CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Entering school ready to learn has become a growing concern now-a-days. Children begin school with considerable variation in their range of general knowledge, skills and abilities. They come from increasingly diverse ethnic, racial, cultural, social, and economic and language background and so they differ enormously in their early care and educational experiences prior to formal schooling. Many families are concerned on whether or not their children have the knowledge and skills at age of six years to succeed in primary education or vice-versa. Even primary school teachers often report that primary children start their education unprepared for the challenges and the transition to formal schooling and that many children are not optimally ready to learn putting them at risk for school failure or retention. Pre-primary education has clearly shown to have important consequences for a Child’s acquisition of knowledge and skills that are powerful determinants for later school success (Pianta & Cox, 2002). Readiness skills at the beginning of primary education are associated with educational outcomes in later years. The acquisition of a child’s readiness skills and success in school can be traced back to and are associated with multiple factors and pre-primary educational experiences family characteristics and influences during the year prior to primary education (Shonkoff & Philips, 2000, West, Denton & Germino Hausken, 2000, Zill & West, 2001). Recent advances in developmental
neuroscience provide greater insight into brain development at early age have revealed that the first five years in a child’s life are a time of extraordinary development. Young children have an impressive learning capacity during these critical years before primary schooling. The role of pre-primary education is of immense important for the wholesome development of children. Learning and development during the early years occur in all areas or domains, of a young child’s development physical and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning language and communication, development emerging literacy development. Cognitive development and general knowledge (Copple & Bredkamp, 2009, Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000)

These domains are associated with and often are predictors of children’s success in primary and later school years and do not operate in isolation from one another. The nurturing of all these domains during the preschool years is essential both for children’s early learning and for children’s educational achievement in later years. Researches have shown that children’s readiness skills can be significantly enhanced through effective pre-primary education, supportive parenting, stimulating school environment and child’s preparedness. These are the strongest predictors of school performance during early years. School readiness is defined by three interlinked dimension; (a) Ready Children, (b) Ready School (c) Ready Parents or Families. These three dimensions of school readiness are considered ready when they have gained the competencies and skills required to interface with other dimensions and support smooth transitions. All three dimensions of school readiness are important and must work together to ensure that the time of transition for child, family and school system is smooth. There is, therefore, the need for special attention to sensitive nature of early learning by affording the child the right environment where he will develop potential and skills for later life experience and education.

1.2 CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND OF SCHOOL READINESS:

Within the last two decades, increasing interest in school readiness has emerged alongside a growing body of research literature. Researchers, practitioners and policy makers have attempted to provide greater understanding of this complex
phenomenon. Conceptualizing school readiness has been and still remains challenging and often a controversial task. Conceptualization of school readiness has been influenced by different perspectives.

Earlier conceptualization of readiness suggests that readiness is fixed, and is determined by specific indicators such as age, ability, maturation. Other perspectives defined readiness as acquisition of certain set of pre requisites skills and proficiencies. Later model assert that readiness is developmental and comprises of interrelated factors. One of these models conceptualize school readiness as comprising the social, political, organizational, education and personal resources that support child success at school entry. This model takes into account the shared responsibilities that parents, communities and schools have in providing nurturing environment that promote children’s learning (Pitrokowski, Botsko, Mathews, 2000).

The concerns that many children from disadvantaged families are insufficiently prepared to begin formal schooling have motivated a greater focus on importance of pre-primary education. The accelerated academic standards and growing expectations for primary students to meet the curricular load demand greater readiness from children in the years prior to school entry. Growing evidences show that early childhood experiences are intricately linked to later on school success have fuelled recent interests in the importance of making sure all children entering school ready to learn.

Recognizing the wide range of abilities and experience that influence early age learning and development, the National Educational Goal Panel was set up in America in 1989, which has referred these as Readiness Goals, has stated that all children in America would start school ready to learn. The National Educational Goal Panel (NEGP) has established a multidimensional model of school readiness and articulated that school readiness does not comprise of a single set of skills or proficiencies but a range variables and proficiencies in different developmental domains each empirically linked with later success in school (Kagan, et al., 1995).
School readiness is viewed as a multifaceted construct in which the interconnectedness of many factors impacts a child’s early learning and development. These include the individual characteristics of the child, the child’s family, the cultural and contextual variability in each child’s early learning and development and early childhood education programs, schools and teachers to support children’s early learning development and competences (Kagan, et al., 1995).

