CHAPTER-VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
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In their chapter the conclusions of the study shall be presented first. The conclusions shall be drawn from the generalisations made in the previous chapter. Recommendations for further research shall then be made. Finally the summary of the entire study shall be presented.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE STUDY

Following a critical discussion of the data collected from the different nursery schools, generalisations were made for the situation prevailing in the field of preschool education in an urban area like Chandigarh. Although a sample of five nursery schools may be considered to be too small for making generalisations and drawing conclusions but the striking similarities in several major aspects of the nursery schools like goals, sources of finance, human resources, records, methods of maintaining discipline, curriculum, method of teaching, teaching aids, evaluation, time table, books, etc. suggest that similar conditions prevail in the nursery schools in an Indian city. Hence conclusions can be safely drawn from such generalisations. The conclusions highlight the strong and weak points in the situation prevailing in the nursery schools. Along with the conclusions the possible solution(s) to the problems have also been provided.
The conclusions shall be presented under the following three heads- administration, infrastructure and curriculum of the nursery schools.

**CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE NURSERY SCHOOLS**

Conclusions regarding the issues pertaining to the administration of the nursery schools are presented below through the following points.

**Strength of the nursery school**

The student strength of the nursery school varied greatly. The range was wide with only 25 students in some preschools and 340 students in some others.

**Grades or classes**

Unlike the schools of India which usually conform to a definite pattern (10+2) of grades, there was a lack of uniformity in that of the nursery schools. The government nursery school had only 2 grades-LKJ and UKJ. The private preschools had one, two or three grades namely-prenursery, nursery or LKG and UKG. Such non uniformity in the structure of nursery school can be attributed to the absence of any board or statutory body to regulate pre primary education.

**Age for admission**

The minimum age required for admission in a private nursery school was 2 ½ years against 3 ½ years of the government nursery
school. In the prenursery, children of 2 ½ years were admitted. In the past educationists like Froebel, Montessori, Gandhi and Bedheka organised preschool education for children of 3 years and above. Today the State sponsored pre primary programmes are meant for children in the age group of 3-7 years. But the modern urban nursery school have set a trend whereby children in their early infancy are rushed into formal systems of education. This practice is today forcing children of two years who are egocentric, unable to socialise and express themselves properly to enter a formal environment. The psychomotor abilities of a child of this age are limited. Forcing them to read and write is therefore not desirable. The collective efforts of the private preschool have succeeded in bringing down the age from when formal learning should start. It is doubtful whether such a practice is beneficial for the children or cater to the profit making motives of private preschool. Today this practice has become so well established in urban society that parents too are keen to send their two years old children to school. If this practice is to continue it would be better if only custodial care is provided to the children. They should be allowed to play and engage in recreational activities. There should be total exemption from activities pertaining to reading and writing.

Ownership and administration of the nursery schools

The government preschool was owned and run by the government while the private preschools were owned by trusts, societies, welfare organisations or individuals. The government
preschool was administered by the principal of the school who functioned within the frame work of the rules and regulations framed by the Directorate of Public Instructions. The private preschools were administered by the owner or the personnel recruited by them.

While the government preschool was administered in accordance to the rules framed by the Department of Education of the Government, the administration of the private preschools was in accordance to the policies framed by the bodies or individuals owning them. It is quite likely that individuals owning the schools are not experts in the field of education. Hence the policies framed by them are not always sound ones.

**Goals of the preschools**

The goals stated by the authorities of the school were in keeping with the recommendations made by the specialists (like The Secondary Education Commission [1952-53], Kothari Commission [1964-66], etc.) in the field of preschool education. The development of balanced personality and foundation for future schooling were the goals commonly stated. However the means to achieve these goals viz. the curriculum, time table and the system of evaluation did not match the goals stated above. The main goal of not only the private nursery schools but also of the government nursery school appeared to be to foster the mental abilities of the children. The foundation for future schooling was not built by fostering social and physical development of the children or by training their senses. It was rather done by
intensively training them in the skills related to reading, writing and arithmetic so that they could compete at the stiff competition at the entrance tests held by reputed schools. The government preschool was no exceptions in this regard.

Thus the recommendations regarding the goals of preschool today have been distorted to meet the aspirations of the parents and the demands of the schools of the urban society. A statutory body set up to regulate the nursery school can help to some extent in ensuring that the goals stated are similar to those pursued.

