



Contributions of AGA khan education services Pakistan in early childhood development

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ABSTRACT

The present study assessed the contributions of Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan (AKESP) in Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Chitral. The study aimed to find out head teachers, teachers and parents' views about contributions of AKESP in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers at Chitral, and to assess their views about contributions of ECD centers in physical, social, cognitive, emotional, academic and moral development of children. The study was descriptive. Data were collected from parents, teachers and heads of ECD centers from valleys of Chitral through two sets of questionnaires. Findings report that ECD centers are contributing a lot in providing facilities for children at these centers and that ECD centers are contributing a lot in the social, emotional, moral, academic and physical development of children. However, ECD Centers of AKESP may focus on launching more programs for cognitive development of children and programs of teachers training in ECD.

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Introduction

The term Early Childhood Development (ECD) is defined in many different ways by different organizations, research and educational institutions working for social development of the people around the world. According to the latest information, available on this subject on the official website of the World Bank, the concept of ECD has been defined as

“Early childhood is the most rapid period of development in a human life. Although individual children develop at their own pace, all children progress through an identifiable sequence of physical, cognitive, and emotional growth and change. The Early Child Development (ECD) approach is based on the proven fact that young children respond best when caregivers use specific techniques designed to encourage and stimulate progress to the next level of development.” (<http://web.worldbank.org> retrieved on 20-08-2010 at 05:13 PM).

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centers are working under the supervision of Government or Non Governmental Organization's (NGO's) all around the world in one way or the other. Many of the developing countries (Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh) as well as developed countries (America, England, Japan) have considered ECD as a base for human resource development. The importance of ECD can be observed in the developing world particularly.

Keeping in view the necessity of ECD, our country Pakistan is also working in this area and has developed a very rich curriculum for it (National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, 2007). But unfortunately our Government has no enough funds to meet the demands of ECD Centers, and to conduct these throughout the country. As Izzat Begum (2007) says “it needs the co-operation of some non governmental organizations generally known as NGO's”.

Aga Khan Education Service of Pakistan (AKESP) is a branch of Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) working in Pakistan especially in rural areas like Chitral, Gilgit, and rural areas of Sindh to upgrade the Education System. Aga Khan Education Service is also working for Early Childhood Education (ECE) by following the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education 2007.

Statement of the Problem

Early Childhood Development (ECD) has been tested in various forms in different parts of the world and has been adopted as a crucial stage of human development but this is an entirely new concept in a developing country like Pakistan. The concept of ECD, has not still been introduced in most of the rural areas of Pakistan. However, Chitral is among few of the privileged rural areas where the Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan (AKESP) is contributing in the field of early childhood development. Therefore, the problem under study was to explore the contributions of AKESP for development of early childhood in valleys of Chitral.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study were:

- 1-to find out head teachers' and teachers' views about contributions (provision of facilities) of the Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan (AKESP) in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers in Chitral.
- 2-to assess head teachers and teachers views about contributions of AKESP's ECD centers in physical, social, cognitive, emotional, academic and moral development of children.
- 3-to measure parents' views about contributions (provision of facilities) of the Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan (AKESP) in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers in Chitral.

4-to examine parents' views about contributions of AKESP's ECD centers in physical, social, cognitive, emotional, academic and moral development of children.

Hypotheses of the Study

Followings were the hypotheses of the study:

1. Teachers and head teachers are satisfied with contributions of Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan (AKESP) in Early Childhood Development (ECD) through provision of basic facilities such as learning material, proper building, lighting arrangements, fee concession, pick and drop, medical facility, lunch room, sick room, heating system in winter, qualified teachers, hygienic water and comfortable furniture in the ECD centers.
2. Parents are satisfied about Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan (AKESP) contributions in Early Childhood Development (ECD) through provision of basic facilities such as learning material, proper building, lighting arrangements, fee concession, pick and drop, medical facility, lunch room, sick room, heating system in winter, qualified teachers, hygienic water, comfortable furniture, in the ECD centers.
3. Teachers and head teachers are satisfied with contribution of AKESP supported ECD centers for of physical development of children enrolled in these centers.
4. Teachers and head teachers are satisfied with contribution of AKESP supported ECD centers for contribution of social development of children enrolled in these centers.
5. Teachers and head teachers are satisfied with contribution of AKESP supported ECD centers for contribution of cognitive development of children enrolled in these centers.
6. Teachers and head teachers are satisfied with contribution of AKESP supported ECD centers for contribution of emotional development of children enrolled in these centers.
7. Teachers and head teachers are satisfied with contribution of AKESP supported ECD centers for contribution of academic development of children enrolled in these centers.
8. Parents are satisfied about AKESP supported ECD centers for contribution of physical development of children enrolled in these centers.
9. Parents are satisfied about AKESP supported ECD centers for contribution of social development of children enrolled in these centers.
10. Parents are satisfied about AKESP supported ECD centers for contribution of cognitive development of children enrolled in these centers.
11. Parents are satisfied about AKESP supported ECD centers for contribution of emotional development of children enrolled in these centers.
12. Parents are satisfied about AKESP supported ECD centers for contribution of academic development of children enrolled in these centers.
13. Parents are satisfied about AKESP supported ECD centers for contribution of moral development of children enrolled in these centers.

