CHAPTER VII

MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
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7.1.0 Major Findings and Conclusions in Relation to the Status of Pre-school Education in Mizoram.

Major findings and conclusions in relation to the status of pre-school education in Mizoram have been presented under the following three areas of pre-school education:

1. Existing conditions of pre-schools
2. Pre-school teacher training programmes
3. Parents' reactions to and expectations from pre-schools.

7.1.1 Major Findings and Conclusions in Relation to Existing Conditions of Pre-schools

I. Physical Structure and Facilities

1. Majority of the pre-schools (60% of private and 58% of public) are not in accordance with the desired standards as they are located either just adjacent to the main road which is not safe from traffic or in the foothill down the main road or on top of the hill, not safe and not easily accessible to the children. At the same time, all the pre-schools except 34 per cent of private pre-schools, are within 1 Km. radius of the locality to which they are serving as specified by NCERT (1996).
2. Majority of the pre-school surroundings are safe from hazards like noisy and heavy traffic, open ditches, wells, ponds, open drains and heaps of garbage. So, they can be considered to be in conformity with the desired standards. But, majority of pre-school surroundings are not safe for small children due to steep stairs or steps leading to the pre-schools.

3. Majority of the pre-schools (84% in the private and 96% in the public sectors) are not in conformity with the desired standards as either they do not have outdoor play space or the available outdoor play space is less than what has been specified by NCERT, that is, a minimum of 15 x 20 sq.mts. for a group of 30 children.

4. Among the pre-schools which have outdoor play space, majority of them (90% of private and 64% of public) are in conformity with the essential specification prescribed by NCERT (1996) as their outdoor play space is safe for children due to either fencing around it or its natural settings. But in relation to nature of the ground surface and other provisions, the pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards as none of them has play area which includes both cemented as well as grass covered ground surface, and storage space for keeping play equipment. Further, majority of them do not have shaded and sunny area, and flowers and shrubs along the boundaries to make the place look colourful and attractive.

5. a) Majority of the pre-schools (74% of private and 64% of public) do not fulfill even the minimum requirement of a child-indoor space ratio of 1:1.17 sq.mts.

b) Few pre-school classes (14.9% of nurseries, 20% of K.Gs. and
20% of anganwadis) fulfill the minimum requirement of a child-indoor space ratio of 1:1.17 sq.mts. but do not fulfill the desirable ratio of 1:1.50 sq.mts.

c) Only very few pre-school classes (10.6% of nurseries, 6% of K.Gs. and 16% of anganwadis) have a desirable child-indoor space ratio of 1:1.5 sq.mts. or above.

6. a) Almost all the pre-schools do not fulfill even the essential requirement of having a storage space, a toilet, a verandah and cooking facility separately in addition to classrooms.

b) All the pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards as science corner, dolls corner, books corner and a corner or window sill for plants are completely missing in all of them.

c) Majority of the pre-schools (52% of private and 90% of public) have well ventilated rooms with adequate light.

7. a) Majority of the pre-schools (76% of private and 72% of public) are not in conformity with the desired standards as they do not have clean classroom walls.

b) No pre-school is in conformity with the desired standards for not displaying any children's work.

c) Among the few pre-schools displaying ready-made pictures on the walls, all the private pre-schools and majority of the public pre-schools (87%)
are not in conformity with the desired standards as they do not display pictures at children's eye level which is approximately 3 to 4 ft. above the ground.

8. In respect of furniture for children, all the private and public sector pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards due to the following reasons:

a) A durry/mat, a set of low and light tables for a group of 6-8 children for art work, paper work etc. and blackboards at low level for scribbling and free drawing by children which are considered essential in the specifications are completely absent.

b) Although the furniture provided by 8 per cent of private pre-schools is painted in bright and attractive colours, the types of furniture provided are not in accordance with the specification.

9. Majority of the pre-schools (80% of private and 52% of public) are not in conformity with the desired standards as they either do not have any provision of drinking water or water provided is not safe for drinking. Again, majority of the private (86%) and few public pre-schools (22%) are not in conformity with the specification made by NCERT (1996) as they do not have the provision of water for washing glasses, tumblers etc. after use.

10. Most of the pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards due to:

a) absence of clean Indian type toilets with water facilities, and
b) absence of other sanitary facilities such as soap and towel clean cloth, bathroom fixtures and sinks at low level, exhaust fan in the bathroom window and sinks at low level in the classroom.

II. Equipment and Materials

11. Majority of the pre-schools (66% of private and 56% of public) are without any outdoor play equipment and materials. The outdoor play equipment and materials available in the rest of the pre-schools lack in variety and are very few in number. Moreover, materials for sand play and water play are completely absent in all the pre-schools. All the pre-schools are, therefore, not in agreement with the essential specifications made by NCERT and others.

12. In respect of indoor play equipment and materials, no pre-school is found to be in conformity with the desired standards due to the following reasons:

   a) 78 per cent of private and 32 per cent of public pre-schools do not provide any equipment and material for indoor play.

   b) The indoor play equipment and materials provided by the rest of the pre-schools lack in variety and are too few in number. It was further found that many of these pre-schools did not utilise their equipment and materials for conducting pre-school programmes.

   c) Most of the equipment and materials suggested by NCERT and others are completely absent in these pre-schools.
13. Majority of the pre-schools do not have any audio-visual equipment except blackboard. It was further found that the few pre-schools having the audio-visual equipment simply possessed it as a school property, but rarely utilised it for conducting pre-school programme. No school is, therefore, in accordance with the desired standards.

14. The pre-schools, in relation to the provision of first aid materials, are not in conformity with the desired standards as they do not provide for all the first aid materials considered to be essential for every pre-school by NCERT's specification viz. - sterilized surgical cotton wool, antiseptic ointment, bandages, scissors, sticking plaster, potassium permanganate, gentian violet, gauze, thermometer, pincers and mercurochrome.