**Teacher-student ratio**

In the nursery schools the teacher student ratio of the different classes was quite high. This deprived the children of individual attention. They were treated more as a group and less as individuals. Low teacher-student ratio is favourable for developing the abilities of self expression, creativity and for judging the innate potentialities of the children. The teachers of nursery schools apart from teaching, also have to attend to the other needs of the children. But the nursery schools have too many children under the care of too few teachers. The government preschool too presented the same situation. Setting up of a statutory body, which shall regulate and supervise government as well as private nursery schools and opening greater number of nursery schools aided by the government can help in improving the situation.
Finance

The private nursery schools did not receive any aid from the government. Recommendations from experts like Desai D.M.(1961), the report published by the UNESCO in 1961, the report of Kothari Commission (1964-66) have urged the State to provide grants to the private bodies that run nursery schools. This is because it is felt that like elementary education, preschool education too should be provided to all the children in the target age group. The government preschools are funded by the state. Hence they charged nominal fees and paid better salary to their staff. In the absence of any aid from the state the private nursery schools had to bank upon their own resources. Hence they had come up with a number of ways to meet their expenses. The tuition fees and annual charges paid by the students were quite high. They also fixed shops from which all the necessary purchases had to be made by the parents. It was a general complaint from the parents that such shops charged more than the other shops. The number of books required by these nursery schools was much higher than that of the government nursery school. The sale of books, notebooks, stationeries and uniforms provided monetary benefits to these schools.

Overcrowding in government nursery schools was mainly due to the lack of adequate number of government nursery schools. But overcrowding in the classrooms of private nursery schools was a situation, which was deliberately created by their owners. This was
because every student happened to be a potential source of income and every teacher recruited led to additional expenses. The private nursery schools operating from residences of individuals make it clear that opening a nursery school can today be a profitable venture since not much capital investment is required in setting up the infrastructure and payment of salary to the staff is the only major item of expenditure involved.

There is an allegation that our schooling system divides rather than unites the society by creating elites and the common man. Public schools cater to those who are financially well off while government schools are meant for the rest. It is seen that such discrimination starts from the preschool stage itself. The private nursery schools are usually the choice of the well to do, who had no complaints about the fees charged.

Aiding the private enterprises and enhancing accountability in the government nursery schools can bring private nursery schools within the reach of more people and make the government nursery school more desirable. It is expected that if private preschools are aided by the government they will not resort to malpractices like inflating the prices of books and uniforms, exploiting the teachers etc.
Recruitment of Teachers

As per the recommendations of the Sargent Commission (1944-46), the report of the UNESCO 1961, Programme of Action (1986) only female teachers were recruited in the nursery school.

It was found that only the government nursery school enforced the rule that only trained persons should be recruited as teachers in nursery schools. Most of the teachers of the private nursery schools either had no training to teach or were trained to teach in secondary schools. The needs of the children of secondary schools differ greatly from those of nursery schools. Hence those trained to teach in secondary schools are not suitable for pre schools.

The academic qualifications of the teachers of the private nursery schools often did not match the requirement of their job. This reflects a trend in today’s urban society. It is that qualified but unemployed women often take up jobs in nursery schools and remain there till they get suitable placement. They are neither suitable for their job nor can they be dedicated to it. A statutory body can enforce that individual with the right qualification and training should be recruited in the nursery schools.

Decision Making

In the government nursery school the major decisions were taken mainly by the State Department of Education. The other decisions were taken by the principal. The teachers were not involved
in the decisions regarding the administration. This situation arises from the fact that a government preschool is a part of the State Department of Education and it cannot work in isolation from the latter. It has to conform to the rules made by the administrative hierarchy. But a private nursery school is akin to a private organisation. It has the freedom to frame its rules and can hence involve the staff in the decision making process. But inspite of such an opportunity most of the private nursery schools had a centralised mode of administration. This was especially true in case of the decisions pertaining to the administration. The decisions regarding the curriculum were taken in a comparatively more democratic manner.

A statutory body can not help in ensuring that the private nursery schools provide their teachers with the opportunity for self actualisation. The awareness of the school administrators that democracy fosters creativity and dedication can help in this regard. The nursery school in which the teachers collectively took decisions on all issues under the leadership of the principal is exemplary in this regard.

The private nursery school that allowed the parents to make suggestions to improve the functioning of the institution exhibited a progressive approach. It had an access to a rich source of ideas and could also establish link with the parents.

422
**Working days and working hours**

The number of working hours of the nursery school ranged between 3 to 3 ½ hours. The number of working days in a week was six for the government nursery school. It was more than that of the private ones with 5 working days. Since these institutions unlike the state sponsored anganwadis and balvadis do not provide custodial care to the children but fulfill only the educational needs of the children hence 3 to 3 ½ hours schedule for five days in a week is enough for children.

**School transport**

Most of the nursery schools studied had no transport of their own. They however urged the persons engaged in transporting the children to be careful. The choice of the mode of transport was not imposed on the parents. The teachers of all the nursery schools ensured that the children boarded and alighted from their transports properly.

**School uniform**

All the nursery schools required the children to wear uniform at the school. This system has several benefits. But the private nursery schools required that the parents should purchase the uniforms only from the shops fixed by the school authorities. It was a source of monetary benefit for them. The government nursery school desisted from such practices.
Maintenance of discipline

Psychologists and modern educationists feel that corporal punishment tries to discipline the children through fear and coercion. It does not develop self discipline but breeds negative attitude towards school and education. In most of the private nursery schools corporal punishment was used sparingly and that too in a mild form. But in the government nursery school and a few private nursery schools corporal punishment was frequently meted out to discipline the children. Though it was not in a very severe form but it showed that the belief that spare the rod and spoil the child was yet to be wiped out from nursery schools.

