DEVELOPMENT OF
PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM
CHAPTER - III

DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM

3.1 ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CURRICULUM

The unfortunate status of early childhood education is that the parents, teachers and so called school authorities have converted the pre-school atmosphere only as learning centers of 3R's. They have completely forgotten the basic thought of child education. In order to know whether the present pre-school curriculum meets the objectives of the pre-school education or not, the existing curricula of thirty different pre-school were analysed with respect to:

- Physical plant of the school.
- Health aspect of the children.
- Physical, social and intellectual development.

Analysis was done using following techniques:

1. Content analysis of curricula.
2. Through actual observations of the transactions of the curricula in the classrooms.
3. Meeting with the heads of early childhood institutions and discussion with the teachers who are actually transacting this curriculum.
4. Discussion with the parents. Some parents were interviewed to know their views about the curriculum.

On the basis of above analysis the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Curriculum of each school was found to be different from the other
schools. There was no uniformity in the curriculum.

2. Most of the schools were run in residential buildings.

3. Majority of the schools are ill-equipped. Children don't have liberty to touch and handle toys.

4. More stress is laid on teaching methods emphasizing rote memory.

5. Play way method is hardly used for teaching at pre-primary stage.

6. Stress is on teaching alphabets & numbers.

7. No health or medical records in the schools. Immunisations are not recorded.

9. Toilet & drinking water facilities are not satisfactory.

10. Most of the time children are packed in the classroom. Only one period is for free play.

11. School helpers are mostly uneducated maids.

12. No provision for cultural activities to conserve or enhance culture.

13. Curriculum is not according to Piaget's development stages.


15. Inadequacy of resource material for the teachers.

16. Only a few schools have expected pupil teacher ratio. Teachers are untrained and underpaid.

It can be inferred from the above findings that present pre-school curriculum is suited to attain cognitive objectives only. Physical and social aspects are completely ignored. So, in order to have a comprehensive and complete development of the pre-schooler, an activity centered curriculum with specific objectives has been outlined.
3.2 ACADEMIC/ACTIVITY CENTRED CURRICULUM

Curriculum is an organized whole of learning experiences provided by an educational institution to bring about desired changes in the learner. The most common approaches for developing curriculum for young children are the facts approach and the skill approach. With the facts approach, children learn given sets of factual information such as the days of the week, the name of the colours or the alphabets. With a skills approach children acquire knowledge by engaging in developmentally appropriate experience such as cutting on a line, sharing materials with one another or discovering information through book or play materials.

Some recent trends in early childhood education, most especially the more formal academic emphasis embraced by the behaviourists are a cause of concern. Most public school kindergartens are highly academic, teacher-directed, rigidly scheduled and dependent upon workbooks. Most educators in early childhood education and child development characterize these trends as being at cross purposes with understanding how young children learn. Educational scholars have discovered that academically oriented early childhood programs actually hinder children’s potential to evolve as literate problem solving adults. The National Association of State Boards of Education (1988) stated that the academic curriculum is shockingly unstimulating to children and fails to stimulate their thinking.

There is also concern regarding the social results of such academic programs. In a ten year study of early childhood programs Leikart (1989) found that although the different curricula produced essentially the same academic
results, the social results were very different. Children involved in child initiated activity centered curriculum were self directed and able to follow long term goals during adolescence. Conversely children enrolled in teacher prescribed programs often experienced alienation from home, school and even society during adolescent years.

These concerns and others have led to support for a curriculum which is activity centered and based upon sound development theory often referred to as developmentally appropriate curriculum. Activity centered curriculum differs from academically oriented curriculum in both form and content.

Although the goals of the above mentioned two approaches are similar, the paths they follow to achieve these goals are different. We must design our curriculum and implement our practice in a way that is consistent with these values, only then we can hope to fulfill our goals and help all children to become successful learners. Following these guidelines and to achieve the goals of early childhood education, the curriculum was developed to enhance the physical, social and cognitive development of pre-schoolers.