Theoretical Framework

It was a descriptive study and the objective of the study was to find out the contributions of the Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan (AKESP) in Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Chitral and to identify the problems AKESP (as a Service provider) is facing in promoting the ECD in Chitral. The theoretical frame work of the study is based on following factors of EC development

- (a) Physical Development

- (b) Social Development
- (c) Cognitive Development
- (d) Emotional Development
- (e) Academic Development
- (f) Moral Development

Delimitations of the Study

Any research can have some kind of delimitation and mentioning them can help the readers in better understanding the work done. As the researcher had limited resources, therefore the study was delimited to the following factors:

- Collecting data from centers of AKESP in Chitral of ECD that were accessible for the researcher
- Assessing APEKSP contributions from viewpoint ECD centers and provision of facilities at ECD centers for students and teachers
- Assessing head teachers, teachers and parents' views about contributions of AKESP in Chitral.

Methodology

The purpose of the present study was to explore the contributions of Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan in the field of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the valleys of Chitral. It was a descriptive research in nature and two categories of Questionnaires, one for head teachers and teachers and the other for parents, were used as research tool for collection of data for the study.

Population and sample

All Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDCs) located in Chitral valleys registered under Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan, were considered as population of the study and all the children falling between age level 3 to 5 years studying in ECDs were taken as the population of the ECD centers. Convenient sampling technique was used for data collection. Data were collected from those Early Childhood Development Centers that were located in valleys which were accessible for the researcher. Therefore, all 12 heads teachers, 24 teachers serving in these sample centers along with five parents from each center were taken as sample whose children were studying in these centers. The researcher developed two questionnaires; one questionnaire was designed for head teachers, teachers and one for parents of those children who were studying in sample ECD Centers. A team of experts checked the validity of the instruments. After the validation by experts the instruments were pilot tested and some questions were excluded. The questionnaires were again modified in the light of results of pilot testing and expert opinions. When experts validated them, they were administered on the sample. On the whole, the reliability of instrument was measured as .71.

Review of Related Literature

Education is a training, through which a person can polish his or personality and adjust himself in the society,). "Education is a process which enables an individual to adjust himself in the society" S.M Shahid (2007.08 (p.17). It is a fact that education is the light that enables an individual how to live in a society. Education is a way through which a person can understand his or her self as well as other people of society. It is also the process through which society transmits his culture to his coming generation. As Nadia BiBi (2007) finds out "education transmits the culture as preserve its past and present and shape its future and develop the intellect". Every society wants mature and competent members to preserve its culture. For a society this can only be possible when the new generation become fully developed (mentally, physically, emotionally and socially). As

Anna Craft (2002, p.25) quoted the saying of Dearden (1976, p.55) "children unavoidably are our future adults". So children are the mirror of their parents. According to Audrey Curtis and Maureen O'Hagan (2003) "Children's brains are twice as active as those of adults and that activity levels begin to drop during adolescence"(p.31). If a child is treated carefully at this stage (0 to 08years) he or she will become a developed personality and productive for the society. For this purpose so many Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDC) are working in the world.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines "early childhood as the period from birth to eight years of age"(McCulloch and Crook, © 2008)

The term "growth" is used in purely physical sense. It generally refers to an increase in size, length, height and weight. Changes in the quantitative aspects come into the domain of growth" Development is a wider and comprehensive term. It refers to overall changes in the individual. Growth is one of its parts", (Seema Sharma, 2005)

What is Early Childhood Development?

"The Early Child Development (ECD) approach is based on the proven fact that young children respond best when caregivers use specific techniques designed to encourage and stimulate progress to the next level of development". <http://web.worldbank.org> retrieved on 18/09/2010 at 08:50 PM Children below the age of eight learn best when they have objects they can manipulate; when they have chance to explore the world around them; when they can experiment and learn from trial and error within a safe stimulating environment. (Amina Nigar 2008, p.4).

Importance of Early Childhood Development:

"Learning starts in infancy, long before formal education begins, and continues throughout life. Early learning begets later learning and early success breeds later success, just as early failure breeds later failure. Recent studies of early childhood investments have shown remarkable success and indicate that the early years are important for early learning. Moreover, early childhood interventions of high quality have lasting effects on learning and motivation" (James J. Heckman, September 1st 2004, p.1).

