

APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS GAINED DURING THE TEACHERS TRAINING TO PRE-PRIMARY CLASSROOMS IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

The research has completed to investigate "Application of knowledge and skills gained during the teachers training to pre-primary classrooms in Bangladesh". Pre-Primary Education is one of the most important tasks in education life. It helps in the development of the children & their personality as well as it lays the foundation of life-long education. The study completed by the qualitative method. Data was collected by the in- depth questioner. The sample was the purposive sampling process. Four government primary school and four trained pre-primary teachers were interviewed. The study location was the Dhaka city the capital of the Bangladesh. The main reason of this study was to find out and critically analyse the approved and implemented 15 days' pre-primary teachers training in government primary school in Bangladesh. It is also aimed to identifying the gaps between concept and practice of training which provided to the pre-primary teachers in Bangladesh. A pre-primary teacher training helps the teachers to discover the child development and pedagogy for maintaining and ensuring a minimum quality standard of pre-primary education. This completed study also recognised and identified the challenges of the teachers faced difficulties to conducting learning from the training. Finally, based on the challenges these research figures out the ways of mitigating those challenges and recommended the continuing professional development of the pre-primary teachers. Research demonstrates that, children should be enlisted in schools and be treated with kind and delicate voices by the teachers as recommended. Due to time constraints, this study just been designed to be completed in small scale. Therefore, a further study is needed to direct a more comprehensive research on application of the pre-primary teachers' knowledge and skills gained during their pre-primary training to the classrooms level.

Key Words: Pre-primary, Classroom, Knowledge, Application, Skills, Teachers Training.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Pre-primary education is the most important programme in education life. It helps in the development of the children & their personality as well as it lays the foundation of life-long education. Pre-primary education is the first step of institutional education and acts as preparatory to formal education (National Curriculum and Textbook Board, NCTB, 2011). Such an education is the initial segment of a wide-ranged educational complex consisting of the primary, secondary and tertiary or higher education components (Directorate of Primary Education, DPE, 2017). Although a year preceding the start of formal primary education has been allocated to

pre-primary education, but its expanse and extent are not limited to this time period (NCTB, 2011). The growth of the child through a series of continuous experiences, through the informal learning and the changes that he or she encounters after birth is extremely important for the child's development. On the basis of the knowledge and skills that the child acquires at every step of change, he or she reaches the next step. The rate of change at the commencement of infancy is faster and more extensive than the rates of changes during the other periods of life. The child crosses a number of significant steps in the time-span of pre-school. The child's appropriate growth and learning at every step lay the foundation for beginning his or her primary education.

The aims of Pre-Primary Curriculum of Bangladesh

The primary for Pre-Primary Curriculum in Bangladesh is to ensure a joyful and spontaneous entry of a child into the primary education. The pre-primary children (5+) experience their over-all development of physical, mental, emotional, social, cognitive and linguistic growth and development in the pre-primary setting. According to NCTB (2011), the pre-primary education ensures the children a delightful and friendly environment in further education regardless of age & ability. It is a preparatory sector of education.

The Objectives of Pre-Primary Curriculum of Bangladesh

The primary objective is to create an opportunity for child's active participation in delightful and child friendly environment through various games & activities (NCTB, 2011).

- a) To build a positive attitude to learning;
- b) To assist in the development of a sense of beauty and aesthetic value in the children;
- c) To introduce the child to the family and social environment and their components;
- d) To introduce the child to his/her own culture, tradition and customs and to encourage him/her to cultivate these;
- e) To help develop morality, social manners & customs and values;
- f) To help the child in the development of neuromuscular coordination and movement;
- g) To help enhance awareness about personal health and bodily healthiness;
- h) To assist the child in developing language & communication skills;
- i) To assist in acquiring competence in mathematical concepts, logical thinking and problem solving;
- j) To assist in understanding cause and effect relationship through observing everyday events in the environment;
- k) To assist in developing child's spontaneous imagination, creativeness and innovative power;
- l) To assist in developing self-confidence & self-esteem and inspiring to perform one's own tasks on one's own;
- m) To assist in understanding emotions and their proper expression;
- n) To inspire and assist in mutual understanding, cooperating, sharing

