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SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Education of children below the age of six is of great importance when viewed from various angles. Specialists in the field of child care and development are unanimous in acknowledging the foundational significance of this period, not only with regard to health and nutrition but also in the all-round development - social, emotional, intellectual, language and physical of the child. The genesis of this line of thinking is the result of the researches done by various educationists and psychologists like Hunt, Bloom and Piaget.

Hunt (1961) found that intelligence is not a fixed quotient decided at birth but is a function of the interaction between the genetic potentials and the quality of the environment the child is exposed to. He emphasized that children's measured IQ could be raised by participation in given experiences provided by early childhood educators with support for the importance of their programmes. One of the Bloom's (1964) major studies, Stability and Change in Human Characteristics, looked at intelligence over a period of time and concluded that much of what can be measured as IQ at age seventeen is developed in the child's early years.

Researchers conducted all over the world in the area during the last few decades have concluded that in the early years of childhood, characteristics such as intelligence, personality, and social behaviour develop very rapidly. Gesell (1954), for example, noted that the brain practically reaches its mature bulk before the age of six and that the mind, character and spirit advance more rapidly during formative pre school period than during other period of growth. Torrance (1966) and Singh (1990) found that creativity peaks during the preschool years and that
creative abilities not nurtured that time can become more difficult to express later.

According to Senn (1975), most of the growth of human brain and body is completed in the first five years of life. There is no second chance. Children who have to go without adequate food, health care and proper educational facilities in those years will be unable to develop their full potential today and unable to make their full contribution to society tomorrow. Due to the rapid development, this stage of life has been acknowledged as the most crucial period for optimal development of an individual.

Since development is proceeding at a very fast rate in this stage, unfavourable experiences such as lack of adequate health care, nurturance or stimulation, unhealthy living conditions and exploitative working conditions hinder development to a considerable extent. In the same way, favourable conditions foster development. As the foundation of development in later years is laid at this age, the effect of this period is long lasting too. According to Levine (1984), it seems highly probable that certain environmental conditions in childhood have important impact on later development and this adequate stimulation is essential to normal development. This opinion was soon backed by Bloom (1964), when he stated that the rate of development, particularly intellectual development, is most rapid in the early years of life and that environmental enrichment or deprivation makes its maximum impact on the organism during the period of its most active growth.

Another aspect to be appreciated is that development is not simply the result of mechanical acts of feeding and physical care, but rather a feeling of total well being that arises from growing up in a healthy
atmosphere with love, warmth and opportunity for learning. That is, in addition to catering to the health and nutritional needs and providing physical care to the child, it is important to provide 'stimulation' as well. Early childhood stimulation provides learning opportunities for child development. “But with the perpetually increasing number of mothers joining the work force, the break up of the traditional joint family system and the mounting tensions and pre occupations of parents resulting from the existing life styles, children often do not get the benefit of a stimulating environment at their homes” (Kaul 1991, p.12).

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION : VIEWS OF EDUCATIONISTS

Giving due cognizance to all the facts mentioned above, it is now widely agreed that providing opportunities for early childhood education (ECE) to all children is imperative. Eminent educationists like Bruner (1964), Katz (1973) and Montessori (1914) have pointed out that pre school education is essential to develop the child’s good physique, good health habits, social attitudes and manners, group participation, emotional maturity, intellectual curiosity, child independence and creativity.

As another benefit of ECE, Singh (1997) on the basis of various studies such as those by Saxena (1971), Deenamal (1978), UNESCO (1974), Das and Garg (1985) and Lal (1986) reports that by giving proper pre school experience to all children, the appalling amount of wastage and stagnation in the initial grades of primary schools can be drastically brought down. Midness and Keliher (1967) reviewed forty seven studies on the importance of Kindergarten education and strongly supported the plea for pre school education as a part of the public education system. Various commissions and committees such as Woods Committee (1937),
Central Social Welfare Board (1953), Indian Child Education Conference (1955) and Committee of Member of Parliament (1971) have mentioned the essentiality of preschool education (Singh, 1997).