The NEGP established a new model of school readiness by acknowledging that readiness is a collaborative procedure influenced by many interrelated factors. It established three objectives, suggesting that there critical components interact with and impact a child’s learning development and readiness for school and that they are associated with later school success;

- The availability of a high quality developmentally appropriate preschool program,
- Parents participation and support in the child’s education and
- The child’s physical and mental health (Kagan, et al., 1995, West, et al., 2001)

The NEGP recognized that readiness requires not only prepared children but also the capacity and readiness of all nations’ school to be responsive to all children entering schools. In the report, Ready School (Shore, 1998) the NEGP has suggested that policies and strategies be either introduced or expanded learning climates optimal for all children. The particular skills, abilities and knowledge that children bring to school are not only a function of their experience prior to schooling but are impacted by the ‘readiness’ of the school in which they enroll and the smooth transition between home, preschool and school (Kagan, et al. 1995, NEGP, 1993 and Shore, 1998).

The NEGP articulated that school readiness is a multifaceted construct incorporating the interrelatedness of families, early childhood education programmes, school, teacher and the broader community the support children's early success in school. Further, NEGP frame work has suggested that school readiness comprises of a wide range of variables encompassing five inter connected and interrelated domains as given below:
(i) Physical wellbeing and motor development.

(ii) Social and emotional development.

(iii) Approaches toward learning.

(iv) Language development.

(v) Cognitive development and general knowledge.

Development in one domain that often influences development in other domains (Kagan, et al., 1995). Thus, by addressing all the domains and the components of multidimensional framework of school readiness children will build important readiness abilities that will help them for transition to school.

FIGURE -1: Readiness for School: A Multi-Dimensional Framework

SOURCE: Adapted from the National Educational Goal Panel- 1995, (Cappelloni, 2010)
1.3 DIMENSIONS OF SCHOOL READINESS:

Through a combination of international development framework such as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA) Goal and World Fit for Children (WFC) countries are working towards a society in which all children will complete primary or basic education at a minimum (The United Nation Millennium Declaration, 2010). As many children enter schools, it is apparent that many of them are enrolling too late or are getting failed to learn. As a consequence, educational disparities are increasing. In the light of the trends, following three questions need to be answered;

1. Are children entering school with the social and cognitive skills and competencies needed to achieve success in schools?

2. Are schools equipped and ready to provide optimal learning environments for children?

3. Are families and communities ready to help their children make smooth transition to school?

School readiness is the foundation of equity and quality education. It is gaining global support as a viable means to help young children reach their full developmental potential and engage in lifelong learning. School readiness is linked to improved academic outcomes in primary and secondary schools and to the positive and behavioral competencies in adulthood. UNICEF’s major effort to achieve MDG-2 universal access to and completion of primary school by 2015 can be achieved by developing a strategy to achieve school readiness among children. UNICEF has currently defined school readiness by three interlinked dimensions viz. (a) Ready schools (b) Ready children and (c) Ready families.

Children’s school and families are considered ready when they have gained the competencies and skills required to interface with the other dimensions and support smooth transitions. These three dimension and characteristic features are illustrated in figure- 2
1.3.1 READY CHILDREN OR CHILDREN READINESS:

The ready children dimension focuses on children’s learning and development. It refers to what children should know and should be able to do in order to enter school ready and eager to learn there by enabling a successful transition to a primary school learning environment. Success in school is determined by a range of behaviours and abilities such as literacy, numeracy and ability to follow directions, working well with other children and engaging in learning activities. These behaviours and abilities are interrelated across broad domains of development and learning including physical wellbeing and motor development, social and emotional development approaches to learning, language development, cognition and general knowledge. Children readiness for school addresses all children especially the economically disadvantaged and vulnerable, children with disabilities, ethnic minorities and children living in rural areas.