III. Teaching Staff

15. The percentage of male principals or heads in private pre-schools is significantly higher than female heads. Majority of the heads (70%) are in the age group of 31 to 50 years. So far teachers are concerned, the pre-schools are in agreement with the desired standards as almost all the teachers are females, and are 21 years of age or above.

16. All the private pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards as their heads and teachers are untrained in ECE inspite of their fulfillment of either essential or desirable educational qualifications of Class X or XII and a graduate or post-graduate respectively. The position of public pre-schools is also not satisfactory as 28 per cent of the anganwadi workers are under class VIII and 28 per cent are untrained.
17. Range of salaries of private pre-school teachers is from Rs. 1,000/- to Rs. 4,999/-, whereas it is from Rs. 438/- to Rs. 563/- in the case of anganwadi workers. There is a significant positive correlation between educational qualifications of private pre-school teachers and their salaries. Rates of honorarium for anganwadi workers have also been fixed on the basis of educational qualifications and length of service. The pre-schools, in this regard, are therefore, in conformity with the specification of NCERT. However, the honorarium of anganwadi workers are low and are not at par with the primary school teachers as specified by NCERT, possibly due to disparity in both academic qualifications and hours of work.

18. Majority of the private and public pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards as they exceed the desired teacher-child ratio of 1:25 in nursery and anganwadi classes and 1:30 in K.G. classes.

IV. Admission

19. All the private and public pre-schools, except 16 per cent of private pre-schools are in conformity with the desired standards in respect of minimum age for admission as they admit/enroll children at the age of $3\frac{1}{2}$ and 3+ years respectively.

20. Majority of the private pre-schools (74%) are in conformity with the desired standards as they employ admission procedure which does not involve any evaluation of children. But 26 per cent of the private pre-schools are against the desired specification as they employ tests and interviews of the children as procedure of admission to nursery class.
V. Programmes

21. Majority of the private pre-schools (52%) provide for a programme of more than 4 hours duration to K.G. classes and majority of the public pre-schools (68%) provide a programme of less than 3 hours duration to anganwadi children, whereas the desirable duration is 3 - 4 hours. At the same time, majority of the private pre-schools (55%) are in conformity with the desired standards as they provide for a programme of 3 to 4 hours duration to nursery classes.

22. All the private and public pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards in relation to planning of the programme due to the following reasons:

   i) 30 per cent of private and 94 per cent of public pre-schools do not make any planning of the programme.

   ii) The rest of the pre-schools, no doubt make either short term or long term planning, but their plans do not include a balance of activities for all aspects of development as well as a balance between individual and group activities, indoor and outdoor activities, vigorous and quiet activities and guided and free activities as specified by experts in the field of ECE.

23. All the private and public pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards in respect of time schedule as either they do not follow any time-schedule or their time-table mainly focusses on teaching of the 3R's and neglects activities for different aspects of development for pre-school children.
24. All the private pre-schools (100%) are against the desired standards as they make textbooks and carrying bag of books to school compulsory for children whereas most of the public pre-schools (96%) are in conformity with the desired standards as they do not make these compulsory for children.

25. In respect of methodology for pre-school programme, all the pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards due to the following reasons:

i) All the private pre-schools completely rely on formal teaching of the 3R's.

ii) All the public pre-schools also employ formal teaching of the 3R's along with play activities.

iii) No pre-school is found to rely completely on play and activity oriented method.

26. All the private and public pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards due to either absence of or inadequate activities carried out for physical, language, socio-emotional, creativity and aesthetic development of children.

27. All the private pre-schools use English which is an alien language, as the medium of communication and instruction and so are not in conformity with the desired standards, whereas all the public pre-schools use Mizo, the
regional language as well as the mother-tongue of the children, as medium of communication and instruction as desired by experts in the field of ECE.

28. All the private pre-schools and 30 per cent of public pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards as they give homework to pre-school children, whereas 70 per cent of public pre-schools do not give homework at all to pre-school children as desired by experts in the field of ECE.

29. All the pre-schools are against the desired standards as 100 per cent of the private and 42 per cent of public pre-schools solely use formal test and examination to evaluate children; and the rest of the public pre-schools do not do any evaluation of children.

30. All the pre-schools, both private and public, are not in conformity with the desired standards as they do not record progress of children in the various developmental aspects such as physical, language, cognitive, etc.

31. All the pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards due to either inadequate provision of health care services or complete absence of the provision.

32. Majority of the private and public pre-schools do not make adequate provisions for parent contacts such as home visits, meetings etc, and so are not in accordance with the desired standards.
VI. Records and Registers

33. All the pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards as they do not maintain any record of developmental history, habits and interests, teachers' assessment and health of children.

34. The position of all the private and public pre-schools in respect of register maintenance is quite satisfactory. The registers prescribed by NCERT like attendance registers of staff and children, accounts register and staff profile are maintained by 100 per cent and stock register by 96 per cent of private pre-schools. Registers prescribed for the anganwadi workers (except register of immunization services) are maintained by 100 per cent of anganwadi centres.

7.1.2 Major Findings and Conclusions in Relation to Pre-school Teacher Training Programmes

1. Inspite of mushrooming growth of English medium pre-schools in the private sector, not even a single institute or organization, whether government or private, which impart training to private pre-school teachers exists in the state of Mizoram.

2. The Mizoram state has only one Anganwadi Workers Training Centre (AWTC) which was established by the State Social Welfare Department in 1982.

3. The AWTC has no building of its own. At present, it is accommodated in a private building adjacent to the main road with heavy traffic. Some of the
major problems associated with its building are as follows:

i) Absence of outdoor space for conducting outdoor activities.

ii) Absence of library cum reading room.

iii) The only classroom available is too congested and does not have enough space for conducting classroom activities.

iv) Hostel accommodation is too inadequate as only too small rooms in the same building have been provided for this purpose.

