REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Chapter-4

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

RESEARCH:

Research is a term which came into English from the old French root word - "Cerchier" meaning 'to search or seek' and Prefix "re"' means 'again'.

Research therefore means seeking again or intensive search with a view to becoming certain.

EDUCATION:

All kinds of activities which aim at developing the knowledge, moral values and understanding required in the work of life constitute what we mean by Education.

According to Dr. R.A. Sharma, managing curriculum, 2004; Ref No.(1) Education is the process of development, in which efforts are made for the allround development of a child. Education involves three process, Teaching, Training and Instruction. The learning experiences are provided with the help of the activities for bringing desirable behavioural change among children. The content is the means for organizing teaching activities.

Further it is written by Dr. R.A. Sharma; Teacher Training Technology, 2003; Ref. No(2)

Education: All kinds of activities which aim at developing the knowledge, moral values and understandings required in the work of life constitute what we mean be education.

The purpose of education is to develop well informed, well intensive and well equipped citizens of the society. And the purpose of education is to develop the human being not an individual alone. There are qualities of general nature as the sense, that are needed by everyone in respect of the job he is engaged in. There are qualities required by everyone to live a good life, well adjusted and harmonious life. These all qualities developed by education.
Education is a wider term that goes beyond the boundaries of one particular job. It also emphasizes knowledge, skill and attitude but these are of a general nature which may be useful in more than one job and also important from the point of view of the large community or society. Education emphasizes general, important and refinement in behaviour, development of a personality, development of a person who has interest in wider aspect of his environment. Education emphasizes development of knowledge, understanding, values and behaviours which are required in all works of life.

Training: The term 'training' has very limited boundary while 'education' is a very broad term under which many things come. This term is specially defined and explained in the glossary of training terms published in 1971 in London by the department of employment. In this glossary training has been defined as "Systematic development of attitude, knowledge, skill, behaviour patterns required by an individual in order to perform adequately a given job or task."

Knowledge: 'Bruner' in 'Instructional Technology' has defined the term as — "Knowledge consists of facts, concepts, terms, principles, theories, generalization, etc., which are useful for a teacher".

A teacher must have knowledge of his subject, methods and techniques of teaching and factors which affect teaching and knowledge of child psychology.

For training purpose it is necessary to know which part of knowledge is essential depending upon the nature of the job.

Therefore Training includes specific knowledge, Education and efficient performance of the job depends upon the training.

Difference between Training and Education

'Glaser, (1962) in his book 'Psychological Instructional Technology in Training, Research and Education' published by University of Pintsburg has pointed out that a distinction can be made in training and education on the basis of two criteria:

(a) The degree of specificity of objectives.
Minimising Vs. Maximising individual differences.

Training has more specific objectives and attempts to minimize individual difference while educational objectives are more general and it maximizes the individual differences. It means when people are educated the difference among them are increased and when they are trained differences are minimized.

**Difference between Education and Training**

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<th>Education</th>
<th>Training</th>
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<td>1. Education emphasized the activities which aim at developing the knowledge and moral values required in all walks of life rather than knowledge and skill relating to only a limited field of activities. Education is a process of developing integrated personality.</td>
<td>1. It emphasizes on development of specific knowledge, attitude, skills and behaviour patterns which an individual requires to perform a job adequately. These behaviour patterns differ from job to job. If we train a teacher we develop those skills which are needed to him to be a good teacher.</td>
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<td>2. The purpose of education is to provide the conditions essential for young persons and adults to develop an understanding of traditions and ideas influencing the society in which they live, others cultures and o the law of nature and to acquire linguistic and other skills which are basic to learning personal development and creativity.</td>
<td>2. The purpose of Training is to bring excellence in the specific job for which the individual is being trained. Training is concerned with people learning to perform tasks fairly specific and prescribed tasks, although there are exceptions where tasks are more opened as in management and supervision.</td>
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Difference in education and training exits more in the context in instructional activity than the actual methods used and objective sought. Nevertheless academically it is impossible to make clear distinction between training and education. Training is an aspect of education.

Curriculum:

The teaching structure is based on the format of the curriculum. The pivot of education is curriculum. The curriculum is based on the social philosophy which is a changing phenomenon.

Thus the meaning and format of curriculum is also changing according to need of the society as well as nation.

Meaning of curriculum:

An old concept of curriculum was to consider it as merely syllabus or an outline of courses of study.

The curriculum word is of Latin language. It means 'race course'. In education it means 'work field of student' or race course of the students. It consists of two words-race and course. The word 'course' means curriculum and race refers students experiences and activities. A teacher performs his teaching activities in view of curriculum.

The new concept of curriculum is very broad. It consists of the totality of experiences that a pupil receives through the manifold activities that go on in the school, in the classroom, library, laboratory, workshop and play-ground and in the numerous contacts between the teachers and the pupils. It is neither dogmatic nor rigid in its form and structure. It is neither uniform nor standardized to conform to a prescribed pattern. It is characterized by variety and flexibility and is tailored to the needs of the students at different age levels.

Definitions of curriculum:

The term 'Curriculum' has been defined by the scholars and educationists. Some the definitions have been provided here to understand the nature and characteristics of curriculum.
According to B. Rudyand and H. Henry

"Curriculum, in its broadest sense, includes the complete school environment, involving all the courses, activities, reading and associations furnished to the pupils in the school".

Curriculum include, physical, social and academic environments of a college.

Cunninghous has defined the curriculum operationally

"It (curriculum) is a tool in the hands of the artist (teacher) to mould his material (pupil) according to his ideal (objective) in his studio (school)".

According of Froebel

"Curriculum should be conceived as an epitome of the rounded whole of the knowledge and experience of the human race".

According to Munroe

"Curriculum includes all those activities which are utilized by the school to attain the aims of education".

Horne has defined the curriculum as follows

"Curriculum is that which is taught to the students. It is more than reading and writing. It includes practice, activities, industry, vocation and acquiring knowledge.

According to Caswell

"The curriculum is all that goes in the lives of children, their parents and teachers. The curriculum is made up everything that surrounds the learner in all his working hours. In fact the curriculum has been described as the environment in motion."

The Secondary Education Commission

"Curriculum does not mean the academic subject taught in the school but it includes total experience that a child receives at a school."

John F. Kerr has defined curriculum
"All the learning which is planned or guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school, is known as curriculum."

**Taylor has defined Curriculum**

"The curriculum consists of content, teaching methods and purpose may be in its rough and ready may be a sufficient definition with which to start. These three dimensions interacting are operational curriculum."

Philip H. Taylor has defined curriculum operationally. He has indicated three dimensions of curriculum – content, teaching method and purpose.

Paul Hirst has given a comprehensive definition of the term curriculum.

"A programme of activities designed so that pupils will attain, as for as possible, certain education ends or objectives is known as the curriculum."

**Characteristics of Curriculum :**

The above definitions indicate the following characteristics of concept of curriculum.

1. Curriculum is tool in the hands of the teacher. Which is used to realize the objectives.
2. It is pivot around it whole human knowledge concentrates.
3. It includes those activities which are used by the school to attain the purpose of education.
4. It is more than teaching and learning and includes practice, activities, industry vocation and acquiring knowledge.
5. The curriculum is made up everything that surrounds the learner in all his working terms.
6. It has been described as the environment in motion (physical, social and psychological).
7. Curriculum includes total learning experience that a child receives at a school.
8. All the learning inside or outside the school which is planned and guided by the curriculum.