1.3.2 READY SCHOOL OR SCHOOL’S READINESS:

Ready school or school’s readiness dimension focuses practices that (a) foster and support a smooth transition for children to primary school and beyond and (b) promote learning for all children. Ready school characteristically creates connectivity and maintains learning expectations for children between early learning and primary school environments. Other important quality characteristics include the practices that schools use to bridge the cultural divide between home and school. In general, the dimension of ready schools includes the overall quality of the school environment evident in such characteristics as sufficient class time devoted to learning, adequate supply of learning materials such as books and teaching aids, pedagogic practices and teacher competencies.

1.3.3 READY FAMILIES OR PARENTAL READINESS:

This dimension focuses on parental and care giver’s attitudes and involvement in their children’s early learning, development and transitions to school. Supportive parenting and stimulating home environments have been shown to be among the strongest predictors of school performance during primary school and beyond. Parents’ educational goals, beliefs, attitudes and commitment are considered crucial for school
success. Parental commitment to ensure timely enrolments for young children is an important aspect of successful school transition. Another characteristic of ready families is the learning environments provided in the home including parents engagement with their children in learning activities such as singing, reading books, telling stories and playing game. Supportive and responsive relationships in the family are the building blocks of children’s social and emotional development and are required for success in school. All three dimensions of school readiness are important and must work together to ensure that the time of transition for the child, family and school system is smooth. Interlinked, they support each other in building competencies and preparing for the transition from home to school.

1.4 ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL READINESS

Assessment of school readiness is of primary use for evaluating programs, monitoring trends and supporting learning (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001). The overall goal of assessing school readiness of young children at the time of school entry is to provide means by which an individual child’s skills, abilities or traits can be identified. School readiness can be assessed following a structured, developmentally appropriate and systemic approach to all the Dimensions of School Readiness.

1.4.1. Children Readiness for school

A child who is ready for school has the minimum skills and knowledge in a variety of domains that will enable him to be successful in school. These minimum standards set the bar for what children should be able to know so that they may enter school ready and eager to learn, enabling, thereby a successful transition to school. Success in school is determined by a range of basic behaviors and abilities including literacy, numeracy, and ability to follow directions, working well with other children and engaging in teaching learning activities. The ready children component can be covered under following five dimensions viz;
FIGURE-2: School Readiness and Transitions

SOURCE: UNICEF
(A). **Cognitive Development and Basic skills:**

Cognitive skills are those skills which provide children knowledge of the objects, people concepts and conventions of this world (D-Angelo, et al., 2007). With the increasing academic demands, it is getting more and more rigorous. Development of cognitive skills is necessary for children so that they can be ready to face intellectual demands of primary stage education. “The single most important factor in predicting later academic achievement is that children begin school with a mastery of cognitive skills. Mastery of cognitive skills predicts not only future mathematics achievements but future reading achievement, also. (Doherty, 2007). The domain of cognitive development and basic skills encompass indicators measuring the knowledge base a child has and the child’s ability to represent the world cognitively within three types of knowledge viz. physical knowledge, logico-mathematical knowledge and social-conventional knowledge (Cappeloni, 2013). The following indicators have been identified as key attributes of cognitive development and basic skills;

- Observation, questioning, problem solving.
- Recognizing and understanding relationship, associations differences and similarities among people, objects and events.
- Comparing and contrasting.
- Ability to construct, to understand, to acquire and to represent knowledge.
- Physical knowledge, awareness of physical world –Recognizing identifying colors.
- Logico – mathematical knowledge.
- Recognizing and identifying shapes & patterns, understanding concepts of time and shapes.
- Social – conventional knowledge.
- Having knowledge of personal data (name, age, phone numbers).
- Making predictions.
- Understanding adult roles.
- Distinguishing real from pretend.
(B). **Physical wellbeing and Motor Development:**