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: WHAT KOTHARI COMMISSION REPORT SAYS:

Recognizing the benefits of ECE, Kothari Commission (1964-66) hailed the preschool education as an essential adjunct of the national system of education. The commission in its report has pointed out the following as the objectives of preschool education in India.

* to develop the child good health habits and to build up basic skills necessary for personal adjustments such as dressing, toileting habits, eating, washing, cleaning etc.

* to develop desirable social attitudes and manners to encourage healthy group participation, making the child sensitive to the rights and privileges of others.

* to develop emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control his feelings and emotions.

* to encourage aesthetic appreciation.

* to stimulate the beginnings of his intellectual curiosity concerning the environment and to help him understand the world in which he lives and to foster new interests through opportunities to explore, investigate and experiment.
* to encourage independence and creativity by providing the child with sufficient opportunities for self expressions.

* to develop the child's ability to express his thoughts and feelings in fluent, correct and clear speech and

* to develop in the child a good physique, adequate muscle co-ordination and basic motor skills.

Early childhood education has received its due emphasis in the National Policy on Education (1986) and in the subsequent Ramamoorthi Committee Report (1990) as a critical input both for the holistic development of an individual and for its impact on the enrollment and retention of children in the primary grades.

Realizing this paramount importance, the demand for ECE is increasing day by day everywhere in our country. Consequently, there has been a wide expansion of ECE facilities in the country during the last few decades.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1. Early Childhood Education Movement in Pre-Independence India

   Early childhood education, as an organised endeavour, in India, dates back only as far as the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when the American Missionaries took the initiative to set up a few kindergarten classes in Madras, Sholapur and Ahmedabad (Muralidharan, 1968).
As the beginning of pre school education, in 1874, Loreta Convent School was established for the education of young children. After that St. Hildas nursery school was founded at Poona in 1885 (Singh, 1997). Devi (1975) reports that as early as 1888 kindergarten classes were added to the Saidapet High School in Madras and the trainees at the Saidapet Teachers Training College had to do a part of their practice teaching in this school. She also mentions that in 1901-02 the American Missionary Josephine started a kindergarten school with the objective of giving training to teachers of kindergarten. This institute had to be closed down in 1904-1905 but was again renewed in 1920-21.

The actual pre school movement on a national scale was started by Annie Beasant and Tagore in the early parts of the 20th century (Singh, 1997). In 1915 two social workers, Darbar Gopal Das and Moti Bhai Amin, under the influence of Madam Montessori's ideology, established a Montessori school at Vase in Baroda District of Gujarat.

Five years later Giju Bhai Badheka started his Bal Mandir at Bhavnagar in Gujarat and began to adopt Montessori methods to suit Indian condition. In 1922 Giju Bhai was joined by Tarabai Modak who devoted her entire life since then to child education (Muralidharan, 1968).

In 1925 the followers of Montessori established a Montessori Association and convened a Conference on child education. Subsequently, under the influence of Gijubhai the objectives of the association was modified to suit the Indian condition and it was renamed as 'Nutan Bal Shikshan Sangh'. In 1936, the first full fledged nursery training institution was started in Vepery, Madras, by Christian Missionaries (Devi 1975). In 1938, the 'Nutan Bal Shikshan Sangh' organized some nursery schools and a training centre at Dadar, Bombay.
In 1939 Madam Montessori visited India and provided tremendous impetus to nursery education. The Montessori method aroused a great deal of interest among Indian educators and a series of training centres were started in different parts of the country.

In 1946, Montessori met Mahatma Gandhi who asked her to 'Indianize' the method to bring about a revolution in Indian education. Gandhiji emphasized the need for an inexpensive system of pre school education which could be made available to a large majority of children. That was the beginning of pre-basic education. Pre-basic education was first experimented within the Sevagram under the guidance of Shanta Narulkar and was subsequently carried out by the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, primarily in the villages of India.