Background and context

Pre-primary education is a first step of primary education. After a year of preceding the start of formal primary education, all pre-primary education has been allocated in Bangladesh. However, its expanse and extent are not limited to this time (NCTB, 2011). The National Education Policy, 2010 of Bangladesh recommended a yearlong pre-primary education for the children above the age of 5 to provide fundamental education in personality development and formal primary education. The PPE has been declared as a readiness to the child in acquiring mental and physical development (NEP, 2010). Bangladesh has by this time made a tremendous progress in establishing pre-schools and 1.62 million children enrolled in pre-primary in Government Primary School (GPS) and Newly Nationalized Primary School (NNPS), more than double the enrolment in third Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP3) baseline year of 2010. Almost 100% of the GPS and 91% of NNPS are enrolling children in the last few years. Gross enrolment of 3-5 years' children in some form of Pre-Primary Education (PPE) increased from 23 percent in 2009 to 84 percent in 2012 (DPE, 2012). In 2017, the total enrolment in pre-primary classes was 2.86 million in all types of institutions run by the government, NGOs and private sectors. The percentage of Grade 1 students with PPE experience increased from 50 percent in 2012 to 96.1 percent in 2015 (DPE 2015). Pre-primary teachers training started 2013 and it was finished in the last fiscal year of 2018 (DPE, 2018). To my important job responsibilities and duties is worked to develop Annual Primary School Census (APSC) and Annual Sector Performance Report (ASPR) which two reports are the mainly progress report of primary education in the Bangladesh. Pre-primary education is also included that two reports. To my professional responsible and interest, I want to know the gaps between the pre-primary teachers training and practice in government primary school. This proposed study will be explored and analysed the issue of further planning of teachers training on pre-primary education in Bangladesh. For that issue I have selected the title "Application of knowledge and skills gained during the teachers training to pre-primary classrooms in Bangladesh".

Pre-primary Education in Government primary school

From 2010, government has initiated PPE through government primary schools as an interim arrangement under second PEDP (DPE, 2012). Being influenced by the progress and experience of second PEDP, Pre-primary education (PPE) became an important component of third PEDP and thus set objective to gradually expand standardized pre-primary education for all eligible children of the country. To achieve this goal, Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) with technical assistance from UNICEF developed PPE Expansion Plan in 2012 (IBID.). This plan provided an indication of year-wise improvement of PPE to reach higher level of standards into all government and registered non-government primary schools (now NNPS) by the end of third PEDP in June 2016 and also a way forward up to 2020 (DPE, 2018). There is also rollout plan of expansion of PPE services by NGOs. This plan based broadly on third PEDP framework (resources, options and opportunities) to have a match between the expected results of the project and that of the expansion plan (DPE, 2012). Since the second PEDP, PPE has drawn a lot of attention in Bangladesh. To introduce a uniform PPE system, Government of Bangladesh initiated and approved the PPE Operational Framework in 2008 with a short term vision 'to introduce one-year pre-primary education for all children of 5-6 years' age' and long term vision 'all children, 3-5 years of age are attending pre-primary programmes of some kind and have access to health, nutrition, social, physical and intellectual development activities and being initiated into the formal education. After the approval of the PPE Operational Framework, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), and DPE took several initiatives to universalise PPE for all eligible children by engaging different actors including NGOs. Officially second PEDP laid the foundation for the introduction of PPE by orienting education professionals and introducing PPE into Government Primary School (GPS), through an interim package. In 2011, the Government of Bangladesh approved a national PPE curriculum for a standardised delivery mechanism. Recognising the contribution of the NGOs who were the main actors in PPE in the past, government also approved GO-NGO collaboration guidelines for PPE in 2011 which created scope for the NGOs to contribute in the universalizing process of PPE. Based on the experience of second PEDP, PPE has become an integral part in the third PEDP (2011-2016) with a view to create a permanent structure for PPE in the primary education system and gradually provide standardised services for all children (DPE, 2015). DPE has developed and approved Standards of Quality PPE Service Delivery in 2012. PPE service delivery quality standards defines a set of requirements to ensure provision of services adequate to meet holistic early learning needs of 5-6 years old children for getting them ready for the next level of education. This would bring together the Key areas and elements to support and promote quality implementation of the national PPE programme to deliver appropriate care to pre-school age children by ensuring that necessary environments, facilities, staffing, arrangements, resources and management structure are in place. The Key areas of elements of PPE service delivery standards are: 1. Physical environment, 2. Learning environment, 3. Staffing, 4. Monitoring and Supervision, 5. Parent and community involvement, 6. Training and professional development, 7. Management, and 8. Administration. Standards are a gradual progress of achieving 'quality' starting from the existing situation to a higher level. Similarly, gradation of standards was also introduced to make a bridge and smooth transition from the current status to a desired level of quality. The standards are graded into three levels considering the status of implementation and fulfilling the requirement of a defined standard. The levels are: Level 1 - Minimum/basic, Level 2 - Desired /medium and Level 3 - Preferred/ Exemplary. The PPE Expansion Plan has been developed taking the existing situation into consideration and has sought to chalk out a plan for scaling up in phased manner. The Expansion Plan is a road map to universalise pre-primary education for all eligible children of the country. Access, Quality and Equity were the important guiding principle in preparing the plan. It gives a clear direction to reach to all pre-school children with quality. The issue of 'Equity' led this plan to focus on geographical locations considering diversity and hardship where people living in pockets were usually ignored and excluded (DPE, 2012).