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs research states that each lower level need must be met before moving to higher level (*Cappelloni, 2013*). In other words a child’s most basic, physical needs must be satisfied first so that further development can occur. Children must be physically healthy, immunized, growing well and have developmentally appropriate gross and fine motor skills upon entering school. Development of motor skills, both fine and gross, can affect a child’s school experience. Gross motor skills refer to movement in larger muscle like arms or legs. A child who is struggling with gross motor development might have trouble in walking and jumping etc. Fine motor skills refer to movements in smaller muscles like in hands or figures. A Child who is lacking fine motor skills might have difficulty in grasping and using a pencil, crayon or scissor. The Domain of physical wellbeing and motor development characteristic the skills and abilities of child’s physical health and overall wellbeing; self-help skills and gross motor, fine motor, grapho-motor and sensory motor abilities. Children’s health has been directly linked to school performance. It has been shown to have a direct impact on student behaviour, peer interactions and classroom management. Poor fitness can result in reduced energy and prevents children from participating in group activities (*Copple & Bredekamp, 2009*). The following are key attributes of physical wellbeing and motor development;

- Gross motor skills
- Spatial awareness
- Body awareness
- Fine motor skills – use of scissors, glue stick etc.
- Graphomotor skills: Pencil grip, tracing, copying shapes numbers or letters
- Self-help skills - caring for self, dressing, eating
- overall health fitness and stamina
- adequate nutrition and sleep
- Mental alertness
(C). **Social and Emotional skills:**

Children readiness also includes the development of self-control, self-regulatory abilities and social skills to interact positively and work cooperatively in a classroom ([D-Angello et al., 2007](#)). In addition, child must exhibit various self-help skills such as the ability to use the bathroom and wash hands independently etc. To be socially and emotionally ready for classroom participation and learning, the child must be able to learn classroom routines and follow oral direction. The child must maintain appropriate focus on the group ability and demonstrate the ability to make choice. The domain of social development encompasses the characteristics, skills and abilities that enable the children to have positive, secure and successful interactions and relationships with others, including peers, teachers and other adults. The domain of emotional development encompasses the characteristics, skills and abilities that enable children to have positive feelings about them and demonstrate self-control in classroom setting. Following are the key attributes of social and emotional development

- Interactions and relationship with peers, teachers, adults.
- Co-operating and playing with children.
- Sharing and taking turns.
- Sense of personal wellbeing.
- Self-control
- Self-awareness.
- Self-regulation of emotions
- Expression of emotions and feelings.
- Separating from parents easily etc.
- Understanding the consequence of ones behaviors.
- Respecting and caring of other.

(D). **Language and vocabulary skills and Literary skills:**

These skills help children to follow basic rules of conversation, meaning the child will be able to listen and understand other and express themselves appropriately ([D-Angelo; 2007](#)). A child must be skilled in both receptive and expressive languages.
Receptive language consists of learning to listen and to understand language. Receptive language development is significant in early stages when children enjoy listening and comprehending stories and instruction that are read or said to them. A child’s transition to school is facilitated by already being familiar with the words and concepts used by the teacher. Expressive language development refers to the children learning to speak and use language. This is especially important when children are required to communicate their wants, needs, thoughts and feelings to this teacher and their peer. The domain of language and communication development encompasses the characteristics, skills and abilities that enable children to express them and communicate with others. Researches on literary development suggest that the process of reading, writing, speaking, listing and thinking develop simultaneously as learners become literate (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Early literacy experiences in preschool have strong links to long lasting reading success in school. The National Institute for Literacy (2009) has reported that the strongest and most consistent predictors of later literacy development include alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness and writing letters. The following indicators have been identified as key attributes of emerging literary development;

- Alphabetic knowledge.
- Concepts of print.
- Book awareness.
- Story sense.
- Writing letters of alphabets.
- Writing name.
- Receptive language abilities-attentive listening, following directions, comprehension.
- Expressive language abilities (speaking skills) engaging in conversation, singing and reciting nursery rhymes.

(E). Arithmetic and Numeracy skills:

These skills help children to develop ability to work and understand numbers, spatial concepts etc. Activities such as counting objects, understanding shapes, designing bigger and smaller are associated with development of arithmetic and
numeracy skills. A great deal of learning that takes place in a classroom occurs through sheer exploration. Following indicators have been identified as key attributes of arithmetic and numeracy skills:

- Understanding numeric concepts.
- Counting, recognizing, writing and sequencing numbers.
- Having the ability to sort, classify and order the objects.
- Recognizing and identifying shapes and patterns.