4. All the three members of teaching faculty of the AWTC, including the principal are well qualified as their educational qualifications are at par with the essential qualifications for appointment as faculty members. Since the number of teaching staff is inadequate, four personnel from Aizawl District ICDS Cell are usually deputed to the training centre during training session.

5. The pay scales of the Principal, Rs. 6500 - 200 - 10500 and of the instructress, Rs. 5000 - 150 - 8000 are quite low considering the essential educational qualifications for the posts and also as compared to the pay scales of other posts with same essential qualifications.

6. At present, the number of seats available for job training in AWTC is 35.

7. The number of anganwadi workers trained so far by AWTC till June, 2000 was 2200 which exceeded the required number of workers for all the anganwadi centres by 859.
8. The main training course conducted by AWTC is an in-service training for the newly recruited anganwadi workers for a duration of 3 months. Besides, the AWTC also conducts Refresher Course for trained anganwadi workers usually for a duration of 14 days, and Orientation Course for helpers usually for 10 days.

9. The various components of 3 month job training course are:
   a) General orientation
   b) Pre-school education
   c) Nutrition and health
   d) Community participation and community education
   e) Management
   f) Wrap up.

10. Training is imparted through the following methods:
    a) Classroom instruction
    b) Field work which includes (i) classroom practicals (ii) observational visits and (iii) field work placement in ICDS project.
    c) Library and audio-visual.

11. In classroom practicals, the following activities are usually carried out:
    a) Preparation of aids and play materials. For this, low cost, no cost, waste and natural materials are mainly utilized.
    b) Preparation of an Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) and simple recipes for supplementary nutrition.
    c) Role play on different topics and themes
d) Exercises in maintaining correspondence and filling up registers and records.

12. Activities undertaken in observational visits include visits to various important places in Aizawl city, nearby ICDS projects, Primary Health Centre (PHC) or sub-centres and nature walk.

13. Under field work placement in ICDS projects, the trainees are sent out to different anganwadi centres in Tlangnuam and Aizawl urban ICDS projects for 14 working days. Usually 2 trainees are placed in one centre and are visited and supervised by the instructresses.

14. Library work is not carried out as prescribed in the course due to non-existence of library cum reading room and limited access to the available books.

15. Due to absence of equipment, audio-visual sessions are rarely conducted.

16. Evaluation of trainees is done on the basis of their performance in both practical and written examinations.

7.1.3 Major Findings and Conclusions in Relation to Parents' Reactions to and Expectations from Pre-schools

1. Building:

a) Majority of the parents from private and public pre-schools (60% and 54% respectively) consider the buildings of these pre-schools satisfactory. The rest of the parents are dissatisfied with the buildings mainly due to their small size, lack of planning and unattractiveness.
b) Expectations of parents with regard to pre-school buildings in order of priority are big, specially planned and attractive buildings.

2. **Outdoor Play Equipment and Materials (OPEM):**

a) Majority of the parents (59% of parents of private and 72% of parents of public pre-schoolers) are dissatisfied with the pre-schools mainly due to complete absence of OPEM. Out of the satisfied group of parents, more than half of them are satisfied with the very few OPEM available in pre-schools, and the rest of the parents are satisfied even in the complete absence of the OPEM.

b) The two most frequently expected outdoor equipment are see-saw (64%) and swing (63%) in the case of parents from private pre-schools and see-saw (60%) and skipping rope (59%) in the case of parents from public pre-schools. Other expected OPEM in order of their priority are - balls, slides and merry-go-rounds. There are some parents (16% and 17%) who do not expect OPEM as they think them unnecessary for children.

3. **Indoor Play Equipment and Materials (IPEM):**

a) Larger proportion of parents (51% and 57%) find the position of the pre-schools attended by their children, unsatisfactory mainly due to absence of IPEM. Few of them are dissatisfied as the IPEM provided are very few and inadequate. On the other hand, almost all the satisfied parents from private pre-schools are satisfied although IPEM are not provided whereas all the satisfied parents from public pre-schools find the very few materials provided enough and satisfactory.
b) The most frequently referred expectation of parents in order of their priority are - number blocks, alphabet blocks and building blocks in the case of private pre-schools, and building blocks, alphabet blocks, number blocks and counting beads in the case of public pre-schools. Analysis of parents' expectations reveals that both group of parents want that pre-schools should provide such IPEM which can be of help to children in learning the concepts of number and alphabets.

4. **Financial Involvement**

a) 50 per cent of parents of private preschoolers feel that sending a child to private pre-school is quite expensive whereas the rest of the 50 per cent of parents do not feel so. Majority of parents (81%) feel that the education and care provided to their children by the private pre-schools, is worth the money spent by them.

When parents' reactions are analysed in relation to their financial status, it is found that 35 per cent of parents from high income group, 52 per cent from middle income group and 57 per cent from low income group feel that educating a child in private english medium pre-school is quite expensive.

b) The expectations of parents in order of their priority are that the pre-school should (i) impart knowledge of English (80%), (ii) give emphasis on teaching of the 3R's (73%), and (iii) teach manners and etiquettes (66%) to pre-schoolers.
When parents expectations are analysed in relation to their income, it is found that as the level of parents income increases, their expectations about teaching of English language and 3R's decrease and manners and etiquette increase.

5. Teachers

a) Most parents (70%) of private pre-schoolers are satisfied with the teachers as they feel that teachers know how to deal with small children. In the case of public pre-school, most parents (54%) are dissatisfied with the anganwadi workers as they feel that the workers teach too little. This may imply that these parents expect the anganwadi workers to give more time to the teaching of 3R's.

b) Most parents from both private and public pre-schools (47% and 59% respectively) expect that pre-schools should appoint only those as teachers who have at least P.U.or equivalent qualification. With regard to other personal qualities and professional qualifications, the least priority is assigned to the teacher training, and knowledge of child psychology and development by the parents of private and public sector pre-schoolers respectively, which is a clear indication of the ignorance of parents about the right qualities to be expected from pre-school teachers.

