REVIEW
OF
RELATED LITERATURE
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Review of related literature is an essential aspect of a research project. In this chapter an attempt has been made to review the work that has been done in the area of pre-school education. A cursory glance at current researches in the field indicates that we still have a long way to go.

A number of research studies have been located both in foreign as well as in Indian contexts relating to early childhood education, but the number of Indian studies is rather limited. In our country, organised education of the child below primary school age did not, until very recently, receive the attention it deserved. In India, studies have been conducted mostly on children who are in the secondary age group. On reviewing the studies related to pre-school education one is struck by the gross neglect and lack of interest in this crucial area.

There is a growing awareness of the crucial significance of the pre-school years for the optimum development of the child not only in India but the world over. During the 'sixties' and 'seventies' a large number of research studies and intervention programmes were initiated to study and help the pre-school child. No conclusive evidence is yet available; but the direction of results indicate the
significance of the early years. It has not been possible to touch upon all the studies relating to early childhood education. In this chapter only selected and relevant studies conducted on pre-school children have been reviewed.

Some of the researches given below may not be directly related to the present study but a brief review of these would stimulate Indian educators and researchers to explore a variety of themes to study the development of pre-school children.

WESTERN STUDIES

Early in the 1920's Arnold Gesell (1925) began to study the learning habits of young children and suggested that early childhood education may be as important as any that follows. He noted that the brain practically reaches its mature bulk before the age of six and that the mind, character, and spirit advances more rapidly during the formative preschool period than during any other period of growth.

Social growth in play among pre-school children was studied by Parten (1933). She took children aged two to five years into a play yard and allowed them to play alone or with others. The children were observed daily for 'one minute' each at the morning free play hour until 70 behaviour samples were

recorded. She found six varieties of behaviour patterns from unoccupied behaviour to co-operative play.

In the 'unoccupied behaviour' the child watches anything of momentary interest. Next, there is the 'onlooker behaviour' in which the child watches other children at play. In the 'solitary independent play' situation the child plays alone without any reference to what other children are doing. Next there is 'parallel' play in which the child plays independently but with toys used by other children.

In the 'associative play' the child plays with others. Finally, there is co-operative play in which the child plays in a group organized to make some product or in some game.

Susan Issacs (1953) provided some suitable play experiences and studied the personal relationships of young children at certain age levels.

Inhelder and Piaget (1964) investigated into the stages of cognitive development of young children in terms of their genesis and structures. They have divided cognitive development into three major stages: Sensory motor operators (first 18 months); concrete thinking operations (18 months to 11 or 12 years) and stage of formal thinking operations (from 11 or 12 years to 14 or 15 years). The studies of Piaget and his co-workers have emphasized the importance of the child's activity and experience in the early years.

A number of projects were initiated both in the U.K. and U.S.A during the sixties to find the most effective ways of improving the education of pre-school children from
deprived areas and impoverished home conditions. While all research reports cannot be included, it seems pertinent to point out a few studies relating to pre-school education.

The most well known antipoverty programme launched in the USA was the Head Start Project (1969) which was designed to improve the children's health and help in their emotional and social development.

2. Joan Tough, (1977) pre-school language project was concerned with the influence of early social experiences on the child's development and use of language. She conducted this study at the University of Leeds school of Education which was supported by the schools council of the U.K. It sought to examine the use of language by children from unfavoured home backgrounds who received nursery education with those from a similar home background who did not. The study in question was a longitudinal investigation of language development in middle and working class children. She found that even at the age of 3, there were differences in both the linguistic structure and language functions of middle and working class children. The working class children less often used language to report on past experiences or to predict the future, to give explanations, justify behaviour, and reflect

on feelings. In addition, their mean length utterance was shorter and their sentence structure was less complex.

Joan Tough concluded that the educational problem was not to teach working class children to talk more often, or in longer or more complete sentences. The problem is rather that they have had little practice in using language for certain purposes. In high socio-economic status families the mother recalls the past and anticipates the future, she reads him stories, encourages the child to make comparisons, offer explanations and look for differences; she encourages creative indoor activities and imaginative play. The working class child on the other hand has much less of these kinds of experience and enters school with a different set of meanings and does not respond in the way the other child does. Joan Tough suggested that teachers should help the child to ask questions, solve problems, explore the meaning of particular situations, and in general to use language as a means of learning.

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Bloom (1964) concluded from his studies that the most rapid period of development appears to be the first five years of life and that about 17 percent of growth in educational achievement takes place between the age four and six.