A second aspect of the newer concept of children readiness is the understanding of the development trajectory of the foundational skills described above. Children readiness skills are considered cumulative in the sense that achieving simpler skills allow acquisition of higher and more complex skills (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001).

1.4.2. School Readiness for Children:

School readiness for children is defined in terms of the school environment that supports a smooth transition for children (Pianta & Cox, 2002). The components of school readiness can be discussed under following five domains:

(a). Transition: The transition from home to school is significant milestone in lives of children, their families and their teachers. When transitions are well planned, children have fewer adjustment problems and more continuous is the process of development.

(b). Teacher Support: Children progress is increased with the level of qualification of staff. High quality teaching and supporting staff is key feature of ready schools.

(c). Engaging Environment: The resources of school are one of the important dimensions of readiness of school for children. These resources include materials and infrastructure necessary for creating, engaging environment for children and building hands on learning.
(d). Respecting Diversity: Schools must recognize that children are capable learners with their own experiences and expectations. Children are likely to have quite distinct expectation from school and so, they must be acknowledged and respected. A ready school respects individual differences among children and makes provisions for children with special needs.

(e). Family and Community Partnership: Schools needs to develop positive, reciprocal relations and communication among and between children families and community. Ready school ensures family and community partnership and welcomes suggestions and feedback.

Ten Keys to Ready Schools

1. Ready schools smooth the transition between home and school.
2. Ready schools strive for continuity between early care and education programs and elementary schools.
3. Ready schools help children learn and make sense of their complex and exciting world.
4. Ready schools are committed to the success of every child.
5. Ready schools are committed to the success of every teacher and every adult who interacts with children during the school day.
6. Ready schools introduce or expand approaches that have been shown to raise achievement.
7. Ready schools are learning organizations that alter practices and programs if they do not benefit children.
9. Ready schools take responsibility for results.
10. Ready schools have strong leadership.

A school’s recognition and response to a student in need of extra guidance and support effects child’s school experiences. A teacher and school must welcome and understand all children needs in order to ensure a positive transition to school. It is
school’s responsibility to recognize gaps in a child’s readiness skills that may hinder his or her later school success. It is important that early actions are taken to help at-risk students before they experience school failure.

1.4.3. READINESS OF PARENTS:

Early development and learning among children is promoted when they experience secure attachments with stable and dependable care givers within consistent and predictable environments (Chazan-Cohen, 2009). What happens at home and within community makes a difference to children’s readiness and their educational outcomes (Forget, 2009). The nature of parent-child relationship and quality of parenting exerts strong influences on children learning and development including school readiness (Weiss & Stephen, 2009). Readiness of parents can be covered under following broad two dimensions;

(A). Readiness of Parents at Home Level:

Children need stability, permanency and safety in order to flourish. All children, especially young children in the process of establishing trust with adults require a safe and stable home and caring and permanent relationships. Long-term stays in temporary out-of-home placement can negatively affect children, causing emotional, behavioral and educational problems. The level of education attained by parents strongly affects their children’s development. Higher levels of maternal education are associated with better school readiness among young children better health throughout childhood and adolescence and an increased likelihood of finishing high school and going to college. Higher education levels of parents contribute to a more supportive home learning environment and more involvement in the child’s school (Krieder, 2002). The children who have been neglected or physically or sexually abused are more likely to have cognitive and emotional problems. Abuse and neglect are strongly linked with many negative outcomes for children including poor school performance, frequent grade retention, juvenile delinquency and teenage pregnancy. Children are most at risk of maltreatment if their families are overwhelmed by multiple problems such as inadequate income, lack of a job, inadequate housing, emotional stress, drug or alcohol abuse, mental illness or domestic violence (Boethal,
2004). Young children who are taught regularly by their parents develop better early literacy skills and are better readers when they reach elementary school and are more likely to succeed in school. Reading among young children helps them to develop imagination, creativity, vocabulary and early literacy skills. Children who are taught on a regular basis and who have books in the home are more likely to enjoy books and to read on their own. Young children with depressed mother are more likely to demonstrate social-emotional and behavior problems, difficulties in school, trouble with self-control, poor peer relationships and aggression than other children (Chazan-Cohen, 2009).