6. Teacher-Child Ratio

a) Majority of the parents from both private (63%) and public (73%) pre-schools consider the existing teacher-child ratio as moderate and satisfactory.
b) The largest percentage of parents from both the private and public pre-schools (71% and 77% respectively) want the teacher-child ratio to be 1:below 30, which is in conformity with the suggestions made by experts in the field of ECE. However, parents' expectations in this regard are contradictory to their reactions as most private pre-schools and few public pre-schools have a teacher-child ratio of more than 1:30.

7. Holding Tests and Interviews for Admission

a) Majority of parents of private and public pre-schoolers (67% and 55% respectively) are against the idea of holding tests and interviews for admission to pre-school classes.

b) The most frequently expected procedure of admission is 'first come first serve' which is followed by 'test and interview'.

8. Textbooks

a) An overwhelming majority of parents from private pre-schools (95%) consider textbooks necessary for pre-school children whereas majority of parents from public pre-schools (75%) do not do so.

b) Parents' expectations reflect a great deal of their ignorance about the evils of textbooks at the pre-school stage. As a result, most parents from private pre-schools (95%) still expect the pre-schools to use textbooks while experts in the field of ECE suggest to put a ban on textbooks at the pre-school stage.
9. Carrying Bag of Books to Pre-schools

a) Majority of parents of private pre-school children (78%) find the school bag light in weight for a pre-school child. All the parents from private pre-schools, except 9% per cent, are in favour of the practice of carrying bag of books to school by pre-schoolers whereas majority of the parents from public pre-schools (73%) are against this idea.

b) Most parents from private pre-schools (78%) expect the teachers to keep children's books in school and to give out only the ones needed for homework. They feel that this arrangement would lighten the weight of school bag which a child has to carry to and from pre-school.

10. Teaching Methodology

a) Majority of parents (65% and 58%) are happy with the formal classroom teaching method employed by the pre-schools attended by their children.

b) Parents who expect the pre-school to employ play and activity oriented method of teaching are very few (2% and 9%) which indicates that most parents have not yet realised the evils of formal classroom teaching method and the importance of play and activity oriented method at this stage.

11. Teaching of 3R's

a) An overwhelming majority of the parents (97% and 95%) have positive attitude towards teaching of 3R's and they expect the pre-schools to teach these skills to their children which implies their ignorance about the evils of teaching the 3R's at pre-school stage.
12. Medium of Communication

Most parents from private pre-schools (76%) are satisfied with English being the medium of instruction and communication and expect the same to be continued, whereas, majority of parents from public pre-schools (81%) are satisfied with and expect Mizo, to be the medium of communication and instruction.

13. Homework

a) All the parents whose children are given homework, except 15 per cent from private pre-schools are happy with the homework and majority of them feel that the homework given is just enough and few others feel that it is too less, which implies that they want more of it.

b) Large number of parents from both the private and public pre-schools (98% and 71%) expect the pre-schools to give homework to their children.

14. Holding of Test and Examination to Evaluate Children

An overwhelming majority of parents from both the private and public pre-schools (99% and 85% respectively) are in favour of holding test and examination to evaluate pre-school children and expect the same to be continued.

15. Provision of Health Care

a) Inspite of the unsatisfactory position of all the pre-schools with regard to the provision of health care, the percentages of parents from both
types of pre-schools who find this provision satisfactory (47% and 52% respectively) are moderately high.

b) The most frequently expected health service is health check up (76% and 79%) followed by treatment of minor accidents and ailments (70% and 67%). Large number of parents from public pre-schools (65%) also expect growth monitoring through maintenance of height and weight records.

16. Provision of Mid-day Meal/Supplementary Nutrition

a) Moderately high percentages of parents from both the private and public pre-schools (63% and 57% respectively) find the practice of the pre-schools with regard to midday meal satisfactory. Nevertheless, majority of parents from public pre-schools (67%) think that the food items provided for children to anganwadis are being mismanaged by the anganwadi workers.

b) All the parents from public pre-schools (100%) expect the provision of supplementary nutrition from pre-schools. But majority of parents from private pre-schools (58%) do not expect it probably as they are satisfied with the existing practice of letting children carry their own tiffins to schools.

17. Parent-Teacher Contact

a) Majority of the parents from both the private and public pre-schools (63% each) feel that the pre-schools are not doing well in respect of organization of parent-teacher contact.
b) Parent-teacher meeting is the most frequently expected form of parent-teacher contact by both groups of parents (80% and 79%) followed by parents' day celebration in the case of parents of private pre-schoolers (58%) and home-visits in the case of parents of public pre-schoolers (61%). Regarding the number of parent-teacher meeting, majority of parents from both types of pre-schools (71% and 89%) want a minimum of two or more parent-teacher meetings in a year.

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that although pre-school education facilities and programmes in Mizoram are mostly not in conformity with the desired standards, most parents from both the private and public pre-schools showed positive reaction to them. Besides, the expectations of most parents are not in conformity with the desired standards. The study, therefore, reveals that parents' reactions to and expectations from pre-schools cannot be used as a criteria for improvement or modification of the system of pre-school education. Instead, it reveals that parents need to be given proper education with regard to desired standards and nature of pre-school education. Moreover, parents' reactions to pre-school facilities, equipment and materials, programmes etc. confirm the findings of status study which reveal the poor and unsatisfactory condition of the pre-schools in various aspects, and thus help in objectively studying the status of pre-school education.
7.2.0 Discussion

1) Discussion of findings on status of pre-school institutions

The present study reveals that physical structure and facilities in majority of both the private and public pre-schools are not in conformity with the desired standards. This finding has the support of Baruah (1987) and Rajalakshami (1992) who found that the physical facilities in the pre-primary schools in Assam and Kerala respectively were not to the desired extent and needed to be improved.