"The importance of the early years in the formation of intelligence, personality, social behavior and physical development is acknowledged. It is during the earliest period that our basic sense of selves and our relationship to the world established. Learning occurs faster in early years than at any other time and patterns are established at this time that has far-reaching implications" (Amina Nigar 2008, p.5).

"The importance of early childhood care and development (ECCD) in general and early childhood education (ECE) in particular, is now well established. With good quality early education, educational efficiency would improve as children would acquire the basic concepts, skills and attitudes required for successful learning and development prior to or shortly after entering the system, thus reducing the chances of failure; and the system, too, would be freed of under-age and under-prepared learners who have proven to be the most at risk in terms of school failure and drop-out" (National Plan of Action on Education For All, (2001-2015) Pakistan)

Woodhead, (2006) describes, " Research has shown that the early years are critical for the formation of intelligence, personality, social behavior and physical development, and in

laying down dispositions and attitudes which will persist through the life course".

Early Childhood Development and Physical Development

Physical Development "Involves the way children use their muscles, both large and small. The large muscles are used for activities such as walking, jumping and lifting large objects. The small muscles are used for fine motor activities such as threading beads, writing, and drawing, cleaning rice and working with small objects. Exposure to activities that help in muscle development helps children in doing small tasks on a daily basis".

(National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education 2007,(p.6))

"The child is going out of infancy and continues his period of vigorous physical activity. His limbs are strong, flexible and active. He needs an affectionate teacher who will understand him in all his moods and help him to be himself and to learn, (S.Lakshmi,1989)". At this precious period of life a child needs someone very loving, affectionate and well mannered to take care his or her Physical aspect of development.

http://www.wholefamily.com/aboutyourkids/child/normal/physical_development.html, retrieved at 12:31 AM on 25/9/10

Early childhood Development and Social development

"The pre-school child at home lacks the company of the peer group as well as the adoring presence of his grant parents. Perhaps for his social membership and play, the nursery may offer him enough opportunity and hence social health. The child at this stage starts to become an effective member of the group. In the absence of group members, he can exercise his imagination and in his make believe world create any number of people,(S. Lakshmi, 1989)".

Responsible citizenship, social courtesies, respect for law and moral cultural values are not taught through academic regimentation or subordinating children to institutional stereotypes. Children acquire these values and attitudes when they are themselves respected, and when their intellectual and social attitudes are developed through carefully designed scholastic activities based on free inquiry, research, debate and discussion". National Curriculum 2000, A Conceptual Framework, Ministry of Education Government of Pakistan Islamabad,(p.14)

Early Childhood Development and Moral Development

"Children develop their understanding of right and wrong in a gradual progression that parallels their intellectual development in other areas. In the youngest ages, through the preoperational period that lasts until approximately seven years of age, children use what piaget called "moral realism" (piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Children base most of their judgments of good and bad on what is observable or real to them. At this stage, they do not realize that others have different motives for their actions", (Sandra Waite-Stupiansky, Ph. D., © 1997).

Early Childhood Development and Emotional Development

Emotional Development, according to(National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education 2007, p.7) "Refers to the development of a child's capacity to experience, manage, and express a full range of positive and negative emotions. The development of self esteem is critical throughout the early years and having positive experiences in a quality environment is essential at this stage. Feeling important, actively taking responsibility, being listened to and cared for, are the essentials for creating a positive self-concept in children".

“Emotions include feelings, interests, desires, attitudes and values in general. Although we think of emotion as being different from cognition, they are united in intellectual functioning. They are two sides of the same coin. A motivated child, for example, is encouraged to perform well: the child who likes mathematics typically makes rapid progress in that subject; the child who dislikes mathematics typically does not make the same progress”. National Curriculum 2000, A Conceptual Framework, Ministry of Education Government of Pakistan Islamabad, (p.13)

“The aim is to help children to increase awareness and understanding of personal emotions and feelings and develop sensitivity to others through educational activities implemented in small developmental steps which provide positive feedback”. Theodora Papatheodorou, 2005 (p.85)

“The child in the pre-school looks for love and belongingness. He adores his teacher and his playmates. It is his school and his teacher. Emotionally he is growing, trying to learn the ‘good’ as different from the ‘bad’, the ‘right’ as different from the ‘wrong’. These value loaded terms are not very clear to him at this stage but placed under the loving care of a motherly teacher, he feels emotionally safe. The school is a place where in a happy environment, the child’s health is assured, (S. Lashmi, 1989)

Early Childhood Development and Cognitive Development
“Cognitive Development refers to the development of mental process and capabilities; it focuses on how children learn and process information. It is the development of thinking and organizing systems of the mind. It involves language, imagining, thinking, exploring, reasoning, problem solving, developing and rejecting ideas and concepts, memory, expression through multimedia and experimenting and applying what they learn. When they come to school, children are already equipped with all the basic thinking and processing skills that they have learnt as part of growing up. (National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education 2007, p.7)

Cognitive development is the person’s ability to think on objects, problem solving and to explore the things. Early childhood care and development center is considered the best place where a child is provided an environment to fully develop his or her thinking power and thirst for curiosity. At the early stage of life a child’s brain development is very rapid.