Children of preschool age are impulsive and face the trauma of leaving home. Hence forcibly making them obey the orders issued by the teachers is unreasonable. The teachers who are burdened with overcrowded classrooms and the load of an elaborate syllabus, which they are expected to complete within the stipulated time, tend to be impatient. Hence they resort to the methods which ensure quick results.

This practice can be put to an end by the parents who can talk to the school authorities. A timetable that provides rest and recreation in between formal teaching, low teacher-student ratio and ample scope for creative activities can lead the children towards self discipline.
Maintenance of records and registers

Computerisation of records has been advised by several authors like Ethin Kawin (1959) and Moore E.(1988). However it is expensive and few nursery schools can afford it.

The records pertaining to the attendance of the staff and students, financial matters, stocks and equipments, etc. were maintained properly by the nursery schools. The progress of the children during an academic session was recorded in their report cards. But these report cards were designed mainly to record the achievement of the children in the tests held at the end of the different semesters. The progress made during a session was not continuously recorded. Moreover the traits other than mental abilities were not given much importance. Anecdotal records necessary to keep track of a child’s social and emotional development were not maintained. Except in the government nursery school, medical check up and its report were not considered to be of any importance by the nursery schools. The special abilities and interests or problems of the children were over looked. Thus the report cards were not cumulative cards in the true sense.

Records about the all round development of the children should be maintained properly so that they may serve as a rich data bank which can be used for providing future guidance and counselling to
the children. Computerisation of such record keeping will save time as well as space.

**Link between the home and the nursery school**

As mentioned earlier the school is an integral part of the society and a home is a unit of the society. Hence the school has several responsibilities towards the society. It fulfils some of these responsibilities through the link developed by it with the parents of the students.

Most of the nursery schools organised parents-teacher meetings so that the parents and teacher could have a face to face interaction. The other method which was used by all the nursery schools was the use of the link books (student’s diary) to exchange information with the parents. This link book was not used frequently by most of the nursery schools. Only one of the schools invited parents during the celebration of festivals.

The nursery schools undoubtedly attempted to establish link with the parents but this could be further strengthened if they frequently held meetings, discussions, interviews and counselling sessions with the parents and invited parents to participate in the celebration of the festivals. The link book should also be used regularly.
The criteria for admission of the children to the nursery schools

The criteria for admission of the children to the nursery schools were similar as far as the age and physical fitness were concerned. In the government nursery school the students were selected by draw of lots. In most of the private nursery schools admission continued till vacancies existed. However in one nursery school the children and their parents were interviewed. This was mainly to ensure that the reputation of the nursery school was maintained through the selection of the students from privileged families. Preschool education unlike vocational courses has no need for special aptitudes and interests. Hence screening the applicants is an injustice towards children. If at all selection is to be done then children from homes with lesser facilities may be selected. But private nursery schools, which do not receive any aid from the state have the freedom to frame their policies.

The practice followed by the preschool which admitted physically challenged children was not beneficial for such children. This is because special institutions with specially trained personnel can provide better care to them than a school with most of the teachers not possessing training of any sort.

Supervision of the nursery schools

Specially trained personnel should supervise the functioning of the nursery schools. But in the nursery schools supervision was done
by the principals. This deprives the teachers from proper guidance. A statutory body with a team of trained personnel can fulfil this need.

**Consultations with experts**

As mentioned before there were no trained supervisors to guide the teachers. Regular consultations with experts can help to a great extent in improving and upgrading the functioning of the nursery schools. Inservice education programs which could also fulfil this need was rarely available to the teachers. In some of the nursery school it was found that the principal occasionally talked to the specialists in the field of pre school education. Some principals read books on early childhood care and education. Regular inservice education programmes, supervision and consultations with experts can improve the functioning of the nursery schools.

**Meetings between the principal and the teacher**

Regular meetings between the head of an institution and the staff can ensure better coordination and can improve its functioning. In some of the nursery schools formal and informal meetings were held almost everyday between the principal and the staff. In some, there were mainly informal one to one discussions between the principal and a teacher. In some of the nursery schools neither of these was done regularly. In these schools, holding regular meetings could help in enhancing their efficiency.
Human resource of the nursery school

Human resource of an organisation is its greatest resource. The physical resources can be mobilised only by proper human resource. In the nursery school the teachers mainly form the human resource. Hence it is necessary that they should be qualified and trained, interested in their job and devoted to it and above all they should have loyalty to the institution and should not be in a mood to quit the job on getting another one. All these requirements can be fulfilled only by the teachers with proper qualification and enjoying job satisfaction.

