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“A STUDY OF SCHOOL READINESS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD YEARS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL SUCCESS”

ABSTRACT

Early childhood care and Education programmes were found running by Government, Private sectors and NGOs. Design of all the programmes was almost same across the programmes, but the quality and implementation varied. Significant difference existed between the mean Readiness scores of high and low readiness groups. One-third children were neither developmentally ready nor ready with reading and numeracy skills. Significant difference existed between Readiness levels of children with pre-schooling and without pre-schooling. Pupils with early childhood education background were comparatively more ready for school than children without Early Childhood experience. Children with early childhood experience had performed low on developmental Indicators. Private preschool children were found more ready for class I. School Readiness of children up to 5 ½ was relatively lower than those of above 6 years. Physical, cognitive, socio-emotional and creative development among children up to 5 ½ was also relatively lower than those of above 6 years. A significant difference existed between the School Readiness levels of girls and boys. Male children performed better than female children on reading, numeracy. Female children performed better on developmental readiness. School readiness of children in reading and numeracy, of those children whose both parents were educated was better than single educated parent and uneducated parents. Developmentally children of uneducated parents were better than single educated parent. School readiness of children of regular income parents was better in reading and numeracy. Developmentally children of daily waging parents were more ready than regular income parents.

Participation in various Early Childhood Programmes affects school readiness and school readiness affects school success. Pupils with high school readiness in reading and numeracy showed better performance in all the terms in school subjects. It was found that those who received ECE from private schools performed better than children coming from other models.

Pupils with early childhood education had performed well in comparison to pupils without early childhood experience in all the three terms of class I. Performance of female pupils was better than Males. Developmentally at the end of class I girls showed better development than boys. Attainment in school subjects of pupils between 5 – 5 ½ years was relatively lower than of those above 6 years. Performance on developmental tasks was better of smaller age groups children. Smaller age group children performed well (5-5 ½) on developmental task than little older age groups (above 6 years). Development of pupils at the end of class I was better of daily waging parents. Performance of the children of regular income parent was better in school subjects. Achievement of children in curricular and co-curricular subjects was higher of pupils whose both parents were educated. Children of single educated parent performed better than uneducated parents. At the end of class I children of uneducated parents were better on development than single educated parent. Children of Single educated parent were more developmentally fit for school than children whose both parents were educated. Achievement in school subjects of pupils whose parents had regular income was found high. Development of pupils at the end of class I was better of daily waging parent.

Preschool/ECE experience, Parent education and their Income was found highly significant in predicting school readiness. Preschool/ECE experiences, Attendance, Parent Income was found highly significant in predicting school success. Gender and age of the child was found significant in predicting school success. Teacher behaviour in

classroom was found highly significant in predicting school success. Attendance had emerged as important factor in developing school success.

Interaction was made with the Principals, teachers, parents and children of the sample schools to comprehend the information about developing school readiness among children before starting formal education and to explore how learning took place in class I. It was found that teachers and principals were aware of school readiness concept but did not found it necessary to implement it properly. Teachers had limited idea about the components of school readiness. Teachers reported that they had lot of extra duties in the beginning of the academic year and did not get time to develop school readiness. Alphabets and numbers were introduced directly, without developing readiness skills in the areas. More attention was paid to learning to read the alphabet, numbers, two - three letter words. More focus was on pronunciation than comprehension at this level. Less attention was paid to pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-number concepts. Directionality, keeping book in the right position, holding pencil properly etc. were not paid attention to. Classroom observation revealed that co-curricular activities were in classroom processes was getting due attention. Though it was planned in the regular time table but activities were not performed actually. Many a time's children had to forgo the activity due to one reason or another. During the conduct of activities children liked drawing, colouring; but they were not given any opportunity for expressing their own creativity. Children were found copying from the board. Children were found to be responding more to the visual activities than the auditory activities. Even amongst the visual activities they preferred to have colourful pictures than black and white. Children were eager to listen to the taped activities "Radio programmes" but were unable to sustain their attention. Reasons shared by parents for not providing preschool education to their children: Parents did not realize the importance of school readiness. Due to frequent changes in job place they did not admit their children to pre-primary education. As Preschool education is not a pre-requirement for admission in MCD/KV schools so parents enrolled their children directly to the class I. Majority of the parents said that they prepared their children mentally for school. 30% parents whose children didn't go to preschool reported that their children were not going to school happily were facing difficulty in adjusting. Only 60% parents in government schools were found attending PTM. In Private school all parents attended meeting. Parents whose children underwent preschool experience reported that preschool experience had helped their children in adjusting in school. Children were asked whether they like coming to school Daily. Majority (82%) of children stated that they liked coming to school. On being asked what they liked in their school, they replied that they liked Play equipments (73%).

Conclusion

ECE experience had put children in advantageous position with regards to readiness levels. Activities related to audio-visual association, auditory discrimination and visual perception, vocabulary, sequential thinking, seriation, space concepts and pre-number concepts should find prominent place in ECE curriculum. Academic readiness for reading and arithmetic should not be in isolation with children's physical, motor, cognitive, language and personal-social state of development. It is therefore essential to pay attention to children's developmental needs in order to achieve desired levels of readiness among children. It is imperative to have ECE methodology extended to class I also. At least six weeks of school readiness programme at the beginning of the session, would greatly help.