Early Childhood and Academic Development

In the high quality preschool programs a teacher should observe the child’s working on the following;

- Learning the letters of the alphabet or not.
- Learning new words and able to use them or not
- Learning about written language by looking at books or not
- Learning to listening stories
- Learning early writing skills
- Becoming familiar with math and science

<http://www.answers.com/topic/early-childhood-education>.

Retrieved on 15/10/2010 at 08:50 AM

“Lasting from birth to the beginning of first grade, children master several prerequisites for reading. Many learn to discriminate among the letters of the alphabet. Many learn to write their names. Some learn to read a few words, typically the names of products such as coca-cola and stores such as sears. As was the case in arithmetic, young children’s knowledge of reading seems to be considerably greater than it was 40 or 50 years ago. The improvement may be due to educational programs” (Robert S. Siegler, p.320, © 1986).

Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development of a Child

Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of Moral development is based on Piaget theory of Cognitive development. Lawrence Kohlberg derived from his research and theorized that children do not know the moral values of the society they only obey the rules of the society to avoid the punishment and to gain appreciation and rewards. He concluded that at this stage children obey the command due to the fear of punishment. <http://www.aggelia.com/htdocs/kohlberg.shtml>. Retrieved on 17/10/2010, at 12:54 PM

Stages of Early Childhood Education

1. Day Care Center
2. Pre-School Education
3. Kindergarten School

Day Care Center

Day care is typically an ongoing service during specific periods, such as the parents’ time at work. It can also take on a more formal structure, with education, child development, discipline and even preschool education falling into the fold of services. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day_care. Retrieved on 29/10/2010 at 04:20 PM

A large number of family day care programs provide child care services in the homes of the caregivers. This alternative to center-based programs usually accommodates a maximum of four or five children in a family day care home. Home care programs were formerly custodial in nature, but there is a growing trend for care givers to provide a full range of services in their homes. (George S. Morrison, pp 4; 5; 6, © 1988).

Pre-School Education

In the words of George S. Morrison, (1988, pp 4; 5; 6) nursery school is a program for the education of two-three and four years old children. Many nursery schools are half-day programs, usually designed for children of mothers who do not work outside the home, although many children who have two working parents do attend.

Kindergarten School

Kindergarten means Children’s garden, is a program to educate the children of the age before the age of six or seven. It is the initial stage of formal schooling.

The Kindergarten was originated in June 28 1840 in Germany by Friedrich Frobel. Kindergarten stress on the social and emotional development of child, here children are taught to develop their learning skills through play and creativity. Children can attend Kindergarten between the ages from two to seven years. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kindergarten>, retrieved on 29/10/2010 at 03:20 PM

Other Terminology of Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education consists of the services provided in early childhood settings. It is common for educators of young children to use the terms early childhood and early childhood education synonymously.

George S. Morrison, (1988, pp 4; 5; 6), mentions, “There are not as many federal programs providing services to children, parents, and families as there were in the 1970s, but these programs have had a tremendous influence on early childhood education, for example, Home start was a demonstration program within Head Start designed to deliver a comprehensive program of services to children and parents in the home. Today many Head Start programs provide children and families a Home Base option for delivery of services”.

Researches on Early Childhood Development in the World

As child is a very important topic of today's world the researchers are in search of new strategies to promote Early Childhood Education, so they are presenting different values for the Early Childhood Curriculum;

- to develop an awareness and tolerance of other individuals and cultures
- to identify common needs and shared interests with different cultures and individuals
- to develop a respect for diversity
- to develop an understanding of rights (Jane M. Page, 2000, p.78).

"From the results of the research efforts of Hunt (1961, 1964) and Bloom (1964, educators began to realize that the kinds of learning experiences children have during the first five years of life may be crucial to all subsequent learning", (Elizabeth M. Goetz, K. Eileen Allen, 1983, p. 153).

A large percentage of the brain is formed by the time a child reaches the age of five. A child's home and community environment play a critical role in the formation of a strong or weak brain structure (Rolnick, 2004).

"Children who participate in early childhood programmes do better in school, and subsequently contribute more to society: among poor and disadvantaged groups in particular, a child with out early care and education in high quality group settings is more likely to drop out of school, receive welfare benefits and commit crime than a child in receipt of such provision (Schwenhart et al.,1993)".