In relation to deprived young children, Bloom points out that the effects of environment are likely to be greatest during the early and more rapid period of intellectual development. The early years of life, according to him are years for gaining experience and not for formal learning.

**INDIAN STUDIES**

Some research evidence collected from the studies done in the Indian context are presented here to show the significance of pre-school education for the development of the child.

The NCERT initiated a series of developmental studies in the late sixties and early seventies for studying the developmental characteristics of Indian pre-school children who were in the age group of 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) to 5 years.

A study of adaptive, language, personal-social and motor development of children in the age group of 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) to 5 years was conducted by R. Muralidharan (1970) in the urban, rural and industrial areas in seven different centres of the country. (Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras and Hyderabad). Only the urban samples were drawn from the nursery schools. The study was done both longitudinally

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4. R. Muralidharan, *Developmental Norms of Indian Children 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) to 5 years*, Department of Educational Psychology and Foundations of Education, NCERT, New Delhi, 1970.
and cross-sectionally and the sample comprised more than 7000 children. The results showed that in language development rural children showed late development by 1 to 1½ years in almost all tasks as compared to urban children. Children from the industrial areas were found to be faster than rural children but slower than their urban counterparts. The language tests included naming and identification of pictures, use of objects, comprehension, concepts of time, right and left, and ability to give one's own name, age and address, humour, following directions, prepositions, naming parts of the body, responding to picture cards and responding to picture books.

In adaptive development the nursery school going urban sample was found to be faster than the rural children or children from the industrial areas. The tests included block-play, drawing, form-discrimination, number concept, colour identification, immediate memory, comparative judgement and problem solving. In these tests rural children were far behind the urban ones.

In motor development too, the urban children were found to be faster than the children from the other two areas. The tests included ball play, standing, walking and running, ascending and descending steps, skipping, hopping and jumping and hand skills such as threading beads and cutting.

Personal social development was studied by
interview schedules with mothers. The schedules covered behaviours of eating, sleeping, elimination, dressing, personal hygiene, communication, play and developmental detachment. Here again, the urban children were faster in the majority of tasks.

The implication of this evidence is serious. In almost all tasks, the urban nursery school going children were found to do better than the rural children or children from the industrial area. The differences are striking, particularly in all tests connected with school, such as all paper and pencil tests, number tests, picture vocabulary tests etc. Rural children were found to be having trouble in all these tests. It implies that rural children who form the majority of children in India, enter school without having had any kind of preparation for schooling. The process of schooling, therefore, becomes too difficult for them and as such many of them either have to repeat the class or leave school altogether. This is partly the reason of wastage and stagnation in the early primary classes.

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S.K. Chattopadhyay (1971) undertook an investigation on the Language Development of Nursery and Primary school children. The objectives were to find out the developmental

problems relating to nine aspects of language skill of nursery and primary school children of West Bengal. Efforts were made to find out whether differences due to rural and urban areas and differences due to sex had any impact on the development of language skill.

The sample consisted of 600 children in the age range of 4 to 10 years, belonging to nursery and primary school, situated in rural and urban areas of West Bengal. Materials used in the study consisted of Language Development Items (LDI) prepared by the investigator. The LDI had items corresponding to nine different aspects of language skills—namely skill in handwriting, reading, immediate span of verbal consciousness, mean length of verbal response, sense of directional languages, sense of language regarding simple arithmetic, nature of sentence, story telling, capacity through pictures and sense of language regarding causal relation.

The findings were as follows:-

i) Urban children were in a better position than the rural ones so far as language development was concerned.

ii) Girls did not excel boys and the differences in scores due to difference in sex were not significant.

iii) Regarding language development, children of educated parents were better than the children of less education ones.

iv) It would be stated that language skill was directly related to age and hence to maturation.
R. Krishnamurthi (1971) made a study on the preparation of materials to develop Reading Readiness in children of pre-school age. The objective of the project were:

(i) to prepare reading readiness tests and administer them to pre-school children.
(ii) to prepare materials such as pictures, charts etc. for the development of reading readiness.
(iii) To determine the reliability and validity of the developed test.

The sample consisted of 342 children (203 boys and 139 girls) attending the nursery schools in the city of Madras. Reading Readiness was measured by:

(i) The word meaning test
(ii) The sentence meaning test
(iii) The visual perception test
(iv) The auditory discrimination test
(v) The copying test

The major findings were:

(1) Children of 4+ were ready to take instruction in reading.
(2) Girls of 4+ to 5+ did better in reading readiness tests than boys of the same age.
(3) The same copying test was not so easy to the children as

the visual perception test.