2. Early Childhood Education in Post-Independence India.

At the time of independence in 1947, pre school education was thus primarily in the hands of a few voluntary organizations. After independence, the Government assumed greater responsibility towards the care and welfare of children. The Government's approach to child development and child care services are described here in a decade-wise sequence.

(a) Starting of Various Child Care Services in 1960s.

The first five year plan (1951-56) acknowledged that the needs of children should receive much greater consideration than is commonly given to them. The plan assigned the responsibility of welfare collectively to the family, community and the Government. The focus was on encouraging voluntary agencies to organize activities in child welfare, as
they had been engaged in this task even earlier. Accordingly, grants were sanctioned to voluntary organizations for strengthening, improving and extending their activities in this field.

In 1952, Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW), the first national level organization in this field, was formed to mobilize voluntary activities in all aspects of child development (Singh, 1997).

Another significant development of the decade was the establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in 1953 (Singh, 1997). It was set up to assist voluntary organizations and mobilize their support and co-operation in the provision of social services, especially for women and children. At that time most of the voluntary welfare organizations were located in urban areas. Saxena (1959) reports that the Board launched, in 1954, the Welfare Extension Projects (WEP) to cater to the rural population. Several activities were taken up by the project. Balwadi, the multipurpose centre of the project, comprised a crèche, pre school, and provided supplementary nutrition was one among them.

During the second plan the Welfare Extension Projects were coordinated with programmes of women and children in Community Development Blocks with education of children upto six years forming an integral part. During the decade, in 1959 the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted and this Declaration was accepted by the Government of India (Muralidharan and Venita, 1988). It was a favourable aspect for the child care activities in the country.
(b) Quality Expansion in 1960s.

While during the first two plan periods the concentration was on quantitative expansion of pre school programmes, in the course of the third plan period the focus of attention gradually shifted to qualitative aspects (UNESCO, 1974). Although Central Social Welfare Board had by then started 6000 pre schools their quality left much to be desired. Therefore the WEP Programme for women and children developed by CSWB during 1950s was reviewed and reorganized. Subsequently, with a view to reach out the programme with better quality and to more beneficiaries, demonstration projects were set up in rural areas in each state.

Muralidharan and Venita (1988) reports that a new scheme of Family and Child Welfare was prepared and implemented in 1967. The objectives of this scheme were to foster the all-round development of the pre-school child by providing comprehensive services in all areas of child’s needs and to strengthen the family and increase its effectiveness for contributing to the growth and the development of the child. During this period elaborate arrangements were made to provide training and in-service training to the project functionaries at different levels.

In 1963, the then Ministry of Education opened a new unit in the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) at New Delhi to conduct child services and evolve better method of childhood education. The Kothari Commission, set up in 1966, recommended expansion of pre-school education facilities, particularly to children from disadvantaged areas.
An important legislation enacted in this decade was the 'Children's Act'. It came into effect in 1960. The Act was amended in 1978 so as to meet the needs of delinquent and neglected children too.

In 1967 the Ganga Saran Sinha Committee was set up to identify the problems and needs of the child, and to suggest appropriate action programmes. The committee observed that a comprehensive national policy for child welfare was necessary to take an integrated view of the needs of children.

(c) Starting of New Programmes and Services in 1970s.

The highlight of the seventies was the evolution and adoption of the National Policy for Children in 1974, based on the recommendations of the Ganga Saran Sinha Committee. The policy endorsed the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It stated that the Government should provide adequate services to children before and after birth and during the period of growth to ensure their full physical, mental and social development. The measures suggested included, among others, non-formal pre school education also. The Special Nutrition Programme (SNP) was launched in 1970-71 to improve the nutritional status of pre school children, pregnant women and lactating mothers. Another feeding programme started in this decade was Balwadi Nutrition Programme in 1970-71. The aim of this project was to supplement children’s daily caloric and protein intake (Mohanty, 1984).