Significance of the study

PPE is the foundation stage of education. Last education year (2018) there are more than 3.1 million children were enrolled in the pre-primary settings in Bangladesh (DPE, 2018). Where, in the education year of 2016 in government primary school system pre-primary enrolment was 23,949 children (APSC, DPE, 2016). The government of Bangladesh has implementing one of the largest primary and pre-primary education system in the world (ibid.). According to Annual Sector Performance Report (ASPR), 2015 more than 97.93% children are enrolled in the primary school and more than 20.4 % students are dropout from the mainstreaming government primary school in Bangladesh. As a research officer, I have been working in the Monitoring and Evaluation Division under the head quarter of Directorate of Primary Education (DPE). As a desk officer, I am liable to consultate the monitoring and evaluation report of the pre-primary to primary education. I am also responsible to explore the gaps between practice and policy, and how the education providers incorporate pre-primary settings.

Pre-primary education in Bangladesh already made a significant progress. In 2009, pre-primary gross enrolment was 23% (MICS, 2009) but in 2016 it was increased 84% in pre-primary settings (Islam et al., 2016). “The state of pre-primary education Bangladesh-2013” Education watch report showed that, Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at age five was 52.5 % but in 2015 it was increased more than double the enrolment in PEDP3 base line year of 2010. However, the ASPR (2017) declared that almost 100% government primary school are now operating pre-primary education in the settings. The big challenges of pre-primary education are now to maintain the quality of pre-primary education. To implementing quality pre-primary education, the issue is teachers need to know about the comprehensive development of a child. The good quality and proper training for the pre-primary teachers is covering all the issues of holistic child development. The trained pre-primary teachers of Bangladesh do better in classroom practices (UNESCO, 2007). So, it is established that pre-primary teachers training helps the child holistic development (Akter, 2012).

Rationale of the study

The government of Bangladesh has approved the comprehensive Early Childhood Care and development (ECCD) policy (MoPME, 2013). This ECCD policy described among sixteen inter-ministerial and other NGOs coordination with the role and responsibilities. The ministry of women and child affairs (MoWCA) also has been developed of Early Learning Development Standard (ELDS) in 2010. The pre-primary curriculum has been developed in 2011 according to ELDS focusing activities based by NCTB. Another significant step was incorporating pre-primary training into Diploma in Primary Education (DPED) degree. DPED is the main course for all primary teachers in Bangladesh for professional development. ASPR, 2017 showed that there are 93,247 pre-schools /centre are implementing pre-primary in Bangladesh. After the approval of the pre-primary curriculum and ensuring the universal coverage, The Ministry of Education has created 37,672 posts of assistant teacher for pre-primary education and another 28,270 posts for Newly Nationalized Government Primary schools (NNGPS) to ensure pre-primary education (APSC, 2017). Newly recruited pre-primary teachers have already been deployed in each GPS having training of 15 days on PPE. The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) has completed a Pre-primary education assessment report in 2016 showed that one teacher from 100% government primary school and one teacher from 20% newly nationalised primary school have received 15 days training. In PEDP4, there is a plan for remaining all teachers will get the 15 days training (DPE, 2018). So, it is very much important to know the previous 15 days’ teachers training impact in the pre-primary setting in the Bangladesh. Therefore, the research title is chosen “Application of knowledge and skills gained during the teachers training to pre-primary classrooms in Bangladesh”.

Research Aims and Objectives

The principal objective of this study is to investigate and analyse the approved and implemented 15 days’ pre-primary teachers training in government primary school in Bangladesh. It is also aimed to identifying the gaps between concept and practice of training which provided to the pre-primary teachers in Bangladesh. Pre-primary teachers training helps the teachers to discover the child development and pedagogy for maintaining and ensuring a minimum quality standard of pre-primary education. This completed study also recognised and identified the challenges of the teachers faced difficulties to conducting learning from the training. Finally, based on the challenges these research figures out the ways of mitigating those challenges and recommended the continuing professional development of the pre-primary teachers.

Research Question

The research questions consequent from the general aims and objective are as follows

- How do teachers apply the knowledge and skills they gained from teacher education to pre-primary classrooms?
- What kind of challenges do teachers face when applying the knowledge and skills they gained during teacher education to pre-primary classrooms?
- How can teacher education better prepare teachers to implement the PPE curriculum?

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Pre-Primary Education of Bangladesh

A one-year pre-primary education program is recommended for the children from 5⁺ age group by the National Education Policy (2010) of Bangladesh. The aim of this program was to build the foundation of personality

development & enduring education and also offering knowledge regarding formal primary education. The policy of education has considered this PPE as a preparatory program and accentuating the necessity of building an environment that would certainly be child friendly to acquire mental physical readiness. The policy has found out that the pre-primary education curriculum should focus on the following criteria:

- Creating the child's interest in school and his/her curiosity to education as well as practice of culture.
- Developing tolerance towards others; formation of ideas about discipline of formal education at later stages.