3.3 OBJECTIVES

With an aim to promote physical, social and cognitive development of young children pre-school education must have clear cut aims and objectives. For holistic development of the child, these are main objectives of the pre-school education.

1. To provide healthy environment to the children like space, fresh air, sunlight and sunshine.
2. To provide a healthy, safe and regular life and to stimulate intellectual curiosity.
3. To provide continuous medical supervision.
4. To assist in the formation of good and healthy habits.
5. To give opportunity for the development of different interests and skills of various types.
6. To give experience of social life on a small scale where children work and play together.
7. To establish real unity between external environment and home life.
8. To develop emotional maturity and guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control his emotions.

In the light of these objectives and by keeping in mind, the developmental characteristics of 3-4 year old, a complete framework of activities were planned. These activities were to be carried out efficiently and successfully, aiming at development in different aspects. The separation of real life experiences into physical, social and intellectual components is clearly artificial. Children learn all developmental components simultaneously not individually. Though it is convenient to discuss all these aspects separately for better understanding.

3.3.1 Physical development

All children need vigorous physical activity each day. The passive time which children spend watching television or sitting motionless at desks is a growing concern. The physical aspect mainly aims at bringing about development in two major areas.
I  Development of general physique

II  Development of proper muscular coordination

Development of general physique refers to the proper growth of different limbs of the body where as development of muscles refers to make required limbs strong so that child acquires strength.

Physically, a three year old can walk and run but hopping and skipping prove to be difficult for him. He is inclined to use both arms and legs when only one is required and prefers using his large muscles for most activities. However at times, he may like doing things with his hands and even fingers. These may be awkward and messy. That is why it is difficult for him to hold a pencil firmly and make definite strokes. The motor development can be achieved only by allowing the child to perform self paced activities. Therefore, pre school work should be planned for different games and other forms of physical exercises so that development of muscles takes place and surplus energy with the child is properly utilized.

Along with development of muscles it is also quite needed to have proper coordination between muscles movement resulting in:

- Proper body posture in sitting, standing, walking and running
- Proper care while handling different objects
- Proper care in transporting things from one place to another
- Care in transferring liquids from one container to the other etc.

In general, muscular coordination is essential for having proper movement of the entire body for doing any work skillfully. This can very well be
achieved where the children get ample scope to play. The teacher can plan fine motor activities like painting, cutting, manipulating clay, stringing beads, puzzle, pegboards and catching rubber rings etc. Some suggested activities are given in table No. 3.01.

3.3.2 Social development:

During the pre-school years the child learns how to make social contact and get along with people outside home, especially with peer group, the children of his own age. The child at this stage acquires the ability to move from place to place and use language. As a result, his social contacts widen. The child’s social interactions enable him to acquire new social abilities like being cooperative, sharing with others, having a sense of oneness and developing meaningful relation. As these children are quite young to do all these things, the elders have to design direct and indirect programs so as to cultivate these qualities in their children. It is possible through continuous interaction with elders and active participation in social functions.

Pre-school offers plenty of chance for social development. The first group experience is provided in pre-school. The child gets a change of experiencing variety of experience like friendliness, sharing, taking turn etc. In group relationship and experiences children are enabled to build a realistic self concept. Children also build self confidence in a social group. They find strength and safety through group membership. Guidance in social development is given by the teacher by teaching desirable techniques of approaching others, children learn to take turns. The child learns the fundamentals of sharing at home. He continuous to learn about sharing at the pre-school. Hence the pre-school can
play an effective role in socializing the child as well as adjusting to new environments and people very well. Some suggested activities are given in table No. 3.01.

### 3.3.3 Cognitive development

This aspect of development refers to the knowledge in different directions. Mainly we take care of three major areas while planning to have development in cognitive aspect these are language skill, computational skill and exploration of the environment

#### Language Skill:

So far as the language is concerned, all children's minds are like clean slate at the time of birth. They can pick up any language gradually as their medium of expression when exposed to a community speaking a definite language. The language of three year old is marked with 3-4 word "telegraphic sentences" that include only the most essential words. The language not only helps the child to express his already developed concepts but also appears to shape, sharpen and transform thinking.