A healthy environment, adequate food and clean water, the love and care of close relatives, and stimulating surroundings are all part of what a child needs. In addition, a child starts learning at birth and immediately embarks on a learning journey – language, awareness of people and the world around them, play and physical skills. Supporting these aspects of a child's life is the reason for the Education for All goal on early childhood care and education (ECCE)".

<http://www.unesco.org/en/efa/efa-goals/early-childhood/>. Retrieved on 16/10/2010 at 01:41 PM

A child's family can play major role to enhance the learning and left impact on a person's whole life. Because a child spend most of the time in home and no doubt that home is the first place for learning. According to Bronfenbrenner (1975), "long term effects of pre-school are more likely if the home environment, which is children's major early learning context, is strengthened. Pre-school programmes are time limited, but family experiences persist".

"Much of learning research point out the fact that a child learns more in his first five years than in all the remainder of his or her lifetime. This being true and coupled with the use of the right hemisphere of the brain for nearly all learning until the age of five, emphasize a need to teach more effectively. We must approach learning activities more through the right hemisphere of brain". (Barry Persky, Leonard H. Golubchick, Copyright 1991).

"The development of young children during the first 8 years in an elaborate passage that ordinarily proceeds on its own without much attention to the subtle and complex aspects of the process. We take it for granted that in the short space of one year, newborn infants will become upright, mobile, and able to communicate. We expect toddlers to develop a sense of self and working knowledge of the world around them. It does not surprise us that by kindergarten, most youngsters have mastered

a majority of the fundamental motor, language, social and self-care skills required for successful life as adults". (Kristine L. Slentz, Suzanne L. Krogh, p.05, 2001)

The need for pre-school education is felt since for the physical, social, intellectual, psychological and emotional health of children, this period in life is crucial, as it is impressionable and formative (S.Lakshmi,1992)."

Early childhood is the period of rapid development because child's developmental domains developed increasingly a child interacted with other people and copy the model "Another trait of socialization of the child is imitation, which implies that the child becomes interested in other children in and around him and tries to imitate their speech, actions and emotions.

At times the child develops a desire to excel or outdo others. This results rivalry and he tries to brag about his possessions, (M.Reddy, 2006)".

Even for the emotional satisfaction, the child depends upon others. He expects that everybody around him should love him and give him his entire affection and attention.

He wants to love and to be loved and in this exchange he totally depends on the mercy of others. In this way the child at this stage is dependent but as he moves into the later years of his infantile behavior he slowly proceed towards independence, (Seema Sharma, 2005)".

Early childhood education is very important because this early educational setting increases not only children's ability of independence but also increase their ability of creativity. Anna Craft, (2002, p.p. 7,8) describes, "Indeed, there is some evidence that certain kinds of classroom settings do increase learner creativity; Haddon and Lytton (1968) for example, reported a study of children at the top end of primary school that demonstrated a higher learner creativity in informal classroom settings, which are more likely to encourage adventurous thinking in children. Lytton later made a range of recommendations for strategies which might stimulate creative thinking in children, in particular encouraging positive attitudes towards self initiated learning and exploration, and encouraging curiosity".

Child's development is the major issue of today's world because a child is our tomorrow's representative. As some researches indicates, "it is children, rather than adults, who will create the world of the future" (Shane and Shane 1974; p.182, Masini 1986, p.7)

According to UNESCO "a preschool curriculum is one that delivers educational content through daily activities, tuition and furthers a child's physical, cognitive and social development. Generally, preschool curricula are only recognized by governments if it is based on academic research and reviewed by peers". http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preschool_Curriculum. Retrieved on 29/10/2010 at 04:28 PM

First-ever World UNESCO Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has gathered in Moscow on September 27—29, 2010, specialists in the upbringing and education of preschool children from every corner of the world.

Researches on Early Childhood Development in Pakistan

The first evidence of giving importance to Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Pakistan is the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education 2007. The aims of National Early Childhood Education (ECE) Curriculum tell that what is the thinking of our country regarding the children's proper development.

The National ECE Curriculum aims to:

- Provide for the holistic development of the child, which includes physical, social, emotional, cognitive and moral development.
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Nurture tolerance and respect for diversity.
- Nurture in children, a sense of identity and pride in being Pakistani.
- Provide knowledge and understanding of Islam and Islamic society.
- Develop an understanding and respect for the belief and practices of all other religions.
- Create in children, a sense of citizenship in community, country and world.
- Foster a sense of independence, self-reliance and a positive self image.
- Equip the child with life-long learning skills.
- Provide opportunities for active learning.
- Provide opportunities for self-initiated play and decision making.