Pre- Primary education defines the grooming of the children for the school level education. According to CLIL (Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou, 2001), the government should ensure pre-primary education, because they will grow the psychology of learning in a child from the childhood.

Importance of Pre-primary Education

Pre-primary education is an essential part of studies (Berlinski, Giliani and Gertlet, 2006) that develops the mind of the children and helps them to adjust into the world of education (Ibid.). In Bangladesh, education system is now developing the concept in a frame of a vast project (NCTB, 2011). The ministry of education in Bangladesh has launched the project with a view to achieve goal of mass education and increase the number of students in primary and high school level (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2008). Bingham and Whitebread (2012) stated that, pre-primary education can aid in children's thoughts, logic and problem-solving ability and also help in progress in maths, reading and comprehension.

Child Development and Early Years Setting

Children's learning is complex (Vecchiotti, 2001). Young children are full of life, dedicated to uncovering and understanding the world. It is predisposed by their prior knowledge and perceptive and their interests (Ibid.). According to Lambe and Bones (2007), teacher should have appropriate education and training before going to teach in an inclusive environment. In Bangladesh the focus is centred around preparing children in pre-school settings for transition into primary school, where the children will come and begin their education in a place where they are going to be 'prepared' for the primary school environment and high school level (NCTB,2011). As such, Bangladesh have been providing training for teachers in pre-primary ensuring that the children must fit in the future study setting by providing a better educational environment in the pre-primary level. However, in Scotland, there have been many studies that argue that early learning and childcare is important and should be recognised as learning in its own right and not, solely, to prepare for the next stage in their learning. (Siraj et al., 2008). Furthermore, a review of early years in Scotland recommended that the terminology used often does not support early learning and argue that term 'pre-school' be dropped and instead promote the term 'Early Learning and Childcare' (ibid.).

Pedagogy in Early Years

A debate is coming from educationalist and psychologists about the content of the curriculum for early age child (Wood, 2013). These days it is evident that "play based child centered pedagogical approach has a long history starting at the sixteenth century and practiced in various countries all over the world (Loiuse and Nuttall, 2015). In early childhood learning there should be connection between 'play' and environment and should be enjoyable. The pre-primary curriculum of Bangladesh developed with the connection of play based and near environment of the learners (NCTB, 2011).

Pedagogy is broad term used in education field and it is intimately related to methods and way of educating the child (Siraj et. al., 2008). It emphasizes the practical teaching and the effective interventions regarding educating the teachers and others to plan to how learners are learning (Ibid.). It includes strategies of skill, knowledge, and attitudes in various context to facilitate developing and learning process (Wall et al., 2015). In brief, pedagogy helps to create an effective learning environment both at school and family and even in the wider community (Ibid.).

Role of Teachers in Pre-primary Education

Teachers are the chief person in every country's education system and they play diverse tasks (Lambe and Bones, 2007). As a part of pre-school education, teachers play important role in the development and can affect in children's education life (NCTB, 2011). The teaching of quality teachers can be a valuable resource in preschools (Ibid.). Moreover, their judgment and vision towards programme, content and pedagogy, their preschool teaching practices and their attitudes, and behaviour influence the children in their classrooms (NCTB, 2011). Therefore, this study attempts to explore teachers' post training principles and perceptions of

quality pre-school education in Bangladesh and claims to take the changes for complete development of children.

Study done in UK on effectiveness of Pre-school education has exposed that the quality of ECCE is connected to skill, leadership capacity of staff; experienced staff; trained staff and the staff member having sufficient knowledge and expertise in child development (Siraj-Blatchford, 2008). The quality of ECCE depends on the level of education of the staff members. Upgrading of the quality of Early Childhood Care and Education services is related to educational skill, and professional development of the relevant influential (Sylva et al., 2010). Yet, the less competent staff can improve their capability working with the trained staff. The EPPE study showed that the observed behaviour of the low-quality staff members by highly qualified staff could work positively (ibid.).

Teachers are one of the vital rudiments for a school and progression of school needs effective education. Teachers' role is the generally important to make child friendly school and teaching place and therefore, it is mandatory to prepare and support the teachers ensuring training (UNICEF, 2009).

To acquire the holistic development of a child, the teacher's role is considered for effective learning. The key issue in pre-school pedagogy, "whether the activity will be teacher-directed or child-initiated and child driven" stated (Broadhead and Burt, 2012). In the curriculum based on child centered play, the students will begin and run the activity and the teacher should help and follow their interests (Martinez-Beck and Zaslow, 2006). However, Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva (2008) stated that "working together and balance between teacher-directed activity and child-initiated activity in preschool brings better results". Similarly, Walsh et al. (2010) projected a mixed nature of activity that is called "Playful structure" is predicted as a quality of the interaction among student and teacher. Broadhead and Burt (2012) also incorporated the playful learning and pedagogy as the core of day to day learning.

