to get along with other people. It involves proper performance behavior playing of approved roles and the development of social attitudes" (p.13).

Emotional development: according to Webster's dictionary, emotions involve" strong feelings (as of love, hate, desire, or fear)... manifest in neuromuscular, respiratory, cardiovascular, hormonal, and other bodily changes". Emotional development is related to children's over all development.

Cognitive Development: According to Ralph McCaw (1965), cognitive development includes thinking, perceiving, remembering, forming concepts, generalizing

and abstracting, as well as general intellectual activity. According to Musser, Conger and Kagan (1966, p252) " Intellectual ability is most broadly defined as the ability to adopt to environment, and intellectual growth in characterized by (i) acquisition of language and number skills and the rules that govern the use of these symbols; (ii) Increased memory ability;(iii) Differentiation of perceptual experience, and (vi) learning the rules of logic and how to apply them to reason out problems".

1.3 SCOPE OF STUDY:

The present study intends to trace the historical development of pre- primary education in Nagaland. The study of early childhood education is a worthwhile endeavor for several reasons. It reveals how slowly, early childhood education came into its own as an organized effort in the interest of the young child. The history of early childhood education also provides an overview of the theoretical foundation from which early childhood philosophy is drawn. The theories of child development and behaviour emerged through history serve as the criteria upon which to base decisions about methods, materials and content. Finally, a study of early childhood reveals the origins of contemporary curriculum practiced and trends.

The idea of pre- school education through an organized institution outside the home of the child, has been stimulated as a result of various philosophical thoughts, the Industrial revolution, changing social needs, economic necessity, universalisation of elementary education, women's emancipation. Further, it has been stimulated by studies conducted by developmental neurologists, psychologists, and animal behaviorists on the importance of early years for all round development of the child.

In the present century, the importance of pre-school and early experiences in their later development has been acknowledged all over the world. Subsequently of late, it has revived interest in the state too. Pre-primary is the education that goes before the child's compulsory schooling. It is an informal education which, begins when the child is 2 or 3 years of age. Children on their early childhood years are served by many kinds of institution. Children are educated in private institutions, secular schools as well as schools run by churches. Churches operate pre-schools to further religious training or to satisfy community needs. Most programmes for children are in private institutions, and are operated either for profit or non-profit. These institutions serve fewer children than do the Government schools, and often enroll groups that are alike in economic status, ethnicity, or some group traits.

In the State, many terms have been used interchangeably to denote the pre-school education programmes. These include kindergarten, nursery education, Montessori education, and pre-primary education. But, they signify the common purpose as a preparation for primary schools, focussing mainly on the child and his or her educational or physical and psychological needs or the social or economic needs of the state. The programmes of education also vary in different types of pre-schools. A detailed study of these institutions and their programmes need to be undertaken to know the state of development of pre-primary education in the state in general and Dimapur in particular.

The plans and programmes of education provided in each of the pre-primary institutions will influence the development pattern of children. According to Schweinhart and Weikart (1980) could early childhood programme experiences enable children to

achieve greater success, develop higher motivation, better school performance and more successful school careers. Early childhood programme quality is important for young children. Studies (Holloway and Reichhart Erickson, 1988; Pierson, Walker and Jivan, 1984; Roupp, Travers; Glantz, and Coelen, 1979; Whitebook, Howes and Phillips, 1989) reveal that high quality programmes make greater contribution to the behavior of the children. These schools are supposed to promote the physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of children through various programmes and activities. Venkataram (1984) reveals that, early childhood education serves to fulfill effectively all the needs of the young child physical, social, emotional and psychological. Studies conducted by Saxena 1971, Deenamal, 1978, indicate that early childhood education prepares a sound base for formal education. These beneficial effects are likely to be manifested in children as they proceed from month to month in such schools.

The present study would also attempt to study the pattern of development attained by the children in the cognitive, social and emotional sphere after completing at least a year in such schools. Cognitive development will studied in terms of competence and proficiency achieved in language skills, number sense and in the acquisition of general knowledge about environment and the like. Social development will be studied in terms of levels of cooperation, participation in-group activities, sensitivity to group norms, will to share one's time and energy with the group and the like. Emotional aspects will involve learning to control one's emotions, anger, fear, anxiety and also to express pleasant emotion or elation, affection and joy and the level of self confidence attained. These aspects are important in any study on the influence of pre-primary education on the development of children

Children are recognized as having intellectual, social and emotional needs. A well- rounded programme must be provided for the child's development in all these areas. Early childhood programmes and activities contribute in building the child's cognitive abilities to generalize and formulate ideas, to solve problems, increase the child's knowledge about the world, their ability to observe, to listen, to remember, to use language effectively and to reason. Children also, through many experiences pick up desirable social abilities to cooperate, to share and to take turns. Play serves as an important function in social development. The child becomes socially acceptable to other children of the same sex and shows lack of dependence on adults. The child also, forms positive self-concept of social skills, and readiness for formal learning. Emotions play a vital role during the child's life. Through everyday experiences, children adapt to the existence of emotions. It has a profound influence on their effectiveness and happiness as a person. It prepares the young child learn, to appreciate the pleasurable aspects of emotions, and to cope with unpleasantness in a constructive manner and also contributes to the feeling of security and adequacy among the children.

The pre-school activities are organized for the interest of these children, and its ultimate value is determined by the contribution it makes to an aspect of child development. Hence the proposed research would attempt to study the programmes of activities organized and the manner in which they benefit young children of pre-primary classes in Dimapur.

1.4 OBJECTIVES:

- (1) To study, the pattern of development of pre-primary education in Dimapur, in a historical perspective.
- (2) To study, the facilities and programme of educational experiences provided in the pre-primary schools functioning in Dimapur, Nagaland.
- (3) To study, the influence of pre-primary education on the cognitive development of children in Dimapur, Nagaland.
- (4) To study, the influence of pre-primary education on the social development of children in Dimapur, Nagaland.
- (5) To study, the influence of pre-primary education on the emotional development of children in Dimapur, Nagaland.

1.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- (1) The present study will be confined to Dimapur town and the immediately adjoining rural areas and environs within, about 25 Kms.
- (2) For the sake of the present study, the pre-primary schools, nursery Montessori, kindergarten classes and Anganwadis, which have been in existence for sometime and are registered bodies alone were considered. It did not include crèches and pre-primary schools recently started by private bodies, which have not yet been recognized and other coaching centers etc.