(B). Readiness of Parents at School:

Parents’ ability to support child’s entry into classroom is an important component of school readiness. Parents that expose their children to school activities and other meaningful learning experiences assist their children in their success in schools. School readiness is built through experiences prior to entry into school and a child’s family is important to shaping those experiences. Parents’ involvement and participation in programmes, activities organized by school directly contributes in progress of the children. It has often been seen that parents who keep in touch with the teachers and attend school meetings are able to monitor their child in various aspects. Children whose parents do not give proper time in school matters feel themselves neglected. Parents’ educational goals, beliefs, attitudes and commitment are considered crucial for school success of children. Parental commitment to ensuring timely enrolment for young children is an important aspect of successful school transition.
1.5 NEED OF THE STUDY

The current movement to improve students’ achievement through stronger accountability for schools is one of the most significant developments in education. Schools are increasingly accountable for making sure that students perform to meet specific benchmarks. Increased academic standards and assessments of the students’ progress towards meeting those standards have placed growing pressure on teachers, students and their families.

Children who enter primary classes possess a unique set of gifts and challenges. A Child's chronological age is often used as an indicator of whether or not he or she is ready to start schooling. However, there are many other factors that are essential for children’s preparedness for school and their ability to participate in different learning environments. In many schools young children and their parents are subjected to entrance tests at primary stage. Researches have also thrown light on the increasing curricular load on children at primary stages (Vasitha et. al, 2001). In this background it is important that children entering formal school must be equipped with basic skills and competencies to achieve success. Holistic development of children at the time of school entry is strongly associated with their readiness to school e. g. child’s health is strongly associated with learning. Unnourished and stunted children often underperform at schools like wise; children lacking fundamental skills are known to show poor readiness to school (Doherty, 1997). Cognitive skills with which young children enter primary stage of learning make a difference in their achievement at primary stage (Boethal, 2004). Researches on preschool programmes have shown its positive effects on children’s learning and development. Quality pre-primary experience helps prepare children for school and can have long lasting benefits (Cappelloni, 2011). There is linkage between Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and primary education (Upadhyaya, 2003). School readiness is foundation of equity and quality of education. It is linked to improve academic outcomes at higher stages of education. The children who lack school readiness lose confidence and excitement and sometimes become reluctant to learn. Gaps in the readiness of child are more likely to become achievement gaps as the child progress through school.
(Applied Survey Research, 2007). Apart from children readiness the role of parents and schools are equally important in developing school readiness. Parents and families must be ready to help their children in smooth transition to schools. Schools must be equipped and ready to provide optimal learning environment for children. School readiness is a product of interaction in terms of settings in which a child participates (Pianta & Cox, 2002). Parents’ positive experiences with early childhood programmes could help in children’s preparedness and keeping them engaged in elementary schools (Krieder, 2002). Recent conceptualizations of readiness articulate the inclusion of children, families and schools. It has been suggested that understanding the interrelationship among parenting, home school partnership, and the teacher child relationship is more effective than concentrating on isolated skills and abilities solely within the child (Ponitz, Mc Clelland , Mathews, & Morrison, 2009). Past studies have indicated that many children enter primary stage at risk for school failure (West et al., 2000, West et al., 2001, Zill & West, 2001); primary teachers have reported that more than half of children enter school with a number of problems, such as not following directions and not being able to work independently (Pianta & Cox, Taylor, Rimm-Kaufman, 2000) and that significant number of children enter school not optimally ready to learn. These problems have significant implications for the shifting academic expectations that children face from home to primary school and the expectations primary teachers have for incoming students. Common themes that also emerged from these past studies included teachers perceptions that social and emotional development, overall physical health, and positive approaches toward learning (rather than purely academic development) are critical precursors of school readiness. Recent research supports not only healthy development in all areas of early learning and development but the availability of high quality, developmentally appropriate preschool education to support young children’s growth and development. The review on school readiness conceptualizes readiness as a multi-dimensional model that incorporate the interrelatedness of families, pre-primary education programs, schools teachers and broader community to support children’s learning and development. The particular skills, abilities, characteristics and knowledge that each individual child’s environment before primary education and the readiness of the
schools in which they enroll (Copple, 1997; Kagan et al., 1995; NAEYC, 2004; NEGP, 1997; Shore, 1998).