The finding of the present study in relation to the absence of adequate space for indoor and outdoor play activities is in agreement with Shrivastava (1971), Singth et al (1978), Yeli (1979) NIPCCD (1980) and Lyngdoh (1996) who have reported similar findings in their respective studies. Regarding sanitary facilities, Shah (1968) and Verma (1966) found that in majority of the pre-schools in the city of Baroda, there was lack of toilet facilities, and that the toilet and washing facilities present in some nursery schools were poor and inadequate, which support the present finding. Majority of the pre-schools in Mizoram, according to the findings of the present study, are without any equipment and materials for indoor and outdoor play and activities, and the equipment and materials available in few pre-schools are inadequate. Similar findings have been reported by Verma (1966), Sharma (1971), Shrivastava (1971) and Singh et al (1978).
NCERT (1970) again reported that in Hyderabad and Secunderabad, majority of the teachers were untrained. Maiyani (1989) found that the present set-up of pre-primary education in Gujarat was not satisfactory in terms of teacher training. Laltanpuii (1984) and Lyngdoh (1996) on the basis of their respective studies reported that the teachers working in preschools in Aizawl and Shillong were untrained. The finding of the present study in the case of private pre-school teachers reveals that even after about 12 years, there is no improvement in the training of pre-school teachers in Mizoram. But NCERT (1970) and Sharma's (1971) findings which reported that majority of the pre-school teachers in Delhi and Jabalpur were trained, do not support the present finding. This disagreement may be due to the fact that pre-school teachers in these two cities have better opportunity for training than that of Mizoram.

The findings of the present study in relation to teacher-child ratio have the support of Yeli (1979) and Deka (1982) who also found high teacher-child ratio in pre-primary schools in Karnataka and Assam respectively.

NCERT (1970) reported that the age range for admission in most of the unrecognised institutions offering pre-school elementary education in Hyderabad and Secunderabad was from 3 to $3 \frac{1}{2}$ years, and 2 to $4 \frac{1}{2}$ years in Delhi, whereas the present study reveals that the minimum age for admission into nursery class in most of the private pre-schools is $4+$ years.
Regarding formal teaching of the 3R's, the finding of the present study has the support of Verma (1966), Singh et al (1978), NIPCCD (1980), Mishra (1990), Sharma (1992) and Tyobeka (1986) who have also found emphasis being placed on formal teaching of the 3R's. At the same time, this finding is in disagreement with that of Yeli (1979) and Lyngdoh (1996) which revealed that only few pre-primary schools (in Karnataka) include formal teaching of reading and writing, and majority of teachers (in Shillong) adopt the play-way and story-telling in combination with other methods. The finding of the present study in relation to home-work in the case of private pre-schools is supported by the findings of Laltanpuii (1984) and Lyngdoh (1996) which stated that pre-school children were burdened with home-assignments.

The present study highlights absence of or inadequate provision of health care in pre-schools. Similar findings have also been reported by Shah (1968) Singh et al (1978) and Deka (1982) in their respective studies. Verma's (1966) findings that out of 45 pre-school institutions in the city of Baroda, only 17 schools had parent meetings and only 13 schools maintained children's record also support the findings of the present study in this regard.

The investigator regrets that she could not find any study to support or contradict her findings on many other dimensions of pre-school education covered under the status study.

2. Discussion of findings on pre-school teacher training programmes

The present study reveals that there is not even single institution which impart training to pre-school teachers in Mizoram, except one training centre
which is meant for anganwadi workers. Thus, the findings of the present study in relation to teacher training programmes are mainly focussed on the programmes of Anganwadi Workers Training Centre (AWTC).

The investigator could not find any study which directly support or contradict her findings in this regard. Seetharamu and Usha's (1984) study which focussed on non-evaluative findings, aiming to get factual information about the training and physical facilities available in pre-primary teacher education in Bangalore may be the one which is somehow related to the present study. Bapat (1957) reported few problems related to pre-primary teacher training institutions and others like Shrivastava (1987), Murlidharan and Pankajam (1988), Khosla (1991) Dubey and Joshi (1993), studied the effectiveness of teacher training on the performance of the teacher or anganwadi workers or children, the findings of which do not have direct bearing on the present findings.

3. Discussion of findings on parents' reactions to and expectations from pre-schools

The present study reveals that majority of parents whose children were studying in either private or public pre-schools reacted positively to pre-school buildings and negatively to equipment and materials for indoor and outdoor play, whereas majority of the parents were dissatisfied with both according to Tyobeka's (1986) findings. Majority of parents in the present study also feel that the education and care provided to their children by the pre-schools is worth the money spent by them. Parents in Tyobeka's (1986) study also expressed their willingness to pay increased school fees. Regarding the
expectation in return of the money spent by them, parents in the present study expect the pre-schools to teach children English, 3R's, manners and etiquette whereas parents, according to the findings of Sarojini (1971) gave preference to cleanliness, teaching of better habits, rhymes, stories and play.

Regarding teachers qualification, most parents in the present study expect that pre-school teachers should be at least +2 pass, and should have love, patience and gentleness. Sarojini (1971) also reported that parents considered affection and patience to be the important qualities of a pre-school teacher. According to Whitehead's (1994) finding, a specific concern was that staff members should be musically creative whereas parents wanted teachers to have majored in ECE according to Suh's (1994) finding. Majority of the parents in the present study also expect a teacher-child ratio of 1: below 30. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Suh (1994) which reveals that parents wanted a class-size of 20 children per teacher.

Very high percentages of parents from private and public pre-schools in the present study have favoured teaching of the 3R's and expected the same to be continued. This finding has the support of Sethi (1977) Singh et al (1978), and Tyobeka (1986) who, in their respective studies have reported almost similar findings. Regarding medium of instruction, the present study reveals that majority of parents from private and public pre-schools expect English and Mizo respectively to be the medium of communication and instruction. Sarojini (1971) also reported that mother-tongue was the most favourite medium of instruction among the parents.
Majority of parents in the present study expect that health check-up should be carried out by the pre-schools. Similar findings have been reported by Surkar (1984) and Whitehead (1994). Cent per cent of parents from public pre-schools expect supplementary nutrition for their children. In this regard, Singh et al (1978) also reported that provision of nutritional supplements was one of the main reasons given by parents for sending their children to balwadis.