ECD Centers helps a lot to develop a child's holistic development, because the ECD Centers in Pakistan are also following the objectives of National ECE Curriculum. As Amina Nigar (2008, p.29) describes that "the graph shows the performance of ECD student in Literacy, Numeric and life skills. The result illustrates that ECD students have performed well in all learning areas. However, the performance in life skill is better compared other two areas.

"It was studies that formal private preschool institutions in Pakistan are highly expensive and few children get the opportunity to attend them. Their prototype curricula and expensive teaching aids are also inappropriate for local communities. Government's schools only prepare the children for primary school but usually do not look after the developmental needs of the young children. To evolve an effective and meaningful ECD program the researchers proposed the following goals and objectives for development and implementation of the program.

According to Dr. Allah B. Malik, (2004) "(The birth of the child initiates a human being into a life long process of mutual adaptation between the child, his or her intimate relationship partners and the broader social environment. Intimate interactions to the changing needs and stress that evolves with each stage of development throughout one's life time. Intimate interactions from early life serve as the basis and as benchmarks upon which relationships later in life are formed and furthered.

Why Invest in Early Child Development (ECD)

There are many reasons to invest in early childhood development, for example a child's ability to think his or her good physical, emotional health, socialization and so on. Many researches have proven (Amina 2008, world bank.org) that, children who participate in formal Early Childhood programmes are more successful and high scorer in late school performance. The ECD participated child is more competent socially, emotionally, show higher verbal and intellectual, cognitive and moral development during Early Childhood than the children who are not participated in ECD Centers. ECD programmes prepare children for future school learning outcomes, improving their performance, health cognitive and emotional development in the early years. Nobel Laureate Hackman 1999 argues that investments in child bring a higher rate of return than

investments in low skill adults." A large body of research has proven the importance of early brain development and the need for good health and nutrition.

Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan and ECD

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) works under the auspices of Aga Khan Development Network, a body comprising of different organs working in different parts of the world. With main emphasis on education and health these organs also render services in the field of rural development, culture and architecture. The mission of these organs of AKDN is to improve the quality of life of the people of third world countries including some countries of Middle East and Africa. AKF's education program has been a huge success owing to its modern approach in equipping teachers and students with contemporary teaching and learning concepts to enable them to compete in the international arena yet with least disturbance of the cultural and social integrity.

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Education Program recognized its early childhood work in the early 1980. It worked in many developing countries (Kenya, India, and Portugal) on Early Childhood Development. For many years in East Africa, Tanzania and Uganda the program of Early Childhood was under the command of AKF. However the Program of ECD has spread in both within the countries and into 12 other countries with the partnership of other Aga Khan Development Networks other institutions. <http://www.akdn.org/akes>, retrieved on 24/08/2010 at 05:30 PM

Releasing Confidence and Creativity (RCC) is a unique program, introduced by AKF Pakistan, aimed at early childhood development (ECD). Through this program the AKF (Pakistan) is striving to improve the quality of ECD in more than 200 public and private sector schools all over Pakistan.

In order to assess the desired effects of the RCC program on teaching methods, class room and children, AKF is conducting a detailed study in different areas of Pakistan where this program is being undertaken. In this reference a method of comparison of RCC led and non-RCC schools have been adopted.

Once the research is complete it will be evident as to how the RCC has been effective in delivering its mandate of quality 'early childhood development' program in Pakistan. *Zeenat Janmohamed* <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson>, retrieved on 30/10/2010 at 09:08 PM

This RCC Programme is also operational in various ECD Centers in the remote valleys of Chitral. Through the current research project the researcher got the opportunity to investigate the contributions of Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan in Early Childhood Development in valleys of Chitral.

Delimitations

As the research has limited time and other resources, therefore, the current study was delimited to following factors:

- Collecting data from centers of AKESP in Chitral of ECD that were accessible for the researcher;
- Assessing AKESP contributions from point of view of centers of ECD and provision of facilities at ECD centers for students and teachers;
- Assessing head teachers, teachers and parents' views only about contributions of AKESP in Chitral.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected through questionnaires mainly captured the perceptions of head teachers, teachers and parents about two main areas of investigation, which were: (i) contributions of AKESP in promoting ECD in Chitral; and (ii) role of ECD in

physical, social, cognitive, emotional, academic, moral development of children. The data analysis was done through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) by applying comparison of mean score, and percentages. The detail of data analysis is written below:

Table No. 1 Number of Teachers and Head Teachers Included in the Study

Table No.1 shows that there were 12 (33.3%) head teachers and 24(66.7%) teachers that were taken as sample for the study. The total sample size was 36.

Table No. 2 Gender of Respondents

Table No.2 reveals that a majority of 28 (77.8%) out of total 36 respondents, were women teachers and only 8 (22.2%) respondents were men teachers.