9. It includes content method of teaching and purpose of education.

10. A programme of activities designed to realize the objectives is know as curriculum.

Differences between curriculum and syllabus or courses of study:

A syllabus or courses of study, which related to different subjects only, indicate the frame work and amount of knowledge and facts which will be imparted to pupils of different age levels. The modern concept of curriculum explains that curriculum is a wider and broader term. The emphasis is on the child and the primary considerations is to develop his personality to the fullest. Courses of study are thus a part of the curriculum. We should never think syllabus, and courses of study and curriculum as synonymous terms. Curriculum embraces, besides academic courses, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities of the pupils, community relationships, work experiences of the pupils, and the study of their growing needs and their planning, co-ordinating and executing of diverse measures and means to satisfy those wants, giving them as high a sense of achievement as possible.

According to Caswell "The curriculum is all that goes on the lives of the children, their parents and their teachers. The curriculum is made up of everything that surrounds the learner in all his working hours in fact, the curriculum has been described as "the environment in motion".

In India there is not a planned and conceived curriculum in its broad sense. Curriculum and syllabus have always been taken to be synonymous terms. This has naturally circumscribed the scope and content of education the emphasis has subsequently been on imparting factual knowledge pertaining to different subjects. The courses of study prescribed hardly pay and attention to foster among children right attitudes and behaviour patterns, which may give students social efficiency to live fuller and more gainful lives.
Scope of curriculum:

Curriculum is, therefore, very comprehensive in its scope. It touches all aspects of the life of the pupils – the needs and interests of pupils, environment which should be educationally congenial to them, ways and manners in which their interests can be handled and warmed up, the procedures and approaches which cause effective learning among them, the social efficiency of the individuals and how they fit in with the community around. It is intimately related with the individual as a member of the society. It embodies the educational philosophy, the values which it aims to achieve, the purposes it wants philosophy, the values which it aims to achieve, the purposes it wants to realize and the specific goals that it wants to achieve. The emphasis is on the child. In the total education of the child, all the subjects like history, geography, science and language are but tools. They are the means, and therefore, the children must not be made to fit in such of study.

Curriculum Development:

This concept is usually written and spoken as "curriculum development" the term curriculum is considered as incomplete. Curriculum development means a continues process or never ending process. It is difficult to trace out to origin. The out come of teaching is known through students achievement its learning. The assessment of objectives are done on the basis of change of behaviour of the learners.

The learning experiences are provided the desirable change of behaviour of the pupils which are evaluated with help of examination.

Therefore, the term is known as 'curriculum development'. The main focus of the curriculum is to develop the students. The curriculum is designed to realize the objectives in terms of change of behaviours. Therefore it is cyclic process-

1. Teaching objectives
2. Method of teaching
3. Examination or testing and
4. Feedback. These elements have been described in brief.
1. **Teaching Objectives** – Three type of teaching objectives cognitive, affective and psychomotor are identified in view of subject content to be taught. These objectives are written in behavioural terms. All learning experiences are organized to achieve these objectives.

2. **Methods of Teaching** – The most important aspect for providing learning experiences is the teaching strategies. The objectives are realized in terms of behavioural changes of the learners. The content is the means to select the method of teaching and level of the pupils.

3. **Process of Evaluation** – The evaluation of change of behaviour is done to ascertain about the realization of the teaching learning objectives. The level of pupils performance indicates the effectiveness of method of teaching and learning experiences.

4. **Feedback** – The interpretation of performance provides the teacher to improve and modify the form of the curriculum. The curriculum is developed and teaching objectives are also revised. The methodology of teaching is changed in view of the curriculum and objectives are to be achieved.

**Objectives of Curriculum Development**:

There are three components of educational process teacher, students and curriculum. It has three types of objectives, cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Educational process involves three major activities teaching training and instruction. According to B.S. Bloom it is considered as tripolar process – (1) Educational process (2) Learning experiences and (3) Change of behaviour. It is also a cyclic process, shown with the help of the following diagram.

The teaching process is done through interaction between teacher and students in view of the curriculum or course of content. Thus, the curriculum is basis for the interaction between teacher and taught. The following are the major objectives of curriculum development.

1. Curriculum provides the means for the all-round development of a child. Teaching is organized with the help of curriculum.
2. Curriculum involves the human experiences, culture and civilization which is to be transferred to new generation.

3. Curriculum is the means to develop the moral character, discipline, honesty, cooperation, friendship, tolerance and sympathy with others.

4. It helps in developing the ability of thinking, wisdom, reasoning, judgement and other mental abilities.

5. It considers the stages of growth and development of child for development attitude, interest, values and creative ability.

6. It provides the awareness and understanding of physical and social environment and its components.

7. Curriculum develops the right type of feelings and beliefs towards religions, new values and traditions.

8. It helps to develop democratic feeling and democratic way of life among students.

9. It integrates the knowledge of various teaching subjects in view of their future life.

10. It determines the mode of interaction between teacher and students in school. The mode of teaching is also decided by the nature of curriculum.

In points Curriculum Development is :-

1. It is specific or narrow concept of curriculum.

2. Curriculum development is a cyclic process which is used for improving and modifying the courses at particular state or level.

3. It is a cyclic process, uses the following four steps.
   a) Objectives
   b) Instrumental methods
   c) Evaluation and
   d) Feedback

4. It is used for specific course for specific stage. Relatively its easy and simple task.
5. Curriculum development is done by board of studies. The new courses and content are also included in revised curriculum. On the basis of try out the new courses.

6. It is continues process i.e. practical aspect of curriculum.

**Research In Curriculum**

Ever since Independence, India has been making progress in the different are as of life. In the field of education different commissions and committees were set up to improve upon the affairs. Research studies have also been conducted to renovate the system of education. But much needs to be done. A sort of revolutionary upheaval is required. Though about five decade of years have lapsed but still we are not upto the mark as far as school curriculum and text-books are concerned. We have still rigidity dominating the curriculum.

The curriculum development in India is not based on empirical research findings. Undoubtedly in free India, the need for a central agency to undertake research in the area of curriculum was felt. The National Institute of Basic Education did some research work in the curriculum of basic schools. The all India council for Secondary Education tried to develop a new curriculum at the secondary stage. It gave a model syllabus for higher secondary education. The Central Bureau of Text-book Research was established to undertake research in the area of text-books. It developed criteria for evaluation of text books. But no programme of long term research in curriculum is made by any of these institutions. Research in the areas of curriculum and text book was almost absent.

The establishment of National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) gave impetus : research in curriculum. The Central Bureau of Text-book Research and National Institute of Basic Education were merge with it. Soon in the NCERT, the Department of Curriculum, Methods and Text-book was established. The recent nation wide move for implementing the scheme for uniform educational structure (10+2+3) made this need all the more urgent. That is why the **Director, NCERT**
expressed in 'Curriculum for the Ten year School – An Approach Paper (1975): "The necessity of evolving a national consensus on a new curriculum is manifest. It is accepted all round that the curriculum, by way of its objectives, content and methodology, has to serve the current and emerging needs of the Indian Society and the citizen, and these also need to be spelled out so that the ideas may be translated into action". A few studies were carried out about allocation of time to various subjects at school stage, improving the methods of teaching and developing new text-books. The Department of Science in NCERT took up a research project to develop a new curriculum for science at the middle school stage and development of science curriculum at the primary stage with the assistance of UNICEF. The NCERT gave a model approach to curriculum development to all agencies concerned with research in curriculum in the country. During 1960's, State Boards of School Text-books came in existence with the efforts of 1960's., State Boards of School Text-books came in existence with the efforts of Ministry of Education. Each Board accepted curriculum and text-book research as one of its objective.