(4) Nursery school children from the low income group were as able as those from high income group in their performance in the reading readiness tests.

(5) Children exhibited equal ability in taking verbal and non verbal tests.

(6) The pre-school age children possessed essential language elements to profit by reading.

(7) There was an urgent need for attractive get up of reading readiness work books.

7. Muralidharan and Banerji (1974) conducted an intensive study on a small sample of children to study the effect of pre-school education on their language and intellectual development. The sample consisted of children of semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The experimental group consisted of 14 children who were doing their final term in the pre-school and had a mean age of 5 years 11 months. The control group was drawn from class I of a primary school and consisted of 15 children with a mean age of 6 years 6 months, none of whom had pre-schooling but did have five months of schooling in class I. The tests used were story narration for language and draw-a-man test for intelligence. The results

showed in no uncertain terms that the pre-school group is at an advantage in both language and intellectual development in spite of the fact that they were chronologically younger than the primary school group.

Another study was undertaken by Muralidharan and Banerji (1975) on the Effect of pre-school Education on the school Readiness of under privileged children of Delhi. The study was an investigation into the effect of pre-school education as given by a public agency with its limitations of space, play equipment and inadequate funds on a group of underprivileged children entering primary school. The sample consisted of 252 five year old children from 27 Municipal Corporation primary schools of Delhi. All children belonged to the low and lower middle class families, the average income of which was Rs.200 per month. Children (N=109) in the experimental group had received pre-school education in Corporation nursery schools before coming to class I, whereas children in the control group (N=143) came to class I without any pre-school education. Children were tested immediately after they were admitted in class I. The tests consisted of reading and number readiness tests. The components of the reading readiness test were word meaning, sentence meaning, visual, perception and auditory discrimination. The results

showed that the group with pre-school education performed significantly better than the group without pre-school education. The crucial points of the study were that the children under study were under privileged and the nursery schools which gave these children the head start were not "fancy" ones— they were poorly equipped with toys, had limited play space but yet were able to produce results.

In 1975, Devi C.L. made an analytical study of social development of Nursery school children. She tried to analyse the various aspects of developmental trends in social behaviour of nursery school children.

The cross sectional approach was used to study the social behaviour of 200 children in twelve nursery schools in the age ranges 3-4 and 4-5 years. The sample was drawn from urban and rural areas and included both boys and girls in equal number in the two age groups. Social behaviour was studied in relation to physical, motor, personal, language and intellectual development and participation in school activities. The main technique for the collection of data was observation with time sampling and tape recording. Observation diaries on social behaviour of pupils were maintained by parents and teachers on the basis of which parents filled data forms and teachers completed check lists. Interviews were used to supplement the data. Frequency analysis was made for patterning social behaviour into three categories— very high,
average and low. Discriminating values between the two age
groups were calculated for each aspect of social behaviour analysed.

The different aspects of each of the areas of social behaviour were identified and categorized into personal, social and intellectual, which were then patterned into different categories from high to low. The main findings were-

(i) The relationship of intelligence, sex, health and the birth order of children and the religious beliefs of parents to social behaviour were not found to be significant and with the size of the family not conclusive.

(ii) The absence of parents was found to be significantly related to low social development.

(iii) The economic status, occupation and education of parents discriminated between high and low groups in social development.

(iv) The relationship between the environment of school and social behaviour was found to be linked to the economic level of parents. Boys were found to prefer girls in play activities but girls preferred their own sex.

(v) Favourable attitude to school was seen among the high social groups.

9. Pankajan G. (1979) undertook a study to find out the

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impact of pre-school education on the language development of children. She made a comparative analysis of the language development of children among the age group of $2\frac{1}{4}$ to 5 years who were attending and who were not attending pre-schools.

The language development of the children were observed in three different situations –

(i) While playing with a peer group

(ii) In the company of adults at home and

(iii) their responses to a set of pictures of common objects and toys.

The result of her findings indicate that in certain aspects of language development those children who attend pre-schools perform better than the others. No significant difference was observed in the language development of boys and girls. She concludes that attending pre-schools with good programme, specially in rural areas definitely plays a prominent role in language development of children. This asserts the value and necessity of strengthening pre-school education and making it compulsory in the educational system, to have a strong foundation for the future higher education.