Effectiveness of Pre-primary Education Training

Existing pre-primary teacher training program demonstrates the differences with the other programs all over the world like specialization in training and development; ideas and opportunities to learn new role; improving themselves and their practice and broaden themselves as educator and individuals as well (Banu, 2014). 'Pre or in-service training' and gaining knowledge on child development is required for luminous performances of the teachers (Gabrsek, Roeder, and Klic, 2013).

The teacher training is very effective in childhood education, especially in the pre-primary setting where the children get the preparation for the higher level of education (Barnett, 2011). According to Barnett (2011), the intervention in childhood education is very effective as they are going to make the children. Teachers training have a great impact in childhood education. They can use children's background and polish the children's ability of learning and understanding the idea of the better education.

In-service teachers training include exercises and trainings needed for quality transformation and professional advancement of instructors (Siraj et al, 2008). It is a set of collected activities for change of the educators or improving their ability to implement any new program in an officially set circumstance. It is a crucial method responsible for the skilled advancement of instructors and for upgrading of their perception and showing positive changes (Akhter, 2012).

According to Akhter (2012), in-service training is composed of activities which are anticipated for expert improvement and ability of teachers. Through this training, educators can update their knowledge with recent data. The main purpose of in-service training is the changing requirement of society. However, numerous other considerations are there like changes in educational programs, continuous necessity for qualified educators, gaining of innovative information, and upgrading of abilities (ibid.). In correlated writing of in-service trainings, there are unique signs for adequacy estimate of the projects.

The Bangladeshi Policy- Context

The Education Policy of Bangladesh (2010) has emphasised in pre-primary education. They also recommended for teacher training and recruited special teacher for pre-primary education classes. It has been mentioned that learning-teaching approaches must rotate round the development of the students and affection for them (NCTB, 2011). The approaches, techniques and methods of pre-primary teacher training emphasise on the early-year-student's integral interest, imagination and development of their emotion and enthusiasm in a pleasant situation (ibid.).

Pre-primary Education in Bangladesh

Pre-primary education is a new program of primary education in Bangladesh with its recent implication and aims of complete development of children and grounding for the children about systematic formal education system (NCTB, 2011). The worldwide accepted that the teacher's role is the main key to achieving results in

pre-primary education settings. The Bangladesh government has been implemented Primary Education Development Program-3 (PEDP-3), for quality education of the country. Under the PEDP-3, the plan is to start and continue one pre-primary education class in each school maintaining the national service delivery standard. This will contribute eventually to serving all eligible pre-primary education children of a catchments area (DPE, 2012). In addition, the Primary School Quality Level (PSQL) standard in PEDP-3 requires that all teachers receive regular, annual, in-service training and sub-cluster training (DPE, 2012). Thus, various types of teacher training courses exist, including a one-year basic training (Certificate-in-Education) to be upgraded to the Diploma (increasing training duration of 18 months with additional emphasis on classroom practice as part of training), and short-term subject-based training (on five major primary school subjects), sub-cluster training, basic in-service (multiple ways of teaching learning) training, school management and academic supervision training. The contents of all these training courses emphasize and encourage child-centered and activity-based approach - as recommended by most development-psychologists and educationalists (DPE, 2012).

The Bangladeshi Pre-primary Curriculum

Play and child centered education has been given priority in Pre-primary curriculum of Bangladesh (NCTB, 2011). Pre-primary teachers are responsible for developing educational knowledge for children. Understanding the importance of educational and developmental value of play-based education by early childhood educators is necessary and makes them improve learning and development through play (Chowdhury, 2012). Normally children are not able to read intentionally before the age of four, but able to understand the education through playing from about 18 months (Bailey, 2013). According to Bailey (2013), children started to realize self-awareness, the difference between imagination and reality, and the intentions of others through 'play'. Pre-primary curriculum of Bangladesh is play-based and flexible curriculum (NCTB, 2011). Nutbrown and Clough (2014, p.153) stated, "play is seen in relation to all aspects of a child's day, integral to and part of a holistic approach to early education and care for very young children." It is accredited that both early childhoods learning, and teaching is very difficult as they need different ways at different stages. Hence, the curriculum of pre-primary education in Bangladesh is constructed in such ways that is based on Early Learning Development Standard (ELDS) (NCTB, 2011).

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The research study was completed by the qualitative method. Data was collected by using interviews to explore pre-primary teacher's perspectives on the training received

The completed research study participants were the pre-primary teachers of Bangladesh from the government primary schools who got the fifteen days special training on Pre-primary education. The study area was the Mirpur and Cantonment Thana (sub district) educational area of the capital city of Dhaka in Bangladesh. Sampling process was purposive.

Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. The principal researcher collected all data and collected data was recorded using the digital instruments with the permission of the interviewee. The data collection tool was shared and pilot testing before conducted the study for more valid and reliability.

The data was analysed by the thematic process. Data collection with voice recording, transcription, ablating an overview, coding the data, evaluation of relevance, categorization and identification of thematic patterns, transcript data Recorded and coded data were collected and transcribed according to the research aim and objectives (Menter et al, 2011). The researchers have consolidated all the information by classification and make representations were coded by applying a systematic process.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Discussion

Characteristics of the Respondents

A total of 4 teachers were taken as a sample of this study. All these four teachers were interviewed with semi-structured questionnaires. It was observed that all the four educators have been working as a teacher for more than four years and they have received the 15 days intensive training on pre-primary education organized by Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) the sole body responsible for operation, management and implementation of pre-primary and primary education in Bangladesh.

Key characteristics of the respondents are:

- all of them were female and completed their graduation

- age ranges 20 to 40 years of old

Understanding the quality standard of the pre-primary classroom

It is learnt from the interview that all the teachers have comprehensive idea about the quality standard of the pre-primary classroom. Most of them gave emphasis on safe and conducive learning environment with well decorated lucrative classroom and enough and different varieties of teaching learning materials, resources and facilities. The responses that follow demonstrate the emphasis the pre-primary teachers place on the environment:

“Safe and conducive learning environment with good resources and facilities and colourful and attractive learning materials.” (Teacher 1)

“Well decorated classroom with adequate furniture with the floor and the walls of the pre-primary classroom will be well decorated.” (Teacher 2)

As we can see, Teacher 1 makes reference to words like ‘colourful’, ‘attractive’ which is in line with what they learned from their PPE training where it is stated that classroom decoration is often ignored, colours, along with educational posters, charts and art supplies on the walls and floors can make the students feel more at home and might create an enjoyable environment (Islam et al., 2016). However, teachers 3 and 4 extend this by stating that quality can be affected by the ratio of teacher/child by making reference to:

“It should be enjoyable and joyful classroom with available teaching learning materials in the classroom and a trained pre-primary teacher with 30 students in a pre-primary class” (Teacher 3)

“Teacher- students’ ratio should be 1:30 with clean and hygienic toilet and print rich materials in the classroom which is a decorated classroom” (Teacher 4)

Moreover, Teacher 3 also indicated that training was important for a pre-primary classroom and this is in line with “Trained pre-primary teacher-30 students in a pre-primary class.”

Frequently, the first thing to notice when in an elementary classroom is the look and set up. The design of the classroom influences the student activities and work ethic specially the furniture arrangement. A recent report by Moffat et al. (2013) established that classroom interior design could have an effect of about 25% on a student’s performance. Also, children have chance to face seven major safety issues within classrooms including mechanical, physiological, chemical, emotional, thermal, organic and electric threats (ibid.). Therefore, having a safe environment in the classroom is vital to maintain the excellence.

An appreciation of the neatness and cleanliness of the classroom and toilet also arose from the responses from the study for a quality classroom environment. The cleanliness of schools is a significant part of school environments that lowers the threat of the spreading disease and state a caring message to the students and teachers (ibid.).

According to respondents, trained pre-primary teacher, relevant curriculum and child centered teaching and learning also came out as important issues to maintain quality standard of PPE. According to Lambe and Bones (2007), teacher should have proper training before going to teach where the children will come and start their education in the primary school environment. Among the primary school teachers who have received early childhood teachers training do better in classroom practices (UNESCO, 2007). So, it is realized that early childhood teachers training helps the student’s complete development (Akther, 2012).

Also, The DPE has already developed a document describing the quality standard of PPE and the answers about the quality revealed that the respondents particularly the teachers possess idea about the standard of quality pre-primary classroom.

Principles of children’s learning

In response to this question most of the teachers mentioned about child centered learning in which the teacher facilitates independent learning opportunities from one another and equips them with the essential skills they need (NAEYC, 2009). On that note teacher 1 and 2 stated that:

“The principles we need to keep in mind about children’s learning are- Every child has their individualities and children like to learn in a variety of ways such as playing dancing singing, acting etc.” (Teacher 1)

“A child always Curious- they want to know, want to touch, want to say, want to feel and understand everything around their own experiences. Flexible teaching –learning Process-Teacher should not stop him by scolding or caning or beating.” (Teacher 2)