Table No.3 Respondents' age:

Table No. 3 indicates that out of total 36 respondents 30 (83.3%) respondents were between 20-40 years and 6 (16.7%) respondents were above 40.

Table No. 4 Academic qualification of respondents

Table No4 shows that in academic qualification, out of the total 36 sample teachers (teachers and head teachers) 2 (5.6%) had FA/FSc degree 18 (50%) had B.A/BSc degree and 16 (44%) had Masters degree.

Table No. 5 Professional qualification of respondents

Table No.5 shows professional qualification of teachers that 1 (2.8%) was PTC, 4 (11.1%) were CT,10 teachers (27.8%) were B.Edu , 2 (5.6%) are M.Edu , a large number of sample teachers 17 (47.2%) were ECD trained and the remaining 2 (5.6%) had other professional degrees.

Table No.6 Teaching experiences of respondents

Table No. 6 indicates that out of 36 respondents 12 (33%) had less than 5 years teaching experience, 7 (19%) had more than 5 years and a majority of 17 (48%) respondents had more than 10 years experience.

Table No. 7 Teaching experience of respondents at ECD Centers:

Table No. 7 indicates that there were 8 (22.2%) teachers who had less than one year teaching experiences at ECD Centers. The majority of teachers 25 (69.4%) had 1 to 5 years experience and the remaining 3 (8.3%) had more than 5 years experience at ECD Centers. This table shows that the majority of teachers in ECD Centers registered with AKESP ECD trained.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypotheses of the study were tested through comparison of mean scores of respondents on various factors of instruments (questionnaires) used in the study. The results of hypotheses are discussed below:

Table No.8 Head teachers and teachers' views about provision of facilities at AKESP ECD centers Chitral:

Table No. 8 shows that there is difference in the mean score of head teachers and teachers the teachers were more satisfied with the contribution of AKESP. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there teachers and head teachers are satisfied with contributions of AKESP's in ECD through provision of basic facilities like learning material, proper building, lighting arrangements, fee concession, pick and drop, medical facility, lunch room, sick room, heating system in winter, qualified teachers, hygienic water, comfortable furniture, in the ECD centers, is hereby accepted. However teachers have a little higher mean score than head teachers on scale provision of facilities.

Table No. 9 Parents (fathers and mothers) views about provision of facilities at AKESP ECD centers Chitral:

Table No. 9 explains that there is difference in the mean scores of fathers and mothers. Therefore the hypothesis describing that parents are satisfied about AKESP's contributions in Early Childhood Development (ECD) through provision of basic facilities like learning material, proper building, lighting arrangements, fee concession, pick and drop, medical facility, lunch room, sick room, heating system in winter, qualified teachers, hygienic water, comfortable furniture, in the ECD centers, is accepted. Result shows that mothers have higher mean score about AKESP's contributions in provision of facilities for ECD than fathers.

Table No.10 Analysis of hypotheses from 8-13: Analysis of fathers and mothers (Parents') responses about contributions of AKESP's ECD centers in various aspect of child's development:

Table no. 10

Table No 10 illustrates fathers and mothers (parents") responses about contributions of AKESP's ECD centers in various aspects of children's development. Mothers have higher mean (19.37) score on emotional development and higher mean score on social (18.27) that fathers mean score on these aspects. Parents are also satisfied on physical development of children at ECD. Total mean score on physical is 17.22.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that the results of the present study are consistent with S.Lakshmi, (1989) where she says that the child needs objects and materials with the help of which the child continues his exploration. He needs an affectionate teacher who will understand him in all his moods and help him to be himself and to learn.

The results of the present study are in line with S. Lakshmi, 1989) findings that pre-school child at home lacks the company of the peer group as well as the adoring presence of his grant parents. Perhaps for his social membership and play, the nursery may offer him enough opportunity and hence social health. The child at this stage starts to become an effective member of the group. In the absence of group members, he can exercise his imagination and in his believe world may create any number of people.

The results of the present study are consistent with National Curriculum 2000, A Conceptual Framework, Ministry of Education Government of Pakistan Islamabad "learning is, then, most effective and enriching when it becomes a source of enjoyment for children. This is done through a child friendly and relevant curriculum contents, attractive reading material and a learning environment conducive to the child's inquisitive and creative mind". The results of the present study are inconsistent with (National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education 2007) A quality ECE environment provides learning opportunities where children are given the freedom to explore, think, imagine, question, and experiment as they develop the ability to create novel ideas and solutions".