A review of available literature reveals that no serious research has not yet been conducted on parents' reactions or expectations or attitudes towards tests and interviews for admission, use of textbooks, assignment of home-work, holding tests and examinations for evaluation, parent-teacher contact etc.

7.3.0 Recommendations for Improvement of the Status of Pre-school Education

Recommendations for improvement of the status of pre-school education in Mizoram have been given under the following three broad headings:

1. Recommendations for improvement of pre-school facilities and programmes.
2. Recommendations for improvement of the status of training of pre-school teachers.

7.3.1 Recommendations for Improvement of Pre-school Facilities and Programmes

1. A pre-school should be located at a site not adjacent to but near the main road which is easily accessible to the children and free from
hazards like heavy traffic, steep stairs/steps, ditches, drains and distracting noises of heavy traffic.

2. A pre-school should have an outdoor play space of at least 15 x 20/30 sq.mts. for a group of 30 children for conducting outdoor activities. All the personnels involved in pre-school education should be educated and made aware of the importance of outdoor play space so that they would try to have it inspite of the difficulties met in a hilly area like Mizoram. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to construct boundary walls or fencing around the school complex to ensure safety of children.

3. A minimum indoor space (room size) 5 x 7 = 35 sq.mts. for a group of 30 children must be provided. It is desirable that room size may be 5 x 9 sq.mts. or above.

4. Every pre-school, in addition to classrooms should have a storage space, a toilet, a varandah and cooking facility separately. Rooms should be well ventilated and have adequate light. There may be a separate science corner, dolls corner, books corner, a corner or window sill for plants that may be nurtured by children.

5. Classroom walls should be clean and well plastered. They should have ample space for display of children's work and other pictorial material at children's eye level which will be approximately 3 to 4 ft. above the ground.

6. A mat and a set of low and light tables/nest of tables for a group of 6 - 8 children for art work, paper work etc. are to be provided.
Provision of blackboard at low level for scribbling, free drawing by children should also be made. A low rack or built-in-shelf should be there in the room.

7. Facility for pure drinking water and provision for washing the glasses/tumblers etc. after use should be made.

8. A clean Indian type toilet with tap water facility, soap, towel, and garbage bin should be provided. It is desirable that bathroom fixtures and sinks may be fixed at a low level so that children can reach them easily. Exhaust fan may be installed in the bathroom window and sinks at low level may be installed in each classroom.

9. Outdoor play equipment and materials for providing experiences like climbing, jumping, balancing, swinging, swaying, cycling, throwing, rolling, catching, kicking, sand play, water play etc. should be provided for large muscle development of children.

10. Indoor play equipment and materials for manipulative, constructive and imaginative plays, to foster specific language and cognitive skills, for art/craft, music and movement activities etc. should be provided for finer muscle development of children.

11. Pre-schools should have different types of audio-visual equipment like T.V., video, radio, tape recorder, slides and films to provide more realistic experiences to children. Stories, poems, nursery rhymes and features developed by talented writers should be recorded and played back on tape recorders or video cassette recorders and players.
12. First aid or medicine kit should be kept by every pre-school as pre-school age is an accidental prone age.

13. Organisers of private pre-schools should ensure that they appoint only female teachers for pre-school classes.

14. Training in ECE should be made compulsory for every pre-school teacher. In the absence of teacher training institution for private pre-school teachers in Mizoram, the Association of Private English Medium schools offering pre-school programmes should come forward to organise short-course training for pre-school teachers with the help of experts in the field of ECE and/or instructresses of Anganwadi Workers Training Centre (AWTC).

15. Salaries especially of the anganwadi workers need to be raised. The salary of pre-school teachers should commensurate with the qualifications and hours of work and should be at par with the primary school teachers subject to parity in both i.e. academic qualifications well as hours of work.

16. The teacher-child ratio should be 1:25 to 1:30.

17. Policy makers and school managements should make $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 years the minimum age for entry to pre-schools.

18. The admission procedure should be such that does not involve any evaluation of children. Policy makers should ensure implementation of Yashpal Committee (1992-93) recommendation which states ...."holding tests and interviews for admission to nursery class be abolished". Therefore, school managements should adopt child-friendly admission procedures like :- first
come first serve, computerised random selection, quota-based random selection, comprehensive proforma based selection.

19. Duration of the pre-school programmes should be 3 to 4 hours with some rest period in between.

20. Pre-school programmes should be planned in advance both on a long term and short term basis. The daily activities should be planned according to the age and developmental level of the children. There should be a flexible balance of activities for all aspects of development as well as a balance between individual and group activities, indoor and outdoor activities, vigorous and quiet activities and guided and free activities. Each day's plan should include the developmental objectives to be promoted, the specific activities to be conducted and the materials required. The activities in the lesson plans should be very specifically indicated giving the exact title of the story/song/games to be conducted.

21. Daily schedule or time-table should be prepared in which cognitive, language and creative activities, indoor and outdoor play, organized and free play in small groups, free and structured conversations, story telling, dramatization, rhythmic movements, puppet play etc. are to be included. While carefully planned time-table is essential, flexibility should also be provided to accommodate immediate needs and situations.

22. Policy makers should institute a ban on textbooks at the pre-school stage. They should ensure implementation of Yashpal Committee (1992-93) recommendation which states ....... "The young children should not be tortured by compelling them to carry heavy bags of books every day
to schools". If, at present, textbooks cannot be completely banned, at least they should be treated as school property and children should not be compelled to purchase the books individually and to carry them daily to homes.