For language development a child has to be provided with required situations where he can be encouraged to:

- Respond freely
- Ask questions
- Answer questions
- Hear and recite poems
- Hear stores and tell stories
• Narrate simple events and Incidents
• Immitate the sounds of birds and animals
• Describe what is seen on the screen
• Pronounce common words correctly

It is a good sign for language development that these young children are even capable of starting conversation with animals and inanimate objects. When a child plays alone and goes on speaking a lot of things to himself, it definitely counts towards the development of language. Pre-school teacher should introduce new words to the children through stories, rhymes, dramas, action songs, rhythmical exercises and games etc. She should repeat these words again and again so that the child is able to remember them. Speech disorders can be detected, efforts can be made to help the children in whom these tendencies occur. Sense of loving builds up confidence and enhances the speech development in pre-school children.

Computational Skill:

We expect a pre-schoolers to do simple counting of different animate and inanimate objects and materials, Besides knowledge about this simple computation they are expected to know about shape and size of different objects and materials.

One of the most important operation to develop during the pre-school years is that of classification. The ability to organize objects and ideas into useful categories is a fundamental pre-requisite for reasoning. While playing
children come across objects of different colors. They are also expected to identify the objects of common colors like red, yellow, blue, white, black and green. By collecting objects of these colors and classifying these, the child is able to identify colors rightly. They are also expected to tell the names of days in a week and months in a year. They can also show and name the directions by looking at the rising and setting sun.

**Exploration of the environment:**

Children learn a lot of things by themselves having free interaction with the environment. Different seasons have their impact. Children can feel the effect of these seasons and give a common account of seasons like rainy, summer and winter season. Main whether phenomena like cloud, rain, fog, lightning should be understood by them. They are to be acquainted with sources of water, places of worship, means of communication and economy activities of the locality as far as practicable. A pre-schooler can attain this knowledge by observing the same. For this the teacher has to plan and carry out a number of activities for the children. Suggested activities are given in table no. 3.01.

**3.4 SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

In the present study an attempt has been made to provide activities that not only pertain to objectives of pre-school education but are development oriented, inexpensive and practical. Considering one academic year for transaction of the curriculum, a plan of activities was worked out. The guidelines considered for these activity plans were:

1. The compatibility of activities in the developmental status of a three – four year old

45
2. The attention span of 10–15 minutes of the three–four year old

3. Activities related to three major areas of development – physical, social and cognitive development were planned

4. The activities made use of locally made or commonly available inexpensive materials

5. Activities planned/maintained a balance between
   - Group/individual participation
   - Free/organized participation
   - Active/Passive participation
   - Self selected/teacher prescribed activities.

6. Each activity provided a first hand experience to create an active involvement and helped learning through their senses.

7. For most of the activities the physical layout of the classroom was scaled down to the size of the child, low chairs, tables, mats, low shelves and side boards invited children to engage in and take responsibility for their own learning.

8. Enough scope for flexibility was provided to allow the teacher to prolong or shorten any activity or to repeat the interesting activities.

9. The climate conditions were kept in mind for sequencing the activities e.g. outdoor play was kept in the early school hours during summer. Similarly in bad weather outdoor play was replaced by indoor play.

10. Cooperative learning with ability grouping was encouraged to develop social relationship. Parent volunteers were also encouraged to participate in some activities.
Some of the suggested activities are given vide table No. 3.01.