After reviewing a large number of studies conducted in India and abroad, as well, it is agreed that children receiving pre-primary education, demonstrate greater proficiency in some area than others (Surjeet, K., 1989, Upadhyay, G. et al., 1992, Dutta, 1992, Murthy, 1992, Dkhar, 1998), all children demonstrate varying degree of school readiness and readiness comprises of many indicators and domains that are needed to be studied (Bhise & Sonawat, 2015, Bhargah & Kaul, 2015). A large number of studies in other countries have confirmed the short and long term outcomes of pre-primary education and its role in developing school readiness. However in India many studies have been conducted in the area of primary education. In most of the schools young children start schooling at primary stage out of which some children have pre-primary experiences. Thus, school readiness of children must be studied at primary stage. After reviewing a lot of studies in India on ECCE the investigator found that there exists a gap in knowledge in the area of school readiness at primary stage. This study will be an effort to fill this gap as to whether or not Indian pre-primary education helps in developing school readiness in Indian settings and to study all the three dimensions of school readiness together as they are interlinked and support each other in building competencies and in preparing for the transition of children from home to school. Hence, the above problem has been chosen for extensive and detailed study.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) government of India has recently shared discussions notes on 13 themes with a view to generate discussion and elicit suggestions for the proposed New Education Policy (NEP). To quote the MHRD note “...quality issues and determinants there of such as ensuring availability of trained teachers, good curriculum and innovative pedagogy that impact upon learning outcomes of the children need to be addressed on priority basis”. It identifies
grades 1 and 2 as requiring special attention to ensure basic learning levels as is also envisaged in MHRD’s new scheme ‘Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat.

The challenge of learning as has been acknowledged in the note begins right from primary classes one and two, when children are not able to master the basics of reading, writing, mathematics, etc. These deficits continue cumulatively and adversely affect the later learning. Since the introduction of the Right to Education Act (RTE-2009), a significant number of children have started going to school. It is important to understand that starting school ready to learn sets the basis for future development. School readiness plays an important role in early childhood years. It assures smooth transition and successful entry to primary school and first step towards the world of knowledge. Through school readiness, child gets a sure shot path for long term academic career. The pre-schooling offers variety of preparatory experiences which help children for smooth entry to formal learning. It also inculcates a mental qualities which are required at primary level for dealing various scholastic, personal and social challenges. Hence, at the doorsteps of primary education children are expected to be made ready and more capable of facing change and handling their issues more successfully. It is a fact that pre-primary education has arisen like a tool for reducing school dropout. Pre-primary education is an important factor of development of school readiness and it lays the foundations of lifelong learning. Globally, school readiness is gaining importance as a viable strategy to close the learning gap and improve equity in achieving lifelong learning and full developmental potential among young children. It does so by considering all children, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged including girls, children with disabilities, ethnic minorities and those living in rural areas. School readiness supports the adoption of policies and standards for early learning, expanding the provision of opportunities beyond formal Centre-based services to target those who are excluded. School readiness has been linked with positive social and behavioural competencies in adulthood as well as improved academic outcomes in primary and secondary school, both in terms of equity and performance. In addition, school readiness has been gathering attention as a strategy for economic development. Approaches to economic growth and development consider human capital as a key constituent for sustained and viable development, the
inception of which begins in the early years. It is expected that child should be given learning experiences so that he may have a strong foundation, and attitudes for lifelong learning. Hence it can be said that school readiness is a multifaceted concept which refers to the child’s attainment of certain set of competencies which help child for successful entry to school. This research will throw light on the following factors 1. School readiness of children of Gorakhpur city, 2. Impact of Pre-primary education on School readiness.