As mentioned earlier only the government nursery school ensured that the teachers had suitable qualification and training. They were paid good salary and provided with several other benefits. They had job security and occasionally availed inservice education programmes. Hence most of the teachers were satisfied with their job. But in the private nursery schools most of the teachers were not trained to teach in nursery schools. Some of them had qualifications that did not match the requirements of their job. They were paid a meager salary and had no other benefits or job security. Facilities for inservice education were not provided by most of the private nursery schools to the teachers. Most of them were dissatisfied with their job and were on the look out for a better one. The situation reflected the helplessness of the educated unemployed who were willing to take up even odd jobs and were therefore exploited. This tells upon their dedication to their job.
However the government preschool with all its trained teachers who were satisfied with their job did not perform better than the teachers of the private preschools. Preparation of teaching aids, questioning, presentation of a lesson, organising cocurricular activities, maintaining discipline, interacting with parents, etc., were done in a more efficient way in the private nursery schools. Hence greater accountability in the private schools seemed to compensate to some extent the short comings like lack of training and proper qualification of the teachers. The formulation of a statutory body to monitor the nursery schools can enforce the rules regarding the eligibility of the teachers, their working conditions and accountability.

CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE NURSERY SCHOOLS

The infrastructure of a nursery school implies its physical resources. It is an important means to achieve the goals of the school. Setting up the proper infrastructure of a nursery school requires planning. Just any building with a few rooms to spare and a small courtyard cannot fulfill the needs of a nursery school.

The conclusions regarding the various aspects of the infrastructure of the nursery school are presented below:

School site

Apart from the government nursery school, only a few private nursery schools were situated in sites suitable for preschool. These
fortunate few enjoyed sites that were peaceful, green and away from the main road.

Some of the private nursery schools were situated in residential areas in contravention of the regulations in this regard of the Chandigarh administration. Few of these nursery schools happened to be close to the main road with heavy flow of traffic. The sites of these nursery schools were totally unsuitable. This practice of running nursery schools from residences can be curbed only by strict enforcement by the administration of its own regulations.

School campus

The nursery schools situated in residential areas lacked proper campus. The nursery schools in suitable sites had spacious, peaceful and green campus. Therefore the choice of site for a nursery school is important since it determines the spaciousness of the campus. The children from urban homes with limited space face the same problem even at school if the site is unsuitable.

The other factor as important as the availability of space is the maintenance of the school plant. The government preschool had a spacious campus but unlike the private preschools with similar facility it was not properly maintained. Beautification of the campus gives it an aesthetic look and the right ambience. It was seen that a private preschool inspite of its limited space put in every effort to
make the premises beautiful. Hence not only a spacious campus is required but also its maintenance is important.

**Building and Equipments**

The nursery schools were all situated on the ground floor. This eliminated the risks associated with stairs. The schools enjoying proper site possessed the right type of building. They had well-ventilated and spacious classrooms. The classrooms had display boards with teaching aids and had enough facility for storage. But the nursery schools located in residential areas had no separate buildings and were a part of the residences of their owners. They either totally lacked spacious and well ventilated classrooms or had classrooms with moderate space and ventilation. Few of these schools had classrooms that lacked the facility to store the necessary things and had walls without any teaching aids.

The furniture of all the nursery school was light and portable. But not in all the schools were they painted brightly. The seating arrangement in the prenursery class was informal but in LKG and UKG it restricted the free movement of the children.

The nursery schools followed safety measures like walled premises, clean and tidy classrooms, non slippery floors and proper electrical wiring. But in the government preschool the broken furniture stored inside the classroom and those used by the children were safety hazards. The overall sanitary conditions of the toilets of
the private preschools was also lacking in the government nursery school.

Hence the government preschool with all its facilities lagged behind the private preschools regarding the maintenance of the facilities it had. The blackboard and furniture were in need of urgent repair. The teaching aids looked faded and worn out. The government nursery schools did not have the bright and attractive appearance of most of the private preschools. One of the private preschools, which lacked space but made every attempt to productively utilise and decorate every inch of the space available was commendable and was an example for the others.

Playground

As mentioned earlier the nursery schools operating from residential areas had inadequate space. Hence they lacked proper playgrounds. In these nursery schools a small area with a few outdoor equipments was marked out as a playground. Hence the situation was far from being satisfactory. The nursery schools enjoying proper sites had spacious playgrounds on one side of the school building. The playground of the private nursery schools had tall trees, hedges, an adjoining garden and playground equipments.

The playground equipments of all the nursery schools fell short of the required number. The swings of all the nursery schools had wooden seats that were safety hazards for the children. The nursery
schools could use locally available inexpensive things like rubber tires, empty crates, sand pits, cement pipes, etc. as play ground equipments.

The dearth of space being a constraint for a proper playground the solution lies in disallowing the functioning of nursery schools from residential areas. Even if the state is liberal with aid it cannot help in overcoming the problem due to the constraint of space if nursery schools are run from the residences of the school owners. A nursery school should be allowed to be opened only if the premises are spacious.

**Miscellaneous Equipments of the nursery schools:**

Experts in the field of preschool education [like Aggarwal J.C., (1990), *Report of NCERT*, (1978)] have prepared a list of essential equipments of different categories for nursery schools (page no.302). Out of the different categories of equipments, all the nursery schools lacked adequate number and variety of musical instruments for the children. The nursery schools had adequate collection of things pertaining to art and craft. Things required to train the visual senses were there in most of the schools but those required for the other senses were lacking. Things used by children for carpentry and gardening and didactic toys were also not there. Very few nursery schools had sufficient number and types of teaching aids and colourful storybooks. Adequate number and types of outdoor
equipments were not there. The dearth of toys and colourful books was acute in the government nursery school. The expenses involved in procuring the essential things is not much but the lack of awareness about them is responsible to a great extent for the present inadequacy.

CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE CURRICULAR ISSUES OF THE NURSERY SCHOOL

The curriculum followed in a school is the chief means to reach its goals. Framing the curriculum and implementing it requires expertise.

Framing of the curriculum

In the nursery schools the principal and the teachers framed the curriculum. This process was based on certain criteria like the goals of the nursery school and the curriculum generally followed by other nursery schools. It has been observed that the goals stated were different from the ones actually pursued. The actual goal was to develop the mental abilities of the children and to prepare them for the academic requirements of the primary schools. The curriculum was framed to fulfill these requirements.

The curriculum generally being followed in the different nursery schools was also a criterion. This practice had resulted in similar curriculum being followed in the different nursery schools. Hence the
same shortcomings were found in the curriculum of the different nursery schools.

The recommendations presented by the experts in the field of preschool education were ignored. Framing the curriculum requires expertise. Hence recommendations of experts regarding the curriculum of pre-schools should be considered to be the guidelines rather than the curriculum generally being followed in the different nursery schools. The views presented at in-service education programmes help to update and revise the curriculum. Hence if the teachers attend such programmes frequently they can frame the curriculum in a better way.

**Curriculum followed in the different nursery schools.**

The curriculum of a nursery school should foster balanced development of the personality of the children. But in the nursery schools the stress was on reading, writing and arithmetic. In addition to this the private nursery schools had a definite syllabus for science (general knowledge) full of facts and information.

From the age of two years a child had to learn to read and write alphabets and numbers. From the age of three years he had to grapple with two languages, arithmetic and general knowledge. It is said that preschool should not make the children learn organised bodies of knowledge but prepare them to acquire knowledge through the training of their senses. However training of the senses was neglected.
The sense of sight was trained cursorily through a few visual aids but the training of the other senses was totally ignored. The children were kept busy cramming organised bodies of knowledge from the books of general knowledge, reading, writing and doing sums.

The lessons in science are supposed to stimulate the intellectual curiosity of the children. But in the absence of activities and trips the learning was bookish.

The curriculum was biased towards the teaching and learning of English. Children as young as two years were taught to master alphabets of English. It had a course content much more elaborate than that of Hindi.

The formal subjects of the curriculum-languages, arithmetic and science were considered to be much more important than the informal activities that develop the different traits of the personality. The curriculum was not integrated but it was divided into watertight compartments (subjects), which is not desirable at the preschool level.

The informal activities of the curriculum were more enjoyable to the children but they were not given their due importance. The children did not get sufficient opportunity to socialise, play, sing, perform rhythmic activities, narrate events, listen to stories, go on trips or engage in creative activities since these activities were accorded less importance in the curriculum.
Children of preschool age learn mainly by rote rather than by logical thinking. But the base for logical thinking should be developed from this stage. For this narration of events, playing with blocks and puzzles can help. Instead of making children memorise facts, first hand experiences provided through activities and trips will stimulate thought. Hence a curriculum based on activities and projects is needed. This will also make it child centered and develop the ability to think logically. But the curriculum followed was bookish and was dominated by the teachers.

The opportunities for self expression were limited. Activities related to art were pursued but dramatisation and other creative activities were not pursued. Since the curriculum was oriented to foster mainly the cognitive growth of the children and neglected activities related to art and music, the interests and abilities of the children could not be determined.

The curriculum neglected activities that could foster social, emotional, physical and moral development. Teamwork, games and stories could foster such development but these activities were either totally overlooked or were paid little importance. Manual labour which develops the sense of dignity of labour had no place in the curriculum. Hence the curriculum did not develop balanced personality of the children. It also failed to develop the right attitude towards education in the children because children started to regard education as a burden from the preschool stage.
The shortcomings of the curriculum were accepted by parents and the teachers. But they did not want that it should be revised. They felt that it was indispensable for future schooling. The nursery schools are the stepping stones for elementary education provided by the schools. Several educationists have time and again pointed out the defects of the curriculum of the school. Until and unless the curriculum of the primary schools are revised that of the preschools will continue to cater to the curricular demands of the primary schools. The pressure from the urban society will not allow preschools to go for radical changes in the curriculum and frame an ideal one. Hence the shortcomings of the curriculum of the preschools are to some extent due to the shortcomings (stress on cognitive development) of the curriculum of the primary schools. Overcoming the shortcomings of the curriculum of the primary classes of schools through well planned efforts can stimulate the necessary changes in the curriculum of preschools.

So far the defects of the curriculum have been highlighted. But it had some praise worthy features too. In all the nursery schools the first activity on a working day was the morning assembly. During the morning assembly the otherwise restless toddlers peacefully but zestfully sang prayers. The nursery schools also celebrated different festivals in a colourful manner. It was commendable that the nursery schools attempted to develop the skills to read, write and count. But instead of introducing them from the nursery class they can be
introduced later in the UKG. Grammatical exercises in languages, compositions, etc. make the syllabus unnecessarily heavy. These portions could be easily dispensed with.