Though still the education system considered to be teacher-centered giving the emphasis on the teacher and widely applied by many teaching practitioners (Young, 2002), scholars now broadly adopting more flexible child-centered methods to boost up the active learning process in classrooms (ibid.). Teacher 3 and Teacher 4 also stated about creating Child friendly environment in the classroom, emphasizing their interest and maintaining child pedagogy. Child friendly environment develops a learning environment in which children are moved towards self-learning and educators are friendly and welcoming to the children and gives attention to their health and safety needs (Young, 2002, p. 18). Teacher 3 and 4 gave emphasis by the following way:

“Emphasis of child interest, maintaining child pedagogy” (Teacher 3)

“To respect their own opinions, to be patients in the classroom” (Teacher 4)

To achieve a child friendly environment, children should be actively involved in producing their own curriculum experiences in the early childhood programmes, selecting their own materials and finding innovative usages of different objects. Concepts are effortlessly developed, understood and better remembered in a curriculum that is created by children’s own interest (NAEYC, 2009). Using widespread variety of materials through considerable extent of activities facilitates Children’s and in cooperation with adults who help them ask good questions. Being patient in the classroom, encouraging the child and giving instruction with use classroom language also emphasized by the Teacher 4 which the important part of PPE training is. Although there seems to be some evidence of a change in mind shift regarding pedagogy, whereby the teachers discuss ‘*child interest*’, ‘*respect their opinions*’ there still remains some indication that they are still applying more traditional didactic approaches when they say, ‘*giving instructions*’, ‘*I will teach them*’. The above findings indicate that there appears to be some acknowledgement that having the right environment and creating an inviting classroom climate is important and this is knowledge that their training has provided. On the other hand, some of their responses as shown above, indicate that perhaps further training opportunities may be required to embed the concept of child-centred principle as they revert to comments that are in line with teacher directed learning.

Promoting early literacy and numeracy in the pre-primary classroom

Regarding this question all teachers quoted that:

“After acquiring training, able to apply real objects, various teaching materials, number card, picture card, chart etc, in order to developing numeracy in pre-primary setting.” (Teacher 1)

“To Promote early literacy and numeracy use real thing or objects and to ensure the learning of numeracy use the seeds of beans or marbles for better understanding.” (Teacher 2)

“To promote early literacy and numeracy use sentence, word-alphabet and number card, for better understanding use real things and objects, sometimes use model, picture and chart for ensuring to promote early literacy and numeracy in the pre-primary classroom.” (Teacher 3)

“Training helped how to use story books and rhymes for early literacy” (Teacher 4)

All the teachers emphasized using real things and objects and various teaching - learning materials, number card, picture card, chart, story books, flash cards to promote early literacy and numeracy in the pre-primary classroom. There are various different similar ways as mentioned by the teachers to promote phonological awareness and numerical knowledge in formal contexts and in play involving rhymes and songs, using worksheets, charts and flashcards, displaying posters, pictures, story books, alphabet blocks and letter/object cards are stated as effective tools in many guidelines. *“Use the seeds of beans or marbles for better understanding of the numeracy in the classroom”* (Teacher 2).

Promoting play in the pre-primary classroom

In response to this question teacher gave different responses for example:

“Play is the medium of education of pre-primary” (Teacher 1)

“Giving instruction to play with individual, peer and group in the classroom.” (Teacher 2)

“Ensured the different types of materials and toys in the classroom.” (Teacher 3)

“By using colourful and attractive toys and materials to play in the pre-primary classroom.” (Teacher 4)

Among various approaches to early education, play-based learning is gaining momentum in primary school curriculum enhancing children’s academic and developmental learning outcomes. Research showed play-based approach serve all children including low to high competency. Play can be a potent vehicle for learning for kindergarten children (Woodhead and Moss, 2007). Though teachers are not always conscious of their role in promoting play, it is the fundamental element of early childhood education (Whitebread, 2011). Ideal play-based program should provide opportunities for both free play and guided play. But for children’s learning, guided play is better option than other plays and direct instruction (Woodhead and Moss, 2007).

Regarding play, all of four respondents stated about arranging different types of play in the classroom and outside the classroom. Play with students in the classroom and using different types of attractive toys and materials ensuring active participation students in the classroom. All of the also gave importance on giving instruction to play with individual, peer, teachers and group in the classroom consuming all 4 corners in the classroom.

Benefits of physical exercise for children

According to the teacher’s understanding;

“It’s helps to child for their holistic development” (Teacher 1)

“By the physical exercise different limbs of body become stronger of the child.”(Teacher 2)

“Physical exercise helps child physical and mental development.” (Teacher 3)

“By the physical exercise children enjoy their daily activities in the pre-primary classroom” (Teacher 4)

Four of the teachers gave emphasis on physical exercise as an integral part of the learning process. According to them, it helps in holistic development and develops child physical and mental growth. All of them said that physical exercise helps the children to follow instruction with rules and regulation. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 also said that, it helps developing leadership in them.