23. The methodology for pre-school programme should be play and activity oriented and there should be no formal teaching of the 3R's. In this regard, the policy makers should:

   a) ensure implementation of National Policy (1986) and Yashpal Committee (1992-93) recommendations which state ...... "It should be ensured that these institutions do not perpetrate violence on young children by inflicting a heavy dose of 'over-education' in the form of formal teaching of Reading, Writing and Numbers ....", by instituting some form of licensing or regulation.

   b) provide for an orientation/training of pre-school teachers in play and activity based ECE.

   c) school managements also should make pre-school programmes play based and focussed on developmental not academic goals.

24. Play activities should be planned in ways that would expose children to a variety of experiences and promote their social and emotional development, large and fine muscle development, language development, cognitive skills and foster creativity in them.

25. Medium of communication should be the mother tongue/ regional language.
26. No homework should be given to children at pre-school stage. The recommendation of the Yashpal Committee which states "children should not be given any homework even in primary classes" be implemented.

27. There should be no formal tests and examinations at pre-school stage. Instead, continuous evaluation should be done mainly through observation of the child's behaviour and responses during the various play activities e.g. through puzzles, structured language and cognitive activities, games etc.

28. Report of progress of children in the various developmental aspects such as physical, language, cognitive etc. should be prepared on the basis of children's work and teachers' observations.

29. The pre-school should provide for:
   a) regular medical checkup of children and follow-up and referral services where necessary,
   b) growth monitoring through maintenance of height and weight records.
   c) treatment of minor ailments and referring serious cases to HWF or PHC.
   d) immunization.

30. The pre-school should provide for snack-time and daily provision of supplementary nutrition.

31. Frequent parent-teacher contact activities like home-visits, meetings etc. should form a vital part of the pre-school programme. These
should focus upon eliciting parental involvement in order to develop awareness in them regarding the pre-school programme and facilitate smooth running of it.

32. Each pre-school should maintain a detailed record of personal data sheet, home background, developmental history, habits and interest, health record and teachers' assessment of the child.

33. Private and public pre-schools should maintain all the prescribed registers so as to enable them to assess their own performance, identify services that need improvement and report on their progress.

7.3.2 Recommendations for Improvement of the Status of Training of Pre-school Teachers

A. Recommendations for training of private pre-school teachers

1. It is the responsibility of the state government to see that pre-school teachers get opportunity to undergo training appropriate to their work. The state government should, therefore, assist private agencies running pre-schools in the strategic area of teacher training as envisaged in various Five Year Plans especially in the Fifth Plan.

2. The SCERT, Mizoram should set up the Department of Pre-school and Elementary Education in line with NCERT which has set up this department in 1971 at its National Institute of Education. Special attention should be paid to teacher preparation and training and more literature should be produced for the pre-school level as has been done by the NCERT at the national level. Organisation of in-service courses for the private pre-school teachers should also be taken up by the SCERT.
Many state governments in India have assigned the responsibility of pre-school and elementary teacher education to the SCERT of their respective states. SCERTs of only those states which have well qualified staff like Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Karnataka, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan are taking keen interest not only in the development of pre-school teacher education, but also in improving its quality. Staff members of SCERTs of these states have been appointed through direct recruitment. But SCERTs whose staff members are appointed on promotion basis, from high school or intermediate teachers are not functioning properly because these teachers do not have research aptitude. Uttar Pradesh, a biggest state of India is one example of this. It is, therefore, suggested that at the time of the establishment of the Department of Pre-school and Elementary Education in SCERT, Mizoram, its faculty posts should be filled through direct recruitment from qualified personnels who have background in the area of pre-school education or ECE.

3. Voluntary organisations, private bodies and agencies, semi-government organisations etc. in Mizoram which are concerned with the welfare of pre-school children should come forward to start pre-school teacher training centre or institution as has been done in some other states in India. The Mizoram State Social Welfare Advisory Board (MSSWAB), which had opened many balwadis and creches in rural areas of Mizoram before Social Welfare Department opened anganwadis, may be an appropriate body to start pre-school teacher training institute in Mizoram. After the introduction of ICDS scheme, many balwadis from MSSWAB have been taken over by the S.W.D., Government of Mizoram, therefore, MSSWAB can now focus its attention on the training of private pre-school teachers.
A biggest women's organisation in the state called the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), which has been entrusted by Social Welfare Department to run many pre-schools all over Mizoram, may also be assigned the responsibility of running a pre-school teacher training centre.

4. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Delhi has been offering a diploma course in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) which can be pursued by any willing candidate who has passed 10+2 or its equivalent. In the absence of training institution for private pre-school teachers in Mizoram, it is suggested that the teachers working in private pre-schools should be persuaded by the organisers of pre-schools to join this course.

5. Awareness on the part of the organisers and teachers of private pre-schools, parents and community of the specialised nature of pre-school education and the importance of training of teachers in ECCE is a pre-requisite for the setting up of pre-school teacher training centre or institution. If people are aware of this, demand for training institution will grow and result in the opening of pre-school teacher training institution. Awareness campaign, therefore, needs to be launched through electronic and print media and also by organising seminars, workshops and debates on the issue of ECE. Besides, there should be a regulation from the government insisting the organisers of the private pre-schools to give top most priority to the training of their teachers.
B. Recommendations for improvement of training of anganwadi workers

1. In the absence of its own building, Anganwadi Workers Training Centre (AWTC) has been shifted many times to different localities of Aizawl city. The private building occupied by AWTC at present is located just on the road side and does not have even the minimum infrastructure required for a full-fledged training centre. The single classroom available in the institute is too congested. There is no library cum reading room for the trainees. It is, therefore, suggested that the AWTC should be provided with a large building of its own with a compound or shifted to a building having the basic infrastructure required for training purposes.

2. There are only two instructresses in the AWTC which is too less for a full-fledged training centre. It is, therefore, suggested that more instructresses be appointed so that different types of training programmes offered by AWTC can be successfully carried out without the help of outsiders.