**Time table followed in the nursery schools**

The time table followed in the nursery schools reflected how much importance was accorded to a particular type of activity. From the time table it was apparent that desk work was allotted much more time than that for outdoor activities. The children pursued formal activities (reading, writing, doing sums) for a much longer duration. These activities along with those related to art confined children to their desks within the classrooms. Children were allowed to play outdoors in the fresh for only a short duration.

The timetable for prenursery and LKG of most of the nursery schools and that of UKG of all the nursery schools had no provision for narration for stories, indoor games, manual works, etc. Musical activities too were neglected.

In most of the nursery schools formal activities were performed first and informal activities were usually performed in the second half when the children were tired. This practice was healthy but formal activities in one of the schools started with written revision of earlier lessons. This made academic activities even more formal. The children should be allowed to acclimatise to classroom activities through oral work. Thereafter written work should be pursued.
Time table is the tool to implement the curriculum. It mirrors the biases of the curriculum. The time table of the nursery schools reserved more time for academic work. The time allotted for the development of the cognitive abilities was much more than that for the other traits of the personality. Socialisation is possible only when children play and work together. But children spent most of the school hours working alone at their desk. Similarly the best of play ground equipments in a spacious play ground if remain unused or are used for a short while will fail to foster physical and psychomotor development of the children.

Most the short comings mentioned in the time table do not require direct redressal. Overcoming the shortcomings of the curriculum will automatically improve the time table. But the defects like the problems created by consecutive periods of formal activities can be eliminated by proper planning to ensure that formal and informal activities alternate.

**Method of teaching adopted in the nursery schools**

An appreciable point associated with the teaching method adopted in the various nursery schools was that a new lesson was always started with the revision of the earlier lesson(s). Apart from refreshing the earlier experiences it facilitated the learning of new experiences.
The second point that was appreciable was that the maxim of analytic to synthetic was followed. The skill of writing an alphabet or a number or solving a sum was taught through the constituent parts or steps. This made learning easier. Another point which was praiseworthy was that while teaching the skill of writing, the easier alphabets and numbers were taught earlier in most of the nursery schools. The sequence of alphabets and numbers was followed flexibly. Thus the maxim of simple to complex was followed. In most of the nursery schools the children of the prenursery class spent a few weeks making different types of lines and curves. This prepared the foundation for writing.

The development of the skill to read was accompanied by phonic drill and word drill. Oral work always preceded written work. This facilitated the learning, of the more difficult task of writing.

The teacher motivated the students by continuous verbal praise and the appreciative remarks made in the notebooks. The other praiseworthy points were that extensive drilling, revision and timely correction of written work were done.

The above mentioned points were the praiseworthy ones regarding the teaching methods. But the teaching methods adopted were not free from defects. The defects are listed below.
Providing an introduction to a new lesion could arouse curiosity and arrest the attention of the children but it was not a regular feature of the method of teaching.

In a few nursery schools the children were taught to write alphabets and numbers in their natural sequence. Selecting the easier ones and teaching them first is a better method. For a child of 2 years writing A and B are more difficult. But writing I and X are easier.

The skill of conversation in English or that of communication in general can be developed by providing the children with ample opportunities to express themselves verbally. Teaching them the responses to common phrases or questions or talking to them in English are not adequate.

Recitation of rhymes in most of the nursery schools was not accompanied by appropriate actions, facial expressions and modulation of voice.

Lessons on science were taught mainly by teaching the answers of certain questions. This encouraged rote memory. The emphasis was on the quantum of facts learnt and not on arousing the interest of the children in their environment.

Teaching was not child centered. There was no place for activities and projects that could impart first hand experience. Hence the development of curiosity and logical thinking was not fostered.
The teachers paid little attention to a child as an individual. A child was treated as a member of a group. Hence the specific needs and interests of the children were not taken care of. Every child was expected to perform activities similar to that being performed by the others. Readiness to learn was not considered. Every child was expected to have the same level of readiness and pace of learning. Moving along with the group was the motto.

Frequent questioning makes learning child centered to some extent as the children get the opportunity to answer, make suggestions. But in very few nursery schools questioning was done frequently and at every step of teaching. In the other nursery schools questioning was mainly limited to the task of revision.

In most of the nursery schools teaching aids were limited to the chalk and the black board. The teaching aids in the display board were not regularly changed in most of the preschools. Puppets, masks, flash cards, language games, objects used in real life, pictures, etc., were used in few nursery schools. Teaching of things involving abstractions like addition and subtraction was done only through the pictures drawn on the black board. Concrete objects which can help in dealing with abstractions, were not used.

Home work was assigned regularly in most of the nursery schools. This increased the load of formal activities on the children.
The teaching method in general was far from being the play way method considered to be ideal in nursery schools. Hardly any lesson was taught informally. Children were herded into a classroom and the teacher with chalk in her hand stood away from the children near the black board and explained things to them.