The fifth plan saw a major break-through with the formulation of the National Policy for Children which was approved by the Parliament in 1975. In pursuance of this policy the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme was proposed (Muralidharan and Venita, 1988). This
scheme was presented for the first time at the sixth conference of the Indian Association for Pre-school Education (IAPE) in October 1972 at Bangalore by K.V. Natrajan, the then chief, Nutrition and Social welfare, planning commission, in a paper titled "Integrated Child Care Services – An Approach". As indicated in the paper, the minimum package of services envisaged in the scheme did not include any component of pre school education. IAPE, therefore submitted a memorandum to the Planning Commission to bring this matter into their notice. After extensive correspondence with IAPE on this matter, the scheme that was finally launched on an experimental basis in 1975 included non-formal pre school education as a component along with other components of health and nutrition. The scheme has been expanding steadily and is presently the largest child development programme in the country.

Doka (1982) reports that another landmark in the seventies was the setting up of the National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development (NIPCCD), New Delhi. Set up in 1975 as an autonomous institute, it was identified as an apex body for training of workers in child welfare. Another function of it was to assist the Government in all technical matters related to child development and promotion of voluntary action in social development.

(d) Expansion of Programmes and Services in 1980s

Programmes and services for children in the areas of health, nutrition, education and social services were expanded during the eighties. Early childhood education was first suggested under the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) as a strategy to reduce the dropout rate and improve the rate of retention in schools. It was designed with a view to prepare the child for primary school by enhancing her communication and
cognitive skills. A scheme was initiated whereby voluntary organisations were provided central assistance for operating ECE centres in rural and backward areas of backward states. The task of the ECE Centres was to take up activities related to early childhood care and education.

It was for the first time in the National Policy on Education (NPE), adopted in 1986, by the Government of India, that a bold recognition was granted to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and a clear Government Policy was stated in this regard. The NPE used the term ECCE to include all activities which foster and promote the all-round balanced development of the child during the critical early childhood years, that is the age group of 0-6 years.

The contents of ECCE – Physical, mental, social and emotional development - were very similar to what was being offered in the ICDS package, which also has non-formal preschool education. The policy thus suggested that ECCE be integrated with ICDS wherever possible.

(e) 1990s : First World Summit for Children

The nineties witnessed the first ever World Summit for Children, held in 1990. The World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children made at this Summit was endorsed by over one hundred countries, including Government of India, with a view to focus on giving every child a better future. The Summit urged all Governments to promote earliest possible ratification and implementation of Convention. India is amongst the countries that have ratified the Convention.
Early Childhood Education: The Present Scenario

The demand for ECE is increasing day by day everywhere in India. To cater to this need a large number of ECE institutions are coming up these days. Such institutions come under one of the following categories:

i. Anganwadies;

ii. Balwadies;

iii. Pre primary schools run by State Governments, Municipal Corporations, or Voluntary Agencies;

iv. Early childhood Education Centres run under the scheme of assistance by the Government to Voluntary Organisations/Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs); or

v. Pre primary schools run by Commercial Agencies.

Early Childhood Education: Institutions in Kerala

Children in the age group of 3-5 are generally admitted for early childhood education (ECE) at present in Kerala. Known by different nomenclatures such as Pre primary schools, Nursery schools, Anganwadies, Balwadies, Kindergartens, and Montessori schools different types of ECE institutions are now functioning in the state. It include institutions functioning under different Government departments such as General Education Department, Rural Development Department, Social Welfare Department, Scheduled Cast Development Department and Tribal Development Department, recognized institutions and unrecognized institutions. The details regarding such institutions functioning in the state at present are given in Table 1.
TABLE 1
Details of Early childhood Education Centres in Kerala

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Category of centres</th>
<th>No. of centres</th>
<th>Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Anganwadies</td>
<td>15778</td>
<td>Social Welfare Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Balwadies</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>Rural Development Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Government Nursery Schools</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>General Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Nursery schools</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Scheduled caste Development Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Kindergartens</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Scheduled Tribe Development Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Pre primary classes in Government Schools run by the Parent Teacher Association</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Association of the concerned schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Unrecognized Institutions</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Private management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of Sl.No. 1: Social Welfare Department, Govt. of Kerala, (1998)
Source of Sl.No. 2: Rural Development Department, Govt. of Kerala, (1998)
Source of Sl.No. 3 & 6: SCERT, Trivandrum
Source of Sl.No. 4 & 5: Scheduled Caste Development Department, Govt. of Kerala
* : Exact number is not available
NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