In 1980 Rao, S.R. conducted a study to find out the effect of pre-school education on Primary and secondary school

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More specifically, the study was designed to find out the differences in academic achievement and acquisition of certain personal and social characteristics of children who attended a nursery school and those who did not. A rating scale was developed to assess the attainments of children with regard to such aspects as ability to mix with others, cooperation, leadership qualities, picture drawing ability, ability to narrate stories, health habits, ability to work independently and participation in games and sports.

The major findings of the investigation were:-

(i) The achievement of the children with pre-school education was higher than that of the children without such education in class I. But the scores of the children with pre-school education did not differ significantly from the children who did not receive such education.

(ii) Regarding personal and social characteristics, the children who had the benefit of pre-school education were superior to those children who did not receive any such education in respect of picture drawing ability, punctuality and participation in games and sports.

development, socio-economic status, reactions to frustration and patterns of social behaviour. Play preferences and patterns of social behaviour were studied through the Obsen and Cunningham Observation chart. The data were analysed and interpreted using correlation and analysis of variance, supplemented with critical ratio.

The findings of the study were:

(i) Most of the boys and girls preferred to play with building blocks, hole fixing boxes, musical instruments, picture boxes and water.

(ii) In the case of outdoor games, boys and girls preferred to play with sand boxes, swings, merry-go-round, slides, see-saws, balls and rings.

(iii) Play preferences of boys and girls did not differ significantly at junior levels both in case of indoor as well as outdoor games.

(iv) Socio-economic status did not influence the play preferences of boys and girls at junior or senior stages if given equal opportunity.

(v) Boys and girls displayed different patterns of social behaviour. Boys displayed more patterns of rivalry and teasing whereas the girls displayed more patterns of cooperation and sympathy. On other patterns of social behaviour, the sexes differed but not significantly.

The study has its implications for the nursery schools
where different play activities need to be provided to the children, irrespective of sex and socio-economic status. These activities will help in cognitive development, handling reactions to frustrations and above all for proper social development.

Another interesting study on the social competence of 5-6 year old children in relation to the family structure and pre-school background was made by Shukla, R. (1984). The study was designed to determine the effect of the structural composition of the family, ordinal position of the child, school environment and socio-economic status on the social competence of children.

The data regarding social competence were collected with the help of the Social Behaviour Check List. Information regarding family composition was collected with the help of a Family Information Form. With the help of an unstructured interview schedule, responses from the mother about children's interaction with adults and siblings at home were collected.

The main findings of the study were:

i. Family structure did not have any effect on children's ability for social interaction.

ii. Family size did not have any effect on social competence of children.

iii. Presence of grand parents did not have any effect on the social competence of children.

iv. Ordinal position of the child did not have any effect on the social competence of the children.

v. Both reward and punishment had effect on social competence of children.

vi. With age, the students acquired greater social competence.

vii. Sex did not have any influence on social competence.

viii. School environment had a significant effect on social competence of children.

An evaluative study of the 'Balwadis in India' was conducted by K.K. Singh and others. The study aimed at finding out who benefited from the programmes, what services were provided, how children were prepared for school, what were the roles of the balsevikas and what kind of relationship existed between balwadis and the community. The sample consisted of 150 balwadis drawn from six states. The study was done by using observational techniques and planned interview schedules. Some of the important findings were:-

(a) The balwadis were found to be used more by the privileged children of the community.

(b) The position regarding health services were not very satisfactory in terms of health check ups etc.

(c) The main impact of the balwadis appears to be in the area of education. The children who came from balwadis were perceived to be better in general behaviour, adjustment to school, neatness and cleanliness, regularity and punctuality in school, rate of learning and achievement in reading and writing. It was, however, found that the activities in the balwadis were too structured and lacked flexibility and imaginative play.

STUDIES CONDUCTED IN ASSAM

A review of research literature pertaining to the problem revealed that very little work has been done until now in Assam on pre-school education. To the best knowledge of the investigator, none so far has made any attempt to study the social development of pre-school children. Obviously, there is not much relevant literature to be reviewed.

The work done by some researchers on pre-school education in Assam are given below:

14. Gauri Deka (1982) made a study on the organisation of pre-primary education in Assam. The study analysed the

objectives, activities and the routine of the various types of pre-school institutions, namely, nursery schools, kindergartens, Montessori school and Balwadis. The tool used was a questionnaire embracing the different aspects of pre-school education. The recommendations of the Kothari Education Commission and the programme framed by the NCERT were taken as the basic frame of reference. This was followed by visits to certain institutions for gathering supplementary information. Formal interviews with some parents and follow up studies with certain institutions were conducted to elicit authentic information.