Research in curriculum and instruction is becoming more and more important day by day. The simple reason being it is that the school curriculum is in a state of continuous change all over the world today. It may be the situation of an advanced country or the advancing one, the school-curriculum is said to be lagging being in many respects. In our country, this area of working needs special attention of the researchers. In our country, this area of working needs special attention of the researchers. The research guides, the authorities responsible for the preparation and provision of curriculum for the schools need to be reoriented for doing their jobs in some better ways.

Out of the studies conducted so far in this area, very few of them have gone deep into the problems of general curriculum development. Very little has been done on knowledge subjects like Science, History, Geography, Social Studies etc. There is need of developing a scientific
curriculum. In the development of such a curriculum, needs, individual differences, growth and development of the child, classroom interaction, social structure etc. need be specially cared for. Some comprehensive research projects which are of long term nature need to taken up by terms of research workers. Fundamental research should be emphasized and executed to provide empirical foundations to curricular changes. The areas for research may be:

(i) bases of curriculum,
(ii) components of curriculum in different subject areas,
(iii) growth of curriculum.
(iv) Barriers to curriculum change,
(v) Case studies of specific problems in relation to particular subject field
(vi) Analytical studies on Indian languages,
(vii) Teaching of reading and writing skills and
(viii) Teacher involvement in curricular change etc. In the area of text-books, there may be content analysis of text books at different levels. Text-book writing, editing and publication of text-books require exploration and sustained research. Research in the area of vocabulary will prove all the more beneficial for writer of text-books.

**Researches conducted in the Area of Curriculum:**

A few researches conducted in the area of curriculum are summarized a head in chronological order:

* S.R. Gothiverekar worked on the secondary School Curriculum in the Province of Bombay (A critical Analysis and examination of its Basis, Present structure and Future Reconstruction) for Ph.D education Bombay University 1947. The main conclusions were:

(1) During to political pressure, there is undue dominance of the English language since the advent of the British rule to the present day.
(2) The undue importance given to the English language and to the matriculation examination have narrowed the purpose of secondary education.

(3) Such subjects as drawing, art, craft, music, physical education, religious-cum-moral instruction are neglected.

(4) Due attention is not paid to practical and vocational education.

(5) Undue emphasis is laid on English medium, consequently the mother tongue and the Indian languages are neglected.

In 1957, S.L. Chaturvedi was awarded Ph.D. on the topic 'Craft as an Education Medium in Elementary Schools'. Some of the observations were as follows:

Craft occupies an important place in the education of the child and teaches the dignity of labour. It helps in maintaining continuity between home and school life. Physical activity provides for the healthy growth of mind etc.

E.A. Pires and K. Katyal of C.I.E., New Delhi worked on 'Building up a Social Studies curriculum for the CIE Basic School' in 1957. The purposes of the study were:

(1) To develop a social studies curriculum suitable for junior basic classes;

(2) To demonstrate how Basic School teachers can and should develop their own curriculum; and

(3) To show how current events can be woven into the social studies curriculum at junior Basic stage.

In 1968, K.S. Pillai did research for Ph.D. Education at Kerala. U. on the topic "An Investigation into the changes in the content and scope of the Primary and Secondary School Curriculum in Kerala during the last thirty years (since 1934)" with a view to ascertaining how far these have been helpful to the raising of standards.
In 1972, **M.G. Chaturvedi and B.V. Mohale** (NCERT, New Delhi) worked on the project *A study of the Position of Language in School Curriculum in India*. The main purpose of the study was to assess the position with regard to the study of different languages, at different stages of school education, in the states and Union territories of India.

In 1972, **S. Rajagopalan** worked on the topic *A Critical Study of the English Curriculum at the Primary and Secondary Stages of Education in the Madras State (Tamil Nadu)* for Ph.D Education from Anna. U. The main objectives of the study were: in the light of present position of English in Tamil Nadu to examine and identify inadequacies in respect of objectives of teaching English. Present English syllabus, text-books used, audio visual aids available, methods of instruction followed, organization of English curriculum and the administrative barriers in implementing it, the evaluation procedures utilized, and to suggest remedial measures in all respects.

**T. Ghosal for Ph.D Education (1973)** from Cal. U. worked on *"An inquiry into the Curricular Trend in the Secondary Schools of India during the British Rule"* (A Comparative Study).

The objectives of the study were:

(i) To test validity of the educational system of the country which had always been to some extent, the microcosm of the larger social system; and

(ii) To analyse the curricular trends in secondary education in India in context with the developments in English.

**P.K. Gupta** worked on *"A Critical Analysis of the Elementary School Curriculum in NEFA (Arunanchal)"* with suggestion for improvement for Ph.D. Education from Gau. U. in 1973. The objectives of the study were:

(i) To analyse the elementary or junior school curriculum in NEFA on the basis of an examination of its socioeconomic and cultural conditions; and

(ii) To offer suggestions for improvement.
G.B. Shukla was awarded Ph.D. in Education by Gujrat Vidyapeeth on the topic 'A Critical Study of curriculum development at the stage of elementary education in the state of Gujarat : 1940-1970. In this study, the investigator highlighted the major effects of primary school curriculum – lack of practical knowledge, inadequate arithmetic in the lower classes, emphasis on information rather than understanding, a heavy load of subject matter, absence of moral education, devoid of flexibility etc.

In 1979, A.P. Thakkar Got Ph.D. degree in education from Bom. U. on the topic 'Curriculum in Pre-School Education. A few objectives of the investigation were:

(1) To seek a rationale for a pre-school curriculum.
(2) To study the existing philosophies, methods and practices in the field.
(3) To carry out an initial explorating survey of the pre-school curriculum in Bombay to elicit the awareness of a cognitive base to the curriculum in the schools.

Need for further Research:

A probe into the teaching as it is being carried out in the schools will bring to light the drawbacks. Naturally something better to overcome the lacunae will be thought of and suggested.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) brochuer has laid down the following objectives of Teacher Education at Pre-Primary stage:

1. Acquires theoretical and Practical knowledge of childhood education.
2. Understands the major principles of growth and development of children.
3. Applies theoretical and practical knowledge to education of the children in Indian context-rural, urban and industrial.
4. Develops understandings, skills, attitudes and interests which will enable him to foster allround growth and development of the children under his care.

5. Develops skills to help in the physical and emotional health of the children by providing a conductive environment.

6. Develops communication skills such as story telling explaining situation, etc.

7. Develops skills to provides a experiences through organizing rhythmic grammatic experiences, creative.

8. Develops skills to provide visual aids with the help to waste of indegeneous material.

9. Understands the home environment of the child and develops amicable home school relationship.

10. Understands the role of the school and the teacher in changing the society.

**Objectives of Teacher Education at Pre Primary Stage:**

It has been assumed that teacher who will be educated in the Pre-Primary Teacher institution will generally teach children between 0-6 years of age.