3. The pay scales of the principal and instructresses are not at par with the pay scales of equivalent posts in other government departments requiring the same educational qualifications. It is, therefore, suggested that this disparity in pay scales should be removed so that more competent and efficient personnel can be attracted for these posts.

4. The AWTC does not maintain proper record of the number of anganwadi workers who have been given different kinds of training. It can be assumed that there will come a time when researchers would like to focus their study on AWTC only for which more detailed information would be required.
For this and many other purposes, it is strongly suggested that important data relating to the activities and programmes of AWTC should be worked out by the office staff and be kept ready for reference.

5. Inspite of the number of anganwadi workers trained by AWTC surpassing the number of workers needed for all the anganwadi centres in the state, there is still a backlog of untrained workers. The main reason for this appears to be the fact that new workers have to be recruited every now and then as trained workers frequently give up their jobs possibly due to low honorarium paid to them. One important pre-requisite for raising the salary of anganwadi workers is to raise the minimum educational qualification for an anganwadi worker to at least a matriculation. This would raise the position and status of the anganwadi worker which would, in turn, retain trained workers so that the backlog of untrained workers would be liquidated in a short time. It is, therefore, suggested that the minimum educational qualification for the post of an anganwadi worker should be raised to at least matriculation and salary should also be increased accordingly.

6. Conducting Refresher Course for trained anganwadi workers and Orientation Course for helpers once or twice a year, is not enough. As the duration is only 14 days for Refresher Course and 10 days for Orientation Course, conducting more number of these courses in a year is possible and is, therefore, suggested.

7. In view of the difficulties met by the anganwadi workers working in remote places to come to the training centre for Refresher Training, it is desireable and suggested that Mobile Training and Field Visits should be carried out more frequently.
8. Activities for the development of creativity and aesthetic development should also be incorporated in the syllabus under the unit on - "Activities for physical, motor, language, cognitive, personal, social and emotional development".

9. The practical activities undertaken by the trainees for preparation of aids and play materials for different aspects of development are limited to the preparation of only few aids and materials. More aids and play materials need to be prepared and emphasis should also be given on activities for creativity and aesthetic development.

10. As library work is an important part of the training programme, due attention should be given to this so that the programmes can be carried out more effectively. As the number of books available in AWTC are insufficient for 35 trainees, more copies of these books should be procured. Moreover, almost all the books available in AWTC are in English, hence, they are not of much use to the trainees who are generally under matric. It is, therefore, suggested that AWTC should give top priority to the translation of these books into Mizo language so that trainees can make use of these books.

11. So far audio-visual programme is concerned, the authority concerned should always ensure that equipment needed are in good condition and kept in the training centre only.

12. Trainees are evaluated formally on the basis of their performance in few practical activities (mainly preparation of aids and play materials and of simple recipes) and written examination on theory papers, but that is not enough. There should be a continuous, comprehensive and informal evaluation through systematic observation of the trainees' behaviour, responses and
performance in classrooms and practical activities including group discussion, role playing, dramatization, field work etc.

7.3.3 Recommendations for Parent-Education

The present study reveals that parents did not react strongly against the undesirable practices in both private and public sector pre-schools, and do not have high expectations from these institutions. This may imply that parents are quite ignorant about the desired standards as well as the nature of pre-school education. Hence, Parents' reactions to and expectations from pre-schools, in most cases, cannot be utilized for improvement of pre-school education system. To enable them to realize the evils of many current practices, to know what to expect from pre-schools and to influence the pre-school management to modify their practices in accordance with the desired standards, the following suggestions have been given:

1. Meaningful parent-education should be imparted. Parents should be taught about the minimum specifications for pre-schools and other related recommendations or suggestions made by various experts in the field of pre-school or Early Childhood Education (ECE).

2. Parent-education should focus on educating them to realize that ECE is:

   i) a child-centred programme which follows the playway and activity approach, not a teacher-centred programme following the formal classroom approach,
ii) a programme with a focus on the holistic development of the child, not on school achievement.

iii) a programme which provides a stimulating play environment for intellectual, language, social, emotional and physical development of the child, not a syllabus-bound programme for teaching the 3R's.

iv) a programme which prepares children for the primary school, not a downward extension of the primary school.

v) a programme which lays the foundation for the development of reading, writing and number work, not a programme which teaches reading, writing and number work.

vi) not an examination oriented programme which lays stress on the end-product that is learned by the children.

vii) a programme which stresses on prior planning and scheduling but is at the same time flexible to children's needs, not a structured, rigid and inflexible programme set to class periods and fixed time-tables.

viii) a programme which indirectly promotes self-control and thereby, inner discipline in children, not a programme which demands unquestioning obedience in children or exercises strict classroom discipline.

3. Parent-education in this regard should be imparted through

i) T.V. and radio talks or panel discussions, publication of articles in Mizo language in local news-papers and various magazines.
ii) Home-based model involving development of techniques of stimulation advocated in India and many other countries, that can be taught to and applied by parents for providing stimulating environment to children at home.

7.3.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The present study analyses the status of pre-school education in Mizoram in a broad perspective. It may be assumed that some more researchers would take up their research work in this area in the near future. The investigator, therefore, makes the following suggestions for further research in this particular field:

1. An indepth study of pre-school teacher training programmes in Mizoram can be taken up as an independent study.

2. Parents' reactions and expectations, or their attitudes towards or opinions about pre-school education programmes can be studied in relation to their Socio-Economic Status (SES) and Education Level.

3. An impact study can be carried out to find out the effects of pre-school education on psycho-motor, language, social, emotional, cognitive and creativity development of children.

4. An evaluative study of non-formal pre-school education component of anganwadi under ICDS projects in Mizoram can be conducted.
5. A critical study of the functioning and management of anganwadis in Mizoram is also recommended.

6. A normative study of language development in pre-school children in Mizoram can be taken up.

7. An experimental study can be conducted to find out the effects of parent-education, parent involvement and early childhood stimulation on performance of pre-school children or on achievement of developmental objectives of pre-school education.