Conclusions

AKESP is considered a forerunner in designing and implementing ECD program in Chitral region. This study has outlined, in detail, the contributions of AKESP in providing ECD in the area. From the finding of the data it was concluded that :

1. Teachers and head teachers have different views about AKESP's contributions in Early Childhood Development (ECD)

through provision of basic facilities such as learning material, proper building, lighting arrangements, fee concession, pick and drop, medical facility, lunch room, sick room, heating system in winter, qualified teachers, hygienic water, comfortable furniture, in the ECD centers. The teachers are more satisfied with the facilities than the head teachers. This means that they were satisfied with the services that AKESP was providing in ECD centers

2. Parents (fathers and mothers) are satisfied with AKESP's contributions in Early Childhood Development (ECD) through provision of basic facilities such as learning material, proper building, lighting arrangements, fee concession, pick and drop, medical facility, lunch room, sick room, heating system in winter, qualified teachers, hygienic water, comfortable furniture, in the ECD centers.

3. According to teachers and head teachers ECD centers of AKESP were contributing in the social, emotional and moral development of children. Especially teachers were satisfied with the contribution of AKESP's centers in emotional development and social development of children than heads. The reason for this difference in opinion might be due to the fact that teachers had opportunities to direct interaction with children as compared to heads. The teachers, therefore, had more opportunities to notice emotional and social changes in children's behavior after attending ECD centers.

4. According to parents', ECD centers of AKESP were contributing in the social, emotional and moral development of children. Parents noticed emotional and social changes in their children's behavior after attending ECD centers.

5. According to teachers and head teachers, ECD centers of AKESP were not satisfactorily contributing in the cognitive aspect of development of children at ECD centers. Parents were also not satisfied with the cognitive aspect of development of children. It may be due to age factor that contribution of ECD centers in cognitive development was not found satisfactory because cognitive development comes with the passage of time and maturation. As the age of the children in the present study was 3 to 5 years, that is why, the results regarding cognitive development were not satisfactory.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made for the improvement of the situation and for further research in the field.

1. ECD Centers of AKESP may make such arrangements and activities that are helpful for cognitive development of children.
2. Findings of present study report that heads and teachers of ECD and parents of those children who are studying at the ECD centers are satisfied with the contributions of ECD in emotional, social, moral, academic and physical development of children. The respondents, however, were not satisfied about ECD contributions in cognitive development. Therefore further research may be conducted to find out "how ECD centers can promote cognitive development of children".
3. As respondents of present study favored the contribution of ECD in emotional, social, and moral development of children. Further researches may be conducted to find out relationship of emotional, social physical and moral development of children with their academic learning.
4. Findings of present study report that heads and teachers of ECD and parents of those children who are studying at ECD centers are satisfied with the contributions of ECD in emotional, social, moral and physical development of children. As

respondents were very satisfied about ECD contributions in emotional, social physical and moral development of children, AKESP may, therefore, conduct courses of ECD for teachers and head teachers in other areas of Pakistan.

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Table No. 1

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Head teachers	12	33.3
Teachers	24	66.7
Total	36	100.0

Table No. 2

Category	Frequency	Percent
Male Teachers	8	22.2
Female Teachers	28	77.8
Total	36	100.0

Table No. 3

Category	Frequency	Percent
20-40 years	30	83.3
More than 40 years	6	16.7
Total	36	100.0

Table No. 4

Category	Frequency	Percent
FA/FSC	2	5.6
BA/Bsc	18	50.0
Master	16	44.4
Total	36	100.0

Table No. 5

Category	Frequency	Percent
PTC	1	2.8
CT	4	11.1
B.Edu	10	27.8
M.Edu	2	5.6
ECD trained	17	47.2
Other	2	5.6
Total	36	100.0

Table No. 6

Category	Frequency	Percent
Less than five year	12	33%
More than 5 years	7	19%
More than 10 years	17	48%
Total	36	100

Table No. 7

Category	Frequency	Percent
Less than one year	8	22.2
1-5 years	25	69.4
More than 5 years	3	8.3
Total	36	100.0

Table No. 8

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Head teachers	12	100.75	5.85
Teachers	24	102.50	5.62

Table No.9

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Father	19	97.79	1.97
Mother	41	100.37	.99

Table No. 10

Parents	Development Aspects	Development Aspects					
		physical	Social	Cognitive	emotional	academic	Moral
Father	Mean	16.47	17.63	6.63	18.79	15.32	10.89
	N	19	19	19	19	19	19
	Std. Deviation	2.43	2.16	1.80	2.76	1.73	1.56
Mother	Mean	17.56	18.27	6.83	19.37	15.68	10.44
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41
	Std. Deviation	1.89	1.70	1.611	1.79	2.13	1.91
Total	Mean	17.22	18.07	6.77	19.18	15.57	10.58
	N	60	60	60	60	60	60
	Std. Deviation	2.12	1.86	1.66	2.14	2.01	1.80