This age group is considered psychologically to be the most important formulated years of an individual's life span.

Frud believed that foundations of personality of an individual are made in the first five years of his age. This being so, teacher at pre-primary level need to be the best equipped in terms of his/her ability to help in laying down strong foundation for a normal human personality and also the competencies which may enable him to actualize an individual's inherent potentials.

However, little care in the country till date has been made in designing a teacher education curriculum which may develop knowledge, skills and attitudes among the prospective teachers to help in the
personality building process as well as in naturalization of young children's potentials.

In the review of Literature many characteristics of different existing syllabi of NTT/ECCE/B.Ed. as well as the things for which measures has been taken are found.

It is necessary to operationally define the term early childhood care and development service.

A well accepted definition of ECCE refers to services meant for age group of birth to six years or conception to six years. This is based on the holistic approach to development and includes services in the areas of health, nutrition, stimulation and education.

By and large these services are center based in an institutional set up and include component of material care and capacity building of mothers and other care, giver such as family members and community.

The goal of early childhood education is all round development of child. Each child should live a happy childhood, reach her of his potential and become a happy, fully functioning adult.

Each child is helped to reach and appropriate level of development through organized and planned experience.

The goals kept in mind while planning the programmes, selection of equipment and materials and providing guidance to children.

The teacher or grassroots worker make special efforts to work with those children whose home background has disadvantages i.e. lack of stimulation, non availability of learning material such as toys, books etc. and inability of parents to meet needs of their holistic development.

Due to urbanization, people are moving to cities, hence, the living space is becoming limited day by day. There is hardly any space for a child to move about, run and play at home.

There is no scope at all for the child to investigate and experiment around.
E – centers provide more space and enriching environment for free movement and proper play equipments.

Children love to play with other children, which they may not get at home in a pre school, a child gets the opportunity of playing with other children and thus learn to share, wait for his turn and co-operative with others.

**National Policies and ECCE :**

The NPE 1986 (National Policy of Education) and the subsequent Ramamurti Committee Report (1990) and programme of Action (1992) have considered ECCE as the care and education of children from birth to six years. Realizing the crucial importance of early childhood years as a period of rapid physical and mental growth, the policy has laid great emphasis or ECCE programmes 'as an important input in the strategy of human resource and development, a feeder and support programme for primary education and a support service for working women of the disadvantaged section'.

The policy has laid due emphasis on the full integration of pre primary education with primary education.

**Objectives of Pre Primary Education listed be NPE 1986 are as follows :**

1. Development of Good physique which includes development of motor skills and development and co-ordination of the muscles.
2. Training in hygiene and healthy habit such as dressing, toilet habit, eating, washing, cleaning etc.
3. Learning to share things with others and wait for one's turn.
4. Learning desirable social manners and etiquettes.
5. Learning to express, understand and control one's feelings.
6. Stimulating the child's curiosity about his environment and satisfying it.
7. Learning concepts relating to numbers.
8. Expanding knowledge through self activity.
11. Developing vocabulary, developing concepts of right and wrong.
12. Developing interests in picture, magazines and books.
13. Developing appreciation of beauty in the environment i.e. flowers, birds, butterflies, pictures, music, dance etc.
15. Encouraging children to participate in conversational activities.
16. To arouse intellectual curiosity.

The planning commission of India in their sixth five year plan states, "...The pre-school years of the child is the period of its maximum learning and intellectual development and hence of gross potential educational significance.

Impact of ECCE: Research Evidence:

A large number of studies on the significance of the pre-school education for the development of the child have been conducted. ECE contributes to the universalization of elementary education.

It provides school readiness programme to the child i.e. it prepares him with the necessary concepts, language and physical skills for the later learning of reading, writing and mathematics in primary grades.


The learning readiness of the children with pre-primary education was found to be certainly better than those without pre-primary education at class I level (Asi, Sujeet K. 1989).

The tremendous wastage and stagnation that are seen in class I & II in schools can be reduced & avoided if the children who join these classes are prepared in advance for formal schooling.
A child who has had pre school experience before joining the primary school adjust himself easily.

Better emotional control, behaviour management, getting along with other children, following & routine programme, learning to sit and concentrate on an activity for a period of time widening of the attention span, etc.

All these skills and competencies help in adjustment in first few years of primary school. This is to some extent, leads to reduction in the dropouts and failures at the primary level.

In a research conducted by (Kaul Vanita, Ramachandran, Chitra and Upadhyay G.C., 1992) Children with ECE experience were found to have better retention rate in comparison to children who had direct entry in schools.

Retention in primary grades was greater for girls as compared to boys.

(Add more research studies-Evaluation of ICDS, NIPCCO 1992, 1997 and impact of pre-school education. (Baroda, Neelam Sood).

Early stimulation & Educational enrichment can promote creativity in young children. It was felt that early educational intervention of providing stimulation & instruction providing pre school would make a difference in the children's pre-school experience.

**ECCE in India : Present Scenario :**

There are many agencies which manage the pre school education in India. The private sector in India is in the form of individual person, private bodies, twist voluntary organizations etc have played a significant role for the spread of pre-school education.

There are several national level organizations working in the field of pre school education including managing, controlling and evaluating the standard of it. e.g. Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), National council of educational research and training (NCERT) etc.
Various programme of ECCE being implemented in the country at present are as follows –

- Anganwadi centers under centrally sponsored scheme of Integrated Child Development Services. (ICDS)
- Balwadies run by state govt./local bodies.
- ECCE center run under the grant in scheme of the Department of Women and Child Development, MHRD.
- Nursery Schools/ECCE centers run by state government as part of School education.
- Day care centers/ crèches under central social welfare board.

Among all the above programmes, ICDS is the major programme having the largest out reach and coverage of early childhood care and Educational services for children in the age group 0-6 years.

- The Anganwadi
- The Balwadier
- Nursery Schools
- The crèches
- Day Care Centers

Concept of ECE:

The term Early childhood education is very comprehensive. It encompasses all aspects related to or affecting a child. Focus of ECE Programme is mainly upon 3 to 6 years, who are in pre-school.

This programme was launched in Sixth Plan as a distinct strategy to reduce drop out rate and the rate of retention of children in school.

Under the National Policy of Education, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has been accorded priority.

ECCE programmes include component of health, nutrition and pre-school Education for ensuring all round development of the child.

The policy has emphasized that all ECE programmes should be transacted through the play and activity approach. It has also cautioned
against the dangers of using formal methods of teaching and introduction of the 3 R's at this early stage.

Along the lines suggested in the national policy, ECE programme is a child-centered programme, which follows the play way and activity approach. It is a programme with a focus on the holistic development of the child. It is one of the best ways to assure the child a smooth transition in to primary school, i.e. it prepares children for the primary grades. It lays foundation for the development of needing, writing and number work.

ECE programme is a programme, which provides a stimulating play environment for intellectual, language, social, emotional and physical development of child. All together, it is a programme which indirectly promotes self-control and thereby, inner discipline in children.

Internationally the term 'Early Child Care & Development (ECCD)' is used in the area of early childhood, to bring all round development in children.

It refers not only to what is happening with in the child, but also to the care the child requires in order to thrive. For a child to develop and learn in a healthy and normal way. It is important not only to meet the basic needs for protection, food and health care, but also to meet the basic needs for interaction, stimulation, affection, security and learning through exploration and discovery.