1.7 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM OF STUDY
Problem of study reads as ‘Comparative Study of School Readiness of Children with and without Pre-Primary Education’.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Following were the research questions to which the researcher wants to answer;

1.7.1. Do the children with and without pre-primary education differ in children readiness at primary stage?
1.7.2. Do the parents of children with and without pre-primary education differ in parental readiness at primary stage?
1.7.3. Is there any difference in Readiness of schools with and without pre-primary education?
1.7.4. Is there any difference in overall school readiness of children with and without pre-primary education?

1.9 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1.9.1. To study School Readiness of children with and without pre-primary education.
1.9.2. To study Parental Readiness of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.9.3. To study Readiness of School with and without pre-primary education.

1.9.4. To study the Basic Skills and Cognitive Skills of Readiness of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.9.5. To study the Physical and Motor Skills of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.9.6. To study the Social and Emotional Skills of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.9.7. To study the Language and Vocabulary Skills of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.9.8. To study Arithmetic and Numeracy Skills of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.9.9. To study overall school readiness of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.9.10. To construct and standardize Children Readiness Inventory.

1.9.11. To construct and standardize Questionnaire of Parental Readiness.

1.9.12. To construct a Checklist of Readiness of School.

1.10 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Following hypotheses were formulated for the study;

1.10.1 There is difference in School Readiness of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.10.2. There is difference in Parental Readiness of parents of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.10.3 There is difference in Readiness of Schools with and without pre-primary education.

1.10.4. There is difference in Basic and Cognitive Skills of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.10.5. There is difference in Physical and Motor Skills of children with and without pre-primary education.
1.10.6. There is difference in Social and Emotional Skills of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.10.7. There is difference in Language and Vocabulary Skills of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.10.8. There is difference in Arithmetic and Numeracy Skills of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.10.9. There is difference in overall school readiness of children with and without pre-primary education.

1.11. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TECHNICAL TERMS USED

1.11.1. School Readiness:

School readiness can be operationally defined as capabilities of children, their families and schools that best promote students’ success in primary classes and beyond. School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children’s learning, and schools are ready for children. This holistic approach serves as an important operational foundation of the term. School Readiness has been operationalized as a construct having three components viz. Children Readiness, Parental readiness and School Readiness.

1.11.2. Children Readiness:

Children readiness for school has been operationalized as the characteristics and skills children should possess in order to be able to learn effectively in school. Children readiness has been operationally been defined as combination of following domains of abilities and skills required for effective school learning;

(a). Basic and cognitive skills
(b). Physical wellbeing and motor skills
(c). Social and emotional skills  
(d). Language, vocabulary and literacy skills  
(e). Arithmetic and Numeracy skills  

1.11.3 Parental Readiness:  
Parental readiness has been undertaken as parental involvement and positive attitudes in early learning, development and transition of children to the school.

1.11.4 Readiness of Schools:  
Readiness of school has been undertaken as a focus on the school environment including practices that;  
(a) Fostered and support a smooth transition for children to school.  
(b) Promoted learning for all children in 
   (i) Transition  
   (ii) Teacher support  
   (iii) Engaging environment  
   (iv) Respecting diversity  
   (v) Family and community partnership.

1.11.5 Pre-primary Education:  
Educational opportunities provided to children in the age group 2-5 years through preschool sections/classes (Nursery, Kindergarten, Pre-primary schools) in schools has been taken as Primary Education.

1.11.6 Children with Pre-Primary Education:  
The children who have been studying or gotten entered or enrolled in schools in class I at primary stage after receiving pre-primary education have been undertaken as children with pre-primary education.
1.11.7 **Children without Pre-Primary Education:**

The children who have been studying or gotten entered or enrolled in schools in class I at primary stage without pre-primary education have been taken as children without pre-primary education.

1.12. **DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. The study was delimited to the study of school readiness of the parents and their children studying at primary stage with as well as without pre-primary education

2. The study was delimited to those schools which had primary classes.

3. The study was delimited to the children enrolled only in recognized primary schools located only in urban areas of Gorakhpur City.

4. The study was limited to individualized assessment of school readiness of schools.
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