### TABLE 3.01

**Suggested list of activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor play</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Footprints</td>
<td>A set of 18 footprints (9 left and 9 right). Cut out from raxin or any washable material.</td>
<td>Footprints are placed in line in random order, dark footprints are for left foot and light footprints are for right foot. Ask the children to keep their left feet on dark footprints and the right on light coloured cut outs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Along the rope</td>
<td>A thick rope</td>
<td>Lay the rope in a zig zag manner. Ask the children to walk and hop along it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Free outdoor play</td>
<td>Play equipment</td>
<td>Ask the children to play on the slides in outdoor space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Jumping</td>
<td>Tyres of different sizes</td>
<td>Ask the children to pass through tyres without touching. Jumping inside outside the tyres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Balancing</td>
<td>Wooden blocks</td>
<td>The child is asked to stand on a wooden block and press it first left side then right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Projects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Parts of the body</td>
<td>Charts</td>
<td>One boy stands in front of the others and teacher points out body parts and ask the other children to follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Care of the body</td>
<td>Toilet items</td>
<td>Teacher demonstrates how to brush the teeth, combing, buttoning and clothing explained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>My home</td>
<td>Models of exteriors and interiors</td>
<td>Children asked with the help of blocks to make exteriors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Cleaning up the classroom</td>
<td>Simple cleaning equipment</td>
<td>Children asked to arrange property blocks, books, chairs etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>My food</td>
<td>Fresh vegetables, charts showing fruits and vegetables.</td>
<td>Mothers are asked to send fresh vegetable with the lunch box and the child is asked to identify.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indoor play**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Outline me</td>
<td>Newspaper sheet, crayons</td>
<td>Ask a child to lie down on a newspaper sheet, to draw outline by the second child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Free dance</td>
<td>Tape recorder</td>
<td>Ask the children to dance on familiar tunes, tapping, clapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Object grab bag</td>
<td>Bag containing wooden blocks</td>
<td>Each child draws five blocks without looking and matches. First player to match all the blocks wins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Sense of hearing</td>
<td>Two rocks, twigs with leaves</td>
<td>Teacher makes some sounds with different materials. The child who recognizes the sound raises his hand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Creativity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Categorisation</td>
<td>Cut outs of geometrical figures</td>
<td>Ask the child to take out similar cutouts in shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Triangular things</td>
<td>Cut outs, Charts, Tape</td>
<td>Child is asked to match out the triangles of different dimensions. Making triangle with limbs and fingers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Thumb painting</td>
<td>Colours, Charts</td>
<td>Washable colours applied to thumbs and children asked to paint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Concept of time</td>
<td>Clock (Cardboard with numbers written on it)</td>
<td>Teacher fixes hands of the clock and asks children to read time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Difference in me and my friends</td>
<td>Rope</td>
<td>Children are asked to execute standing broad jump. Less able children jump at the apex and more able children on the broader side.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Saturdays are outing days for visiting zoo, market, garden, grocery shop and picnics.
As a three year old child has just left home for a new environment, the teacher has to develop a sense of security and trust in the child by

- Fostering a warm welcome when the children come to school.
- Familiarization with the school routine.

The child should be able to develop following competencies attitudes and physical skills

- Identify self by name
- Concept of personal cleanliness, nails, ears and body.
- Develop independence through activities like buttoning, tying shoe laces, washing, dusting, winding up, self help clothing.
- Habit formation for proper use of toilets, soaps and towels.
- Management of personal safety i.e. not to play with knives, painted things, switches, electric gadgets.
- Develop proper eating habits, laying the table and cleaning it, sharing, use of tumblers, pouring from water bottle to glass.
- Participating in throwing, catching, balancing, block building, hopping, climbing, animal walks.

Social Competencies :
- Develop a healthy idea of one’s own body and confidence in one’s ability.
- Develop vocabulary for social communication and social interaction with others.
- Developing mannerism, waiting for turn, sharing toys, performing duties.
- Caring pets, concern for school property, classroom neatness, care of the
sick siblings and old people.

- Evaluating oneself: Difference between me and my friends.
- Develop understanding and use of classroom vocabulary.

**Cognitive Skills:**

- Recognize name and describe simple words, objects and pictures.
- Match, sort and name basic colours and shapes.
- Sequence objects by size.
- Classify objects by general categories.
- Memorize objects up to three in number in a picture.
- Developing basic concepts of time, day and night, concept of height and weight.
- Ability to recall an object or incident, ability to sing.
- Expressing one's self, verbal expression, listening skills, expression of needs.
- Recognize low and high, slow and fast sounds.
- Recognize similarities and differences in variety of familiar objects.