However ECE is a very broad concept, it is concerned with the holistic development of children, it is involves many people including family, community members and policy makers.

It forms an important component of integrated development work, which has a permanent place on the agendas of government, international, intergovernmental organization and NGO's.

Concept, Goals and Objectives of ECE:

The early years of a child's life are formative years for his/her overall development. The quality of experiences provided to the child during these years have a direct impact on child's health, nutrition,
behaviour and social interactions in later life. In our country, organized education of the child below primary school age did not, until very recently, receive the attention it deserved. Children were generally brought up in a joint family system where they felt secured and loved. Today with the changing social conditions in our country, families are shifting from the traditional joint family system to nuclear forms. Large numbers of mothers are going out to work to supplement the family income. Young children do not often get the benefit of a stimulating, secure and protected environment at home. In order to overcome this deprivation at home, pre-school education or Early Childhood Education (ECE) programme play very important role. It provides a link between the home and the formal primary schooling.

Concept of ECE:

The term 'Early Childhood Education' is very comprehensive. It encompasses all aspects related to or affecting a child. Focus of ECE programme is mainly upon 3 to 6 years olds, who are in pre-school. This programme was launched in sixth plan as a distinct strategy to reduce dropout rate and rate of retention of children in school. Under the National Policy on Education, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has been accorded priority. ECCE programmes include component of health, nutrition and pre-school education, for ensuring all round development of the child. The policy has emphasized that all ECE programmes should be transacted through the play and activity approach. It has also cautioned against the dangers of using formal methods of teaching and introduction of the 3 R's at this early stage.

Along the lines suggested in the national policy, ECE programme is a child-centered programme, which follows the play way and activity approach. It is a programme with a focus on the holistic development of the child. It is one of the best ways to assure the child a smooth transition in to primary school, i.e. it prepares children for the primary grades. It lays foundation for the development of needing, writing and number work. ECE programme is a programme, which provides a stimulating
play environment for intellectual, language, social, emotional and physical development of child. All together, it is a programme which indirectly promotes self-control and thereby, inner discipline in children.

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However ECE is a very broad concept, it is concerned with the holistic development of children, it is involves many people including family, community members and policy makers. It forms an important component of integrated development work, which has a permanent place on the agendas of government, international, intergovernmental organization and NGO's.

**Goals and Objectives of ECE:**

The goal of Early Childhood Education is development of the whole child. Each child should live a happy childhood, reach his or her potential, and become a happy, fully functioning adult. Each child is helped to reach an appropriate level of independence. This goal is always in teachers mind when planning the program, equipment, materials and guidance for children and is remembered when deciding whether or not and how much to help with boots or zippers. The objective is to help each child learn to do things of him or herself, and to make decisions and choices. Form a typical pattern of self-centered affection; children will grow in ability to give and share affection with others, their age and with adults both within and outside the family. The teacher makes special plans for working with those children whose home backgrounds have not fostered feeling of love and security, and for working with their parents,
in hopes of changing some of the negative aspects of the early experiences.

ECE aims at developing self-control. It helps each child to become self-disciplined, self-guided or self-directed. Experience in making judgements and decisions is provided in order that children will become confident that they can make decisions when the adults are not nearby. During these early years child is helped in developing a positive feeling about their relationship to the world. The basic purpose of ECE is to provide a suitable environment and useful experiences for the physical, mental, emotional and social development of children form 3 to 6 years of age.

It aims at holistic education for fuller and richer development of the personality of the child. 3 R's are clearly prohibited at the pre-primary stage, almost everywhere that is being done in the pre-primary (Nr, KG) classes. It is to be discouraged. The ECE programme is to help children prepare for primary school through activities, play-way methods, language games, number games and group activities directed to promote socialization and environmental awareness. Perception, pleasure and a participation are to be emphasized. No formal teaching of subject or reading and writing are to be taken at this stage. Through this program each child is helped to reach an appropriate level of independence. Ability to give and share affection with others in fostered in totality we can say that all round development of the child is the main goal of ECE.

It provides stimulating environment to the child, prepares children for school, helps in enrolment and retention of child in primary school reduces wastage and stagnation at primary level. ECE is a potent factor for social justice and equity as it gives opportunities to children belonging to SC, ST and with special needs. At the same time ensures their completion of primary education. In other ECE lays foundation for Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) acknowledges the needs and significance of programme of ECCE for achieving the goal UEE. The NPE 1986 and the PAO 1992 (31)
have laid due emphasis on the full integration of pre-primary education with primary education. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2000 (NCERT) stresses upon two years of pre-schooling for every child. ECE is a need-based programme. Hence its focus is on the individual child's need, growth and development. The broad objectives of this programme, as described in the report of the Education Commission (1964-66) are —

1. To develop in the child a good physique, adequate muscular coordination and basic motor skills.

2. To develop in the child good health habits and to build up basic skills necessary for personal adjustment, such as dressing, toilet habits, eating, washing, cleaning etc.

3. To develop social attitudes and manners, to encourage healthy group participation and making the child sensitive to the rights and privilege of being a member of a social group, to encourage him to cooperate, share and take of the property belonging to him as well as others.

4. To develop emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control his feelings and emotions.

5. To encourage aesthetic appreciation in the child.

6. To stimulate in the child the beginning of intellectual curiosity concerning his immediate environment (awareness of environment), to help him understand the whole world in which he lives and to foster new interests through opportunities to explore, investigate and explore, investigate and experiment.

7. To encourage in the child independence and creativity by providing him with sufficient opportunities for self-expression.

8. To develop in the child the ability to express his thoughts and feelings in fluent, correct and clear speech.

The NPE 1986 and the subsequent Ramamurti Committee Report (1990) and programme of Action (1992) have considered HCCF as the care and education of children from birth to six years. Realizing the
crucial importance of early childhood years as a period of rapid physical and mental growth, the policy has laid great emphasis or ECCE programmes "as an important input in the strategy of human resource and development, a feeder and support programme for primary education and a support service for working women of the disadvantaged section".

Objective of Pre Primary Education listed be NPE 1986 are as follows:

1. Development of Good physique which includes development of motor skills and development and co-ordination of the muscles.
2. Training in hygiene and healthy habit such as dressing, toilet habit, eating, washing, cleaning etc.
3. Learning to share things with others and wait for one's turn.
4. Learning desirable social manners and etiquettes.
5. Learning to express, understand and control one's feelings.
6. Stimulating the child's curiosity about his environment and satisfying it.
7. Learning concepts relating to numbers.
8. Expanding knowledge through self activity.
11. Developing vocabulary, developing concepts of right and wrong.
12. Developing interests in picture, magazines and books.
13. Developing appreciation of beauty in the environment i.e. flowers, birds butterflies, pictures, music dance etc.
14. Developing school readiness, encouraging creating expressions, developing self reliance.
15. Encouraging children to particular in conversational activities.
16. To arouse intellectual curiosity.