Thus the methods of teaching adopted in the nursery schools did possess some positive points but they suffered from several shortcomings. The goals followed by the nursery schools, the curriculum, stress on achievement in the academic subjects at terminal tests severely affected the teaching methods adopted.

Today the goals, the curriculum, the timetable and the methods of teaching are responsible for making pre school education formal and exam oriented.

**Evaluation system of the nursery schools**

The nursery schools regularly evaluated the progress of the children. The system of evaluation had the following positive points:

1. Semester system was practised in most of the nursery schools. This is scientific because the syllabus is divided into units and each unit is thoroughly learnt before progressing to the next one.

2. In addition to the tests held at the end of the semesters, class tests were held regularly. This helped in assessing the progress of the children regularly.
3. The evaluation system used different tools viz. written tests, oral tests and observation by the teacher to assess the progress of the children.

The system of evaluation however was not free from defects. The defects were the following:

1. The evaluation was neither continuous nor comprehensive. The performance at the terminal tests was considered to be important and was recorded. The performance in a particular subject was not assessed on a day to day basis. It was periodic, through a single test held after every 3 or 4 months.

2. Assessment of only mental abilities were considered to be important. The terminal tests were meant for assessing how well a child could read, write, do sums and answer questions on science. The social and emotional traits were ignored. Health of the children was checked annually only in the government nursery school. Hence instead of assessing the personality in a comprehensive manner only mental abilities were assessed. Creativity, special interests or abilities or problems of the children were not assessed. The evaluation system failed to determine the true potentialities of the children.

3. The evaluation system was formal and did not take into account the mood or health of the children. Written tests, especially suffered from this problem.
4. Among the tools of evaluation, observation was one. In overcrowded classrooms the teachers were burdened with too many children. They also had to complete teaching a definite part of the syllabus, drill, revise and correct written work. They had hardly any time and often no training to carry out observation of the children and record their findings. Hence they assessed the traits linked to social and emotional development in an unsatisfactory manner.

5. Many nursery schools used marks instead of grades to evaluate the progress of the children. It is undesirable since awarding marks tends to be too precise a system. Grades on the other hand cover a wider range. Human abilities can not be assessed with acute precision. It also breeds unhealthy competition not only among the children but even among their parents.

Thus the evaluation system like the goals of the preschools and the curriculum were greatly biased towards the assessment of the academic progress of the children. Social, emotional and physical development, creativity and interests were ignored. Today when formal system of examination is fast losing ground even in the schools, continuing with them at the nursery level is not desirable. While the system of awarding grades is fast replacing that of awarding marks even in higher education, continuing with the latter in nursery schools is undesirable.
Books and notebooks used in the nursery schools

Criteria for selecting the books

The nursery schools had the freedom to select the books to be used by the children. Inspite of this, books used in the different schools were quite similar. This is because the books commonly followed in the different nursery schools was the primary criterion for selecting them. Their content, illustrations, price, etc. were not considered to be of much importance. Private preschools faced stiff competition among themselves. Their reputation was the main factor that would draw students. This could be the reason why they did not dare to try out a new curriculum and books.

The private nursery schools expected the children to handle many more books than the government nursery school. A child of preschool age was expected to handle 8-12 books.

Contents of the books

The content of the books had several praise worthy points. They were:

1. Learning could be through association of the content with the relevant illustration. Illustrations and the content were juxtaposed.
2. The content was arranged in simple to complex order.
3. The content was according to the interests of the children.
4. There was ample scope for revision and drill.
The shortcomings of the content was noticed only in the book of general knowledge. There were many topics which were superfluous. Many of the topics had no bearing with the immediate environment of the children and hence required cramming.

Illustrations

The books had numerous illustrations. They were at the right position. But many of them especially those in the book for general knowledge were small in size. The illustrations were not bright and attractive.

Print

The print of the books was bold but that of the books used for teaching the skill of reading English was not sufficiently bold.

Binding of the books

Most of the books had cardboard binding but some had paper binding that was unsuitable for the children of nursery schools.

Quality of paper

The paper used was of moderate thickness but was not water proof as required for nursery schools.

Price of the books

Most of the parents felt that the price of the books was quite high. Hence, if paper binding and illustrations were to be improved the price would escalate further.
Thus the books used were satisfactory in most of the respects. There were certain shortcomings but removing them would result in incurring further expenses. The notebooks used were designed to suit the needs of the children.

At the end it can be said that the nursery schools should have proper infrastructure and dedicated teachers. The functions of a nursery school were summarised by Jerome and Leavitt (1958). They recommended that a good nursery school should promote all round development of the children, safeguard their health and provide ample scope for physical activities. Social development of the children should be promoted through the presence of the children of the same age. The special interests of the children should be fostered. The children should be happy in the nursery school with plenty to do. They should follow a routine but enjoy freedom.

But during this study it was found that some urban nursery schools did not even have the infrastructure to qualify as a nursery school. There was an all round dearth of necessary equipments. The private nursery schools charged high fees but their teachers were a dissatisfied lot.