The goal of early childhood education is the all-round development of the child (Muraleedharan and Banerji, 1991). The programmes of all type of ECE institutions, therefore, should be suited to achieve this objective. In the National Curriculum Frame Work it is indicated that the basic mode of upbringing the children at the pre school stage should be through group activities and play way techniques, number games, and other activities directed to promote environmental awareness.

Famous educationists like Comenius (1642), Rousseau (1762), Froebel (1826), Hill (1926) and Piaget (1962) have stressed the importance of play and activities in the education of young children. Eheart and Leavitt (1985) state that play offers young children opportunities to master many fundamental physical, social and intellectual skills and concepts. Researchers like Gravey (1977), Sylva, Bruner and Genova (1976) have come to similar conclusions for both younger and primary aged children.

According to Kaul (1991), ECE should definitely adopt play way method because of the following reasons.

- Play way method is essentially child-centered and caters to the individual needs, interests and abilities.
- Play serves as a natural way for children to express ideas and feelings as well as to explore and understand the world around them. It helps to build social relations among children
- Plays provide learning experiences to the child in a concrete form through play situations so that the child becomes an active participant and not a passive recipient in the total learning process.
* Plays provide a balanced, process oriented programme which fulfills all developmental objectives. It nurtures development of learning processes like observation, experimentation, problem solving and creativity in children while also catering to the promotion of their physical, language and social skills;

* It facilitates individual attention and continuous evaluation of each child. Group and individual play activities provide immediate feed back to the ECE teacher/worker on every child; and

* It makes learning enjoyable for children and develops in them a sustained motivation for school and schooling.

Almy (1984) writes that the distinguishing characteristics of play make it essential to the child's development. She believes that adults and teachers must provide opportunities for children to play and to learn from observations and actions as well as from being told things.

Though play way is the widely accepted method of ECE, many of the present ECE institutions are not functioning accordingly. As Muralidharan and Banerji (1991, p.1) have remarked "only a few of the preschools understand the significance of early childhood education. A large majority of the ECE centres are functioning on the same pattern as the primary schools". According to Dave (1991) the existing scenario indicates that, more often than not, it has become a downward extension of primary schools, ignoring thereby the basic philosophy and methodology of Early Childhood Education. This situation is not confined to the urban elite schools, but has also percolated in an aggravated form, to the smaller urban and rural preschools and anganwadies. Singh (1997) feels that pre school education is complete formal in all nursery schools and convents.
According to Panda (1992) the activities followed in preschools are mostly geared to the demands of primary schools. This is partly because of the parent's pressure and partly due to the expectation of the primary schools that the preschools develop formal skills of reading and writing before the children enter class 1.

Findings of the research studies conducted in Kerala by Seethamony (1989) that the conditions of Anganwadies in Kerala is pathetic and Raghavan (1998) that formal teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic is introduced in majority of the preschools indicate the unfavourable situations of the ECE in the state.

The conclusions of Radhakrishnan, Ravindran and Sasidharan (2000) that formal instruction in different subjects is seen in most of the preschools since both parents and teachers consider this course as a preparatory course for the regular schooling support the findings of Raghavan. The investigator who have visited various ECE centres and conducted orientation programmes for the teachers of ECE as a part of his profession felt from his own experience that many of the centres were not conducting the required programmes properly to achieve the objectives of early childhood education. The programmes conducted in many of the institutions were not suited for the all-round development of the child.