Benefits of ECE:

Education is to contribute to the fullest development of the human personality, peace and human rights. The children of today need to be
prepared for the vastly complex and rapidly changing world of tomorrow. This calls for an integrated and meaningful educational programme. The planning commission of India in their Sixth Five Year Plan states "...The pre-school years of the child is the period of its maximum learning and intellectual development and hence of gross potential educational significance". The Indian Association for Pre-school Education (1972) in a National Seminar on integrated approach to pre-school children had urged that investment in human resource development must begin during the early years. Hence, the early childhood education is of greater benefit. The pre-school age is the most impressionable age in one's life. Whatever is learnt at this age gets so deeply embedded in a child that it becomes difficult to change later on. ECE programme fosters in children the natural need for discovery and curiosity, their desire to learn forms the basis of life long learning. Such interest is asset that stays with the for the rest for their lives and helps them to do better in later life. The early year are formative years for his/her overall development.

The rate of growth and development during pre-school age is rapid that the child is able to take in almost anything if it is given to him in a form in which he can understand it. The more experience/exposure we give the child at this age, richer is the divident. ECE programme provides stimulating environment to the children. Children of illiterate parents, working mothers, breakup of tradition joint family system, poor families, under-privileged section do not often get the benefit of stimulating environment. ECE programme provides material comforts and facilities e.g. toys, books, play facilities etc. to such children. If a child is brought up in this kind of a deprived environment in first six years of life, it is likely to have adverse effects on his development, particularly his intellectual and language development. It is unfortunate that a large majority of children in our country grow up in such environment.

Early childhood Education is very important in this context. An ECE programme provides children with stimulating experiences for cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional development. If
organized effectively, an ECE programme can compensate for the deprivation at the home front and can help the child build a strong foundation, which would later facilitate the development of his potential. Prof. R. Muralidharan conducted a large number of studies on the significance of the pre-school education for the development of the child. The benefits of Nursery School education have been discussed by Muralidharan, R. (1969) in her book titled 'A Guide for Nursery School Teachers'.

ECE programme is a social necessity. Due to economic pressure, spread of women's education and social duties, many mothers are away from the home during the daytime for career and may be to supplement the family income. Also as a result of urbanization joint families are breaking up and it is a problem for working mothers to leave their children at home and go out to work. ECE center is a place where children can be looked after properly.

ECE contributes to the universalization of elementary education. It provides school readiness programme to the child i.e. it prepares him with the necessary concepts, language and physical skills for the later learning of reading, writing and mathematics in primary grades. Early childhood education prepares a sound base for formal education (Saxena, 1971, Deenamal, 1978). Pre-primary education contributes for better adjustment in school. The learning readiness of the children with pre-primary education contributes for better adjustment in school. The learning readiness of the children with pre-primary education was found to be certainly better than of those without pre-primary education at class I level (Asi, Surjeet K. 1989).

The tremendous wastage and stagnation that are seen in class I and II in schools can be reduced and avoided if the children who join these classes are prepared in advance for formal schooling. A child who has had pre-school experience before joining the primary school adjust himself easily. Better emotional control, behaviour management, getting along with other children, following a routine programme, learning to sit...
and concentrate on an activity for a period of time, widening of the attention span, etc. all these skills and competencies help in adjustment in first few years of primary school. This, to some extent, leads to reduction in the dropouts and failures at the primary level. In a research conducted by (Kaul, Vanita, Ramachandran, Chitra and Upadhyaya, G.C. 1992) children with ECE experience were found to have a better retention rate in comparison to children who had direct entry in school. Retention in primary grades was greater for girls as compared to boys.

Since the younger children come to the ECE center, the older sisters are freed from the chores of minding the young ones and therefore, attend regular school, indirectly, early childhood education also has a positive impact on the enrolment of girls. Girls give birth to the next generation they grow into women. When parents see the benefits of ECE activities for their daughters, they allow them to continue with their education which otherwise is not in some cultures. Seeing girls having access to learning opportunities, boys become aware at an early age that girls have a right to learn and other opportunities too. ECE can also reduce inequality in society by giving children from disadvantaged backgrounds a chance in life and in school.

With urbanization and industrialization, people are moving to cities, hence the living space is becoming limited day by day. There is hardly any space for a child to move about, run and play at home. There is no scope at all for the child to investigate and experiment around. ECE centers provide more space and enriching environment for free movement and proper play equipments. Children love to play with other children, which they may not get at home. In a pre-school, a child gets the opportunity of playing with other children and thus learn to share, wait for his turn and co-operate with others. Since in India, majority of mothers are uneducated, are unable to guide their children properly, the home environment may not be fully satisfying and challenging for the optimum growth and development of children, in this case, at least pre-school teachers are better trained, equipped and experienced enough in
guiding and providing better environment to the young children once they are at pre-school.

Early stimulation and educational enrichment can promote creativity in young children. It was felt that early educational intervention of providing stimulation and instruction during pre-school years would make a difference in the children's pre-school experiences.

**Existing Condition of Pre-school Education in India**

There are many agencies, which manage the pre-school education in India. The private sector in India is in the form of individual person, private bodies, trust voluntary organizations etc., have played a significant role for the spread of pre-school education.

There are several national level organizations working in the field of pre-school education including managing, controlling and evaluating the standard of it eg. Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) etc. Anganwadi centers are run under centrally sponsored scheme of integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), Balwadies are run by State Government Local bodies, ECCE center are also run under the grantining air scheme of the Department of Women and Child Development MHRD, Nursery Schools are run by state Government. Private bodies, Day Care Center creches are run under Central Social Welfare Board. Among all the above programmes, ICDS is the major programme having the largest out reach and coverage of early childhood care and education services for children in the age group 0-6 years.

**pre-school education is very important from the point of view of improving the social mil** at macro level and the quality of life at a micro level. Unfortunately, pre-school education in India is a neglected chapter. There is a good deal of confusion in India regarding programmes in pre-schools. A large number of pres-schools, particulary in urban and semi urban areas, operate as downward extensions of primary schools, making children sit in well-formed rows and teaching them to read, write and count. This amy be because of parents pressure and partyy due to the
expectation of this primary schools that the pres-schools develop formal
skills of reading and writing before the children enter class one.
only 5% of the population in the age group of 3 to 6 years is being offered
early childhood education. These are mainly from the better socio-
economic strata of the society. Parents want the best for their children
especially in the urban areas. They want to be sure that their children are
educated efficiently in good schools. Anxious and varied parents,
influenced by mass media and peer believe that sooner the children begin
learning academics, the more successful their school life and their future
life experiences will be for this, parents try to get their children admitted
to different preparatory schools. this has led to a mushroom growth of
preparatory schools.
The whole idea of pre-schools was to provide the child with an informal
setting where he could learn through play. It was intended that such
methods of learning would continue into class one and two where the
damaging pressures to learn the, three R's reading, writing and arithmetic
are being done away. Experts and educationalists have called for a
drastic cut in the pressure of education on young children. Joys of
learning through pre-schools in India need to spread faster and wider.
This is only possible through good pre-schools, which prepare happy
child. However it is the duty and responsibility of each of us to provide
necessary assistance and support for the welfare of the young children of
our country considering the social, economic, cultural context into
account.

School education scenario:

An important feature of educational development in India during
the post several decades has been the sustained effort to evolve a national
system of education. It was Sri Aurobindo who first of all in the year 1910
Visualised A National of Education. It's major emphasis was on the
nature and power of human mind, the nature of simultaneous and
successive teaching and training of mental and logical faculty.
Ghandhiji's Bunyadi Taleem (Basic Education) as envisaged in the Wardha scheme was another powerful indigenous model rooted firmly in the Indian soil.