The findings of the study were:

(i) There did not exist a definite set of objectives for pre-school education.

(ii) There was no clear policy or direction by the State Government in respect of pre-school institutions.

(iii) There were a number of shortcoming such as

(a) Lack of co-ordination of activities by the pre-school institutions.

(b) Shortage of competent, qualified and trained educational administrators.

(c) Absence of proper health care.

(d) Prevalence of uncongenial environmental conditions.

(e) Inadequate facilities for the training of personnel for pre-school education for long term as well as short term course and
(f) High child-teacher ratio.

(g) The findings also revealed that there were very few teaching aids, children's books and teacher's manuals especially in Assamese language.

In 1983, Sudhir Chandra Acharjya made a study on the development and problems of pre-primary and primary education in Tripura and Cachar. He made an attempt to evaluate the standard of pre-primary education in the two areas. The study was historical, analytical and comparative in nature. Materials were collected from a wide variety of sources by diverse means such as interviews, questionnaires, field study and personal contact with educational administrators, inspecting officials, teachers, guardians, parents, students, social workers and the like. Information was also collected from relevant records, literature etc.

The study mainly revealed that-

(i) As a result of the introduction of different schemes and due to the provision of increasing outlay in successive plan periods, there had been rapid expansion of pre-primary and primary education in Tripura and Cachar in all the major sectors such as the number of schools, teachers and children. The scope of training and administrative machinery was enlarged.

(ii) During the first 20 years of independence the progress was most remarkable. In Tripura in 1947, 8 percent of the children of school going age attended schools and 20 years later the percentage had increased to 86 percent and was expected to be 96 percent in 1978-79.  

(iii) Similar developments took place in the field of primary education.  

(iv) This rapid qualitative expansion had given rise to a number of problems. Some of the important problems of primary education in Tripura and Cachar were inadequacy of teaching staff, problems of physical plants, problems of single teacher school, lack of properly qualified and trained teachers, lack of incentives in the schools, absence of adequate schools, community relations, problems of accommodation for teachers, weak supervision and administration of primary education and acute problems of wastage arising out of drop outs and stagnation.  

(v) The availability of textbooks in Tripura and Cachar left much scope for improvement.  

(vi) The proportion of school going children of the backward classes and tribal communities was relatively low. Universal primary education has remained a goal yet to be achieved.  

Kusum Goswami (1987) investigated into the problems of working mothers and their impact on their pre-school children.  

children, with special reference to the city of Gauhati. The main objectives of the study were:

(i) To study the problems of working mothers and their conflicting roles as mothers, housewives and employees.
(ii) To study the working conditions and the existing facilities available for children and
(iii) assess the status of pre-school education with reference to Assam. Only those working women were selected who had pre-school children. The study revealed that —

(i) There was a multidimensional impact on children of working mothers. The most vulnerable section was the low paid and illiterate working mothers who were as ignorant of the importance of adequate child care as they were unaware of the facilities available.
(ii) Their children were brought up amidst poverty and ignorance.
(iii) The working women suffered from anxieties and tremendous strain because they had to harmonize the two roles of mother and worker.

J. Baruah (1988) undertook a study on the topic 'An Evaluation of pre-school Institutions in Assam with special reference to Teaching Methodology'. Her objectives were to make a review of pre-school programmes in the state of Assam.

and to know its status in general. She also tried to make an indepth study of the existing methodology in the pre-primary schools of Assam. The other objectives were to identify the problems experienced by the teachers and to know their views while implementing pre-school services to the beneficiaries and to know the awareness on the part of the parents on the impact of pre-school education for the healthy growth of children. She suggested modifications in the implementation of strategies for making the organisation more effective and for ensuring proper utilization of the benefits by the beneficiaries.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The research project has been justified on the ground that no such study has been undertaken in this part of the country. Some studies, however, have been made on various aspects of pre-school education, but the number is very limited.

The pre-school institutions play an important role in the socialisation of the child. The study of social development of children is undoubtedly an important matter. Some studies have been undertaken to study the social development of children, but these have been done elsewhere and not in Assam and are related to a different context. The diverse aspects relating to child development have not been fully explored in our state.
The study undertaken is expected to bring to light many undiscovered facets of pre-school education, mainly relating to the social development of children, the knowledge of which would directly enrich education at this level.