In this context the investigator thought it essential to assess the quality of the programmes of the ECE centres in the state. Hence the present study was designed. It may be noted here that the investigator has developed a hypothetical model of programmes to be implemented in the early childhood educational institutions of Kerala. (The details regarding the hypothetical model are presented in Chapter III).
TITLE OF THE INVESTIGATION

The present study is entitled as

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE PROGRAMMES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES IN KERALA.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Critical Study

The term “Critical Study” as used in the present investigation implies the procedures used for collection of information or data related to early childhood education centres, analysis of the questionnaire with the help of the hypothetical model and drawing of conclusions after careful evaluation of programmes.

Programmes

Programme means a syllabus, or a course of studies or a plan of future events (The Illustrated Oxford Dictionary, 1998). The goal of early childhood education is the development of the whole child. Therefore, in the present investigation, programme refers to all the activities conducted at the early childhood education centres meant for achieving the objective.

Early Childhood Education Centres

‘Early Childhood Education Centres’ refer to institutions meant for the education of young children, usually 3 to 5 or 6 years of age, that is, upto the age of entry into primary school. The ‘early childhood’ is also referred to as the pre school age because at this age the child is learning
skills that will help her to do tasks associated with schooling. Piaget (1955), Andrews (1930) and Montgomery (1965) have considered three to five years age range as pre school age.

For the present study 3 to 5 is the age range of children undergoing early childhood education because of the following reasons.

1. As per the Kerala Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Act and Rules (Draft, 1995) age 3 is fixed as the minimum years for admission to an early childhood education centre.

2. The Government of Kerala has fixed the minimum age of a child for admission to the primary class as 5 years.

As per the Kerala ECCE Act and Rules (Draft, 1995) Early Childhood Education Centre includes, the land, buildings, play ground and the movable properties such as furniture, apparatus, toys and other play materials, learning materials, books and utensils pertaining to the centre.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The objectives of the present investigation were:

1. To critically assess the programmes conducted at the early childhood education centres for the:
   A. Socio-emotional development;
   B. Physical and motor development;
   C. Language development;
   D. Cognitive development; and
E. Development of Creative expression and aesthetic appreciation; of the child.

2. To assess the programmes conducted for achieving the above-mentioned five developments in the following four categories of early childhood education centres separately.

(i) Anganwadies;
(ii) Balwadies;
(iii) Government nursery schools; and
(iv) Pre primary classes in Government schools run by the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs).

3. To classify the early childhood education centres as 'Excellent', 'Good' or 'Poor' based on the success of the programmes conducted for achieving the developments mentioned under objective 1.

4. To conduct comparisons between the followings, on the basis of the above classification:

a. Anganwadies and Balwadies;
b. Anganwadies and Government nursery schools;
c. Anganwadies and Pre primary classes in Govt schools run by the PTAs.
d. Balwadies and Government nursery schools;
e. Balwadies and Pre primary classes in Government schools run by the PTAs; and
f. Government nursery schools and Pre primary classes in Government schools run by the PTAs.
HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated in the present study:

1. The programmes conducted in majority of the early childhood education centres for the:
   A. Socio emotional development;
   B. Physical and motor development;
   C. Language development;
   D. Cognitive development; and
   E. Development of Creative expression and aesthetic appreciation of the child are not in accordance with those stipulated in the hypothetical model.

2. There will not be any significant differences among the percentages of Anganwadies, Balwadies, Government nursery schools and Pre primary classes in Government schools run by the PTAs classified as “excellent”.

3. There will not be any significant differences among the percentages of Anganwadies, Balwadies, Government nursery schools and Pre primary classes in Government schools run by the PTAs classified as “good”.

4. There will not be any significant differences among the percentages of Anganwadies, Balwadies, Government nursery schools and Pre primary classes in Government schools run by the PTAs classified as “poor”.
METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

(a) Sample

The present study was based on a sample of 348 early childhood education centres covering the whole state. It included 232 Anganwadies, 47 Balwadies, 33 Government nursery schools and 36 Government schools having pre primary classes run by the Parent Teacher Associations.

(b) Tools and techniques used for the study

Questionnaire

One questionnaire was used for collecting the relevant data regarding the programmes conducted at the Early Childhood Education Centres.

Statistical technique

The main statistical technique used in the present study was the test of significance between percentages.