The curriculum developed under this scheme aimed at the total development of the child, reflecting the Gandhian Philosophy of education, i.e. the development of Body, Mind & Spirit. The fact that India could not implement it as a national curriculum indicated the magnitude and complexity of the problems involved in changing the established structure of education and the existing pattern of curriculum.

School education in post-independent India passed through different phases soon after independence, the recommendation for improving the quality of school education.

In 1964-66 the education commission was set up which brought out a more comprehensive document on education covering all stages and aspects of education as a whole. This was a major landmark, in the history of the modern education system in India.

Several recommendations of this commission formed the basis for the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1968 the acceptance of a common School structure i.e. 10+2 and a common scheme of student as a part of general education for 10 years of school throughout the country were important steps towards improvement in the schools system.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION AND ITS VOVERAGE:
ECCE deals with care and education of children from 0-6 years. It is further sub-divided into two parts:

(a) 0-6 years- Early stimulation programmes through creches/home stimulation.
(b) 3-6 years- pre school/early childhood education programmes.

0-6 years are most crucial years as this is the period of immense and rapid growth. In three years, the infant passing through different
stages of development acquired various skills. By the time the child in six years it can attend to its daily chores by all itself.

After birth the child needs to be provided a stimulating environment, which would enhance foster the development of the child.

As regards the stages of development according to the piglet 0-2 years is sensory motor stage. In this stage the child explores the environment around him with the help of his senses. Hence the activities at this stage should attempt of stimulate the sensory-motor experiences through play way activity. If necessary by use of appropriate play materials. There should be a warm relationship between the child and gradually lead to positive self-concept. We all need to be cured for at all stages of our life will remember being cured for by your mother or elder members of the family as a child. The pattern of are, as the child grows, differs at different stages; a child requires more care in the younger age. This is what all human being strive to do. Care start since the day of 'inception' once the child arrives in this world, that is he takes birth his health, hygiene and nutrient needs are taken care of. As he grows older his other developmental needs, need to be stimulated through different activities.

WE MUST REMEMBER:

1. Every Child is Primarily an individual and should be treated as such. Do not compass children.

2. Children learn through play. Give as many experiences for play as possible.

3. Children learn best by doing and should be provided opportunities to explore and manipulate their environment.

4. Every child needs to experience success. A child efforts should be rewarded.

5. Children like to ask questions. Encourage them by answering their questions honestly. If your do not know the answer, tell him so the find the answer together.
Development of communication skill is crucial in early childhood. Talking to the child and listening to the child are both important. Help the child to express himself.

Early childhood Education, which eaves the age range of 3-6 years, has therefore emerged primarily as an organized intervention aimed at compensating the under privileged children for the multiple deprivations at their home front by providing them experiences desirable for the development through an institutionalized system.

The significance of early childhood education is tow-fold, firstly, it has a direct influence on the total devepment of the child. Ex. on the cognitive, affective as well as psychomotor aspects of development. Secondly, it makes a potential contribution the program for universalization of elementary education. This latter contribution again has low functional aspects. The first is that while the young child receives care, his outs. The other is that the child gets a chance to became familiar with ideas of constructive play and to develop desirable competencies and behavioral pattern so that it becomes easier for him to cope with the demands of primary schooling. It is therefore essential that preschool education becomes an importanty adjuct to preparal on for primary school. This is expected to reduce subsequent possibilities of wastage and stagnation.

**What is Understanding in the Early Years?**

"Newton (2000: 191) described understand as being about 'getting a handle on things', about being able to make connections between facts and ideas, and being able to see relationships and patterns. He was describing the importance of children's understanding in the context of primary science, but it is equally important in all areas of the curriculum and to all children, whatever their age. Understanding, as opposed to memorisation, is essential if children are to make sense of their world, if they are to learn by connecting new information to what they already
know, if they are to remember what they have learned and if they are to solve problems (Newton, 2000: 192).

Teachers' knowledge of children's understanding is informed by different theories of cognitive development. Piagetian theory has been very influential in describing the stages of thinking that children go through and the recognition that children actively construct their own learning through their interactions with the environment. This has led to teaching approaches that recognise the importance of young children being directly involved in their learning and the necessity of providing them with concrete experiences and opportunities to discover things for themselves (Davis, 1991). This is in contrast to a more traditional teaching approach in which children are seen as being passive recipients of information. The Piagetian constructivist theory is limited, however, in that although it recognises the importance of social and cultural factors these are secondary to the idea of developmental stages.

In Piagetian theory, learning is predominantly individually centred, and development leads learning. Stages of development are both sequential and hierarchical and children cannot progress from one to another until a state of consolidation and readiness has been achieved. (Wood & Bennett, 1999)

Boulton-Lewis (1995) pointed out the dangers of teachers waiting until a child had reached the appropriate stage before introducing certain concepts, giving support to this idea of 'readiness' described above. In accepting Piagetian theory the role of the teacher is very much that of a facilitator and supporter.

Another important player in teachers' knowledge of how children learn and understand is Vygotsky whose theories have given rise to a social-constructivist framework. Children's learning and understanding are seen to be more dependent on experience than on developmental stages. Changes in a child's understanding come about, according to Vygotsky, through moving from an initial level of understanding which is rather vague to a level where the learner attempts to make sense of new
knowledge, collecting it with prior knowledge. Those with greater knowledge and understanding have a key role to play in guiding the child from one level of understanding to another through what Vygotsky called the Zone of Proximal development (ZPD). The influence of social-constructivist theory has led to a greater emphasis on teacher support through modelling and scaffolding (Lewis & Wray, 1995; the National Literacy Strategy, 1998; Waterland, 1985).

The importance of play in developing the young child's understanding has also been well documented (e.g. David, 1999) and is very much part of what early years practitioners know about child development. Whitebread (2000: 151-154) discusses Bruner's argument that play is essential to the development of children's intellectual ability.

Play, in Bruner's view, is all about developing flexibility of thought. It provides opportunities to try out possibilities, to put different elements of a situation together in various ways, to look at problems from different viewpoints. (Whitebread, 2000: 152)

Teachers' knowledge of children's understanding has been influenced by the dominant theories described. From this knowledge notions of good early years' practice have arisen. The Early Years Curriculum Group (1998) took from research evidence the key factors in effective early years education. These included the importance of rooting children's early education in their prior knowledge and experience, the need for active and social involvement, the importance of partnership between teacher and learner and the necessary opportunities being provided for children to take responsibility for their actions (Early Years Curriculum Group, 1998: 2).

In terms of pedagogy these points were translated into opportunities that had to be provided in an early years' curriculum if children were to understand and learn. These were:

- active learning
- interactive learning
- decision making
• reflecting
• representing

(Early Years Curriculum Group, 1998: 2)

Does the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA, 2000) set out to meet these requirements? Certainly it acknowledges the importance of:

Knowledge and understanding of the world: with opportunities for all children to solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan and question in a variety of contexts, and to explore and find out about their environment and people and...places that have significance in their lives. (QCA, 2000: 9)

How the guidance sets about the task of translating these requirements into curricular guidance will be considered in the next section.

Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage: A General Overview

First of all it would be appropriate to look in general terms at the organisation and the content of the guidance before going on to analyze some of the suggested practical recommendations, using the points identified by the Early Years Curriculum Group (see previous section) as a framework. The guidance undivided into four sections, the two main sections address first of all the principles and supporting practice for effective early years education and then the areas of learning and early learning goals. Within the principles outlined can be found elements that relate to learning theory, previously discussed in terms of children's understanding. Examples of these include:

Early years experience should build on what children already know and can do and... an early years curriculum should (include) provision for the 'different starting points from which children develop their learning, building on what they can already do (and) relevant and appropriate content that matches the different levels of young children's needs. (QCA, 2000: 11)
Having outlined the principles for effective practice in early years settings the document provides supporting descriptions of what these principles mean and practical examples of how the principles can be turned into good practice. One example describes how, building on a child's experience of being in hospital, a teacher of a pre-school group of children set up a 'hospital' and in consultation with the children decided that the hospital needed a reception area with a telephone, an appointment book, pencils and a notepad. The children took on the roles of receptionist, doctors and nurses. In their different roles they began to 'write', scribbling and making approximations of letters and numbers (QCA 2000: 15). In this way the children's writing would develop but important social skills would also be fostered.

In this same section (QCA 2000: 20-24) effective learning and teaching are described and clearly explained.

Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the foundation stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking. (QCA 2000: 20)

Teaching "means systematically helping children to learn so that they are helped to make connections in their learning and are actively led forward, as well as helped to reflect on what they have already learned. (QCA 2000: 22)

Again this section gives clear practical examples of how the theory can be translated into good practice, each example easily recognised by early years practitioners as ways in which children can be assisted in their understanding.

The other main section addresses the areas of learning and early learning goals. The guidance is providing a curriculum that supports the attainment of Early Learning Goals (QCA, 1999). These goals are organised into six areas of learning that are almost identical to the earlier
Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning (SCAA, 1996). The areas are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. The supporting curriculum guidance is quick to point out that the areas are defined in order to assist practitioners with the planning of experiences and activities and not to suggest that children's understanding can be divided into discrete areas. Edwards and Knight (1994) discuss the concern of early years practitioners that a Key Stage 2 subject based curriculum is being inflicted on children at Key Stage 1 and even at pre-school stage, forcing teachers to introduce a traditional curriculum too early. Interestingly, Edwards and Knight do not dismiss out of hand the use of subjects for teachers' thinking about the curriculum.

At some point, beginning practitioners will need to arrive at understandings of the structure of the material of the early years curriculum. We suggest that this is best done through analyses of the nature of subjects. Subjects are an accepted way of describing the knowledge that is important within our culture. (Edwards & Knight, 1994: 53)

They argue that the problem does not lie with the subjects themselves but with the traditional teaching of the subjects. It is important that the subjects are not taught in an abstract way but at the same time the framework of subjects can help 'both practitioners and learners to identify and use the discourses and understandings that they contain' (Edwards & Knight 1994: 53). This is very much in keeping with the stated position of the foundation stage curriculum guidance.

The guidance takes each area and identifies 'stepping stones' of progress towards the early learning goals. The knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes are described that children will need to achieve the goals. The stepping stones are supported by practical examples of what children may typically do at the various stages and
what the practitioner needs to do. Again, QCA make quite explicit the fact that although the stepping stones are presented in an hierarchical order if should not be expected that all children will conform to the sequence. Very much in keeping with a social-constructivist theory of children's understanding, building on children's prior knowledge is seen as being very important.

As children move from one stepping stone to another, they take with them what they have already learned and continue to practice, refine and use their previous learning, so that learning becomes consolidated. (QCA, 2000: 27)

For example, in the section on Knowledge and understanding of the world, a
- child's description of a family wedding is followed up with the suggestion that this would be a good opportunity to explain the significance of special events, a stepping stone on the way to the early learning goal of children beginning to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

The value of play and active learning is very much acknowledged by the QCA's guidance. Mathematical understanding, for example, is seen as being developed through stories, songs, games and imaginative play (QCA, 2000: 68) and, again, the practitioner is given many examples of practical activities to help the children on their way to attaining the early learning goals.

Notes on Contributors

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**Dr Tony Blake**

After a number of years in primary school as a classroom teacher and deputy head teacher, Tony Blake joined the staff of the Department of Education in the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in 2000. He is the tutor in charge of the primary science programmes and has a particular interest in geology and the history of science.

**Dr Andrew Davis**

Andrew Davis publishes in the field of educational policy and mathematics education from the perspective of analytical philosophy in which he originally trained. He taught in primary schools for many years and is currently Senior Lecturer in Education at Durham University, directing the primary mathematics provision as well as being Course Leader for the Primary PGCE programme. His publications include *Developing Understanding in Primary Mathematics* (1994, with Diedre Petit, published by Falmer Press), *The Limits of Educational Assessment* (1998, Blackwell) and *Educational Assessment: A Critique of Current Policy* (1999, Impact Series No.1: Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain).

**Ms. Eve English**

Eve English is a lecturer on the Initial Teacher Training course at the School of Education, University of Durham. She teaches English and also supports students' school experience as a tutor. She is particularly interested in the Induction Year for Newly Qualified Teachers. Prior to joining the university she was headteacher of an infant school.

**Mr. John Halocha**

Following a successful career in primary education, John Halocha moved into initial teacher training, initially at Westminster College, Oxford, and then at the University of Durham, where he was tutor in charge of primary geography. In 2000 he moved to a Senior Lectureship
in education at Bishop Grosseteste University College, Lincoln. He also has an interest in ICT in education.

**Mr Steve Higgins**

After teaching in primary schools, Steve Higgins joined the staff at the Department of Education at Newcastle University. He is now a senior lecturer and teaches on the mathematics on the primary-PECE course. His research interests are in teaching thinking, mathematics and ICT. He was project manager for the TT A-funded study of Effective Pedagogy Using ICT for Literacy and Numeracy in Primary Schools.

**Dr Peter Millward**

Peter Millward works at the University of Durham, where his wide range of expertise, both as a primary teacher and lecturer, involves him in a range of courses. In the past he has worked in primary initial teacher training, particularly in the area of English and drama. More recently he has been significantly involved in the innovative Childhood and the Arts course based at the University's Stockton Campus.

**Professor Douglas Newton**

Doug Newton is in the Department of Education, Newcastle University, where he lectures on science and technology education and teaching for understanding. He is particularly interested in the nature of understanding, the mental processes of understanding, and how to support understanding in the classroom. His recent book, Teaching for Understanding (Routledge/Falmer) examines these in some detail and offers practical advice on how to foster understanding in a variety of disciplines and with a variety of learners.

**Dr Lynn Newton**

After working for many years in primary schools, Lynn became an advisory teacher for primary science and technology. She then moved to the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, where she was responsible for primary science as well as being Director of the peCE programme for seven years. She moved to Durham University in 1997, initially to be Course Leader for the BSc (Ed) degree for primary science and ICT
specialists. She is now Director of Primary Programmes and Primary Science convenor for initial training and in-service programmes. Her most recent books are *Co-ordinating Science Across the Primary School* (Falmer Press, 1998) and *Meeting the Standards in Primary Science* (Routledge Falmer, 2000).

**Dr Anthony Parton**

Anthony Parton joined the staff of the University of Durham School of Education in 1999 after a varied career in the world of the Arts. His expertise is very much in the area of creative expression and childhood and the Arts and he is one of the lead tutors on the Childhood and the Arts programme at the University's Stockton Campus, working closely with Peter Millward.

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