The nursery schools emphasised the 3 Rs. Apart from the cognitive activities, other activities important for the development of the personality of the children were ignored. It appeared that the urban preschools initiate the process of churning out individuals with
superior mental abilities who otherwise possess lopsided personalities. The children spent long hours in classrooms doing solitary job and obeying the dictates of their teachers. Their individual differences were ignored. In such circumstances it is doubtful if the children had fun and freedom at nursery schools and if they at all enjoyed their schooling.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study conducted by the present investigator adopted the method of case study and hence involved only five nursery schools. Researches that would involve a large number of nursery schools (both private as well as government) may be taken up through the method of survey. Such surveys will provide information about the situation existing in the various nursery schools. Thus the in-depth information obtained through the case studies conducted by the present investigator can be complemented by the information received through the survey of a large sample. This will in turn help in assessing the total situation existing in the field of preschool education. Survey of the following areas may be taken up:

1. Conditions pertaining to the human resource of the nursery schools. The qualification, salary, working conditions and job satisfaction of the teachers may be studied.

2. The physical facilities provided by the nursery schools to the children vis a vis that considered to be ideal by specialists in the field.
of preschool education. The safety measures adopted by the nursery schools to ensure the physical well being of the children may also be studied. This will give an idea about the adequacy of the infrastructure of the nursery schools.

3. The curriculum followed in the nursery schools, the method of teaching and the method of evaluation may also be studied in the different nursery schools.

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The research report presented in the previous pages is summarised below:

The research taken up involved case study of five nursery schools of Chandigarh. It involved a detailed study of the administration, infrastructure and the curriculum of the nursery schools selected for the study. The objective of the study was to obtain a comprehensive view of the situation existing in the nursery schools selected. The study undertaken involved case study method. The method adopted in carrying out the research involved the following steps:

1) The problem was stated in view of the objectives of the research. Following a review of the related literature the scope of the study was delimited.

2) Selection of the sample and tools for data collection was followed by the collection of data.
3. Critical discussion of the data was carried out and generalisations were reached. Finally conclusions were drawn from the study undertaken.

Since the present work involved case study hence only five nursery schools were selected as sample for the study. The process of sample selection was not based on any statistical technique. This was to ensure that the nursery schools differed from each other in aspects like ownership, student strength, etc. This helped in obtaining a comprehensive view of the situation existing in the field of urban nursery schools.

The tools used for data collection were questionnaires, interviews, observations, informal discussions and check list. Data was collected from the principals, teachers and also the parents of the students of the nursery school. The data was purely of qualitative nature and hence it was not subjected to statistical treatment.

The data was critically discussed to determine the strong and weak points of the nursery schools. The criticism was carried out against the criteria deemed as ideal by experts in the field of preschool education. Although a sample of five nursery schools is too small for making generalisations but striking similarities observed in major aspects like goals, sources of income (of private schools), curriculum, method of teaching, time table, system of evaluation, etc. in the different preschools naturally led to certain generalisations regarding the situation prevailing in urban nursery schools. Finally conclusions
were drawn for the study. Recommendations were made to overcome the shortcomings. The conclusions of the study are summarised below:

1) Unlike the government nursery schools the private nursery schools admitted children of even 2 years of age, thereby lowering the age for formal education.

2) The actual goal of the nursery schools was to foster the growth of the mental abilities of the children against the balanced development of the personality.

3) The teacher-student ratio was high in all the nursery schools. This deprived the children of individual attention.

4) Unlike the government nursery school the private nursery schools had to generate their own funds. Hence they resorted to unhealthy practices like charging exorbitant fees, paying poor salary to the teachers, etc.

5) Most of the teachers of the private nursery schools lacked the Nursery Teacher's Training.

6) The teachers usually had no say in the administration of the school. They were not provided with inservice education. The classrooms were overcrowded. Moreover the teachers of private preschool were not paid well and had no job security. Hence they lacked proper working conditions.
7) Discipline was maintained by threats, rebukes and even corporal punishment.

8) The report cards were designed to reflect mainly the academic achievement of the children.

9) Link books were not regularly used and parents-teacher meetings were infrequent.

10) Supervision of the nursery schools was not done properly.

11) Private nursery schools operating from residences lacked proper school plant. Adequate number and variety of the necessary equipments were not there in the nursery schools.

12) The curriculum of the nursery schools was not framed along the guidelines provided by the experts. It stressed academic activities and was bookish. Social, emotional, linguistic and physical development of the children were neglected. Most of the working hours was spent by the children in desk work, confined within the classrooms.

13) The teachers motivated the children and provided ample scope for revision and drill. Maxims of teaching like proceeding from simple to complex, analysing a unit and then synthesising it, preceding written work by oral work were followed. But teaching was not child centered. Teaching aids were not adequately used.

14) Evaluation was not comprehensive but biased towards the assessment of academic achievement.
15) The children were burdened with too many books and notebooks.

16) The situation in the private preschools regarding the maintenance of the infrastructure and method of teaching were better than that of the government nursery school.

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456