Studies have shown interventions during break times, sport, Physical Education class targeting these discrete periods may be effective in increasing children’s physical activity levels. Meta-analysis studies found that classroom-based physical activity had constructive effects on academic-related outcomes like school engagement, behaviour and lesson enjoyment. Research suggest that, physical activity would be essential to achieve positive effects on mental health and behavioural outcomes in ordinary daily circumstances improving anxiety, depression and self-concept and increase academic performance. These studies match with ideas of our respondents that they gained through the PPE training.

Teaching and learning materials

In a classroom design one of the important elements is allocate space for diverse activity centers that are distinct areas for different small themed activities. These corners allow students to discover their interests and explore their choices about their enjoyment options so that they can carry the skills and interests outside the classroom (UNESCO, 2009). All of the teachers mentioned about having imagination corner, book corner, block and drawing corner with sand and water corner classroom to promote and implement the 4 areas in pre-primary classroom. Teacher 3 and 4 also mentioned about fantasy corner.

Playing with blocks gives the child the sense of the nature of basic materials, things that can be made, allows them to play with the kingdom of the imagination, and ultimately help them to enter their adult life successfully (Chowdhury and Rivalland, 2012). During constructing something while playing with blocks, it becomes symbols for other objects and helps children to work with the intellectual symbols of reading and writing. LEGO sets, wooden blocks help the children to imagine and being creative through playfulness.

Sand and water corner might be a safe environment where students can freely express themselves and explore quantifiable relationships using physical materials through Sensory motor activities. Sand and water table supports children with their mathematical thoughtfulness and their perceptive about relationships, problem and solving, and chances to build connections among concepts. As social-cognitive play form, preferred activities for preschoolers are play dough and sand and water according to observed classroom activity engagement. Therefore, all mentioned corners by the educators are already indicated as essential activities for PPE.

An inclusive learning environment in the pre-primary classroom

In response to this question all the teachers gave different responses. But teacher 1 and 2 were concerned about gender equity. Teacher-1: “provide the equal opportunity for all students in the classroom by; 1. calling by child’s name, 2. giving group work, and peer work with gender parity, 3. no discriminating, 4. interactive teaching-learning process”. Teacher-2 mentioned that –by 1) providing teaching learning materials for all students in the classroom, 2) following the lesson plan, 3) giving extra time for special needs students, 4) ensuring the participants of all students in the classroom, and 5. giving task in group, peer work with mixed gender. Teacher-3 stated that she ensured the individual needs of the students by 1) Providing the same activities, 2) using same teaching–learning materials, 3) giving equal opportunity to the all students of the class, 4) giving extra time for special needs children, 5) no discrimination. In addition, teacher-4 added that “teacher must not discriminate between children about their social back grounds or physical disabilities”. She also mentioned that she used to 1) provide same activities, 2) give extra time and care for the special needs children, 3) give group work, and peer work maintaining the gender parity, 4) provide co- operational teaching learning method also same teaching-learning materials and teaching aids for all the students in the classroom.

Most effective aspects of PPE Training implementation in the classroom

Concerning this question, all teachers mentioned that training on play, rhymes and songs is the most effective aspects of PPE training implementation in the classroom. Additionally, all the teachers pointed out what they have learned from the PPE training as well.

“The most effective aspect of my PPE training that how to maintain a big classroom by one teacher.” (Teacher 2)

“The most effective aspect of my PPE training was that, child psychology, pedagogy and behaviour of 5 to 6 years old child.” (Teacher 3)

Moreover, teacher-1 said about the most effective aspects of PPE Training implementation in the classroom is that she can implement the teaching and learning method by child friendly way. Teacher-2 stated that how could she maintain a big classroom by only her selves. Also, the most effective aspect of PPE training was child psychology, pedagogy and behaviour of 5 to 6 years old children added by the teacher-3 and how to conduct an early grade student's class said by teacher-4. All these processes were found most effective during the implementation of PPE training in the pre-primary settings.

Aspects of difficulties in PPE training implementation

In response to this question, 03 teachers found or experience no difficulties during implementation of their PPE training. Additionally, teacher 4 mentioned that during the play session they need more playing materials or logistics which is very difficult to implement in pre-primary classroom. Another important thing is that for outdoor play there is a lack of playgrounds in the primary school premises. Teachers stated like this way:

"No, there was no aspect which was not relevant in pre-primary training. Everything was related to pre-primary and I have confident to smoothly implement to pre-primary classroom" (Teacher 2)

"No, but for play session we need more play materials which is very difficult to implement in pre-primary classroom. Another important thing that for outdoor play we need to play ground in school premises but most of the school has no play ground." (Teacher 4)

Establish a playing area in the pre-primary classes support the teachers to deal the children with providing opportunities to play. Again, learners can also be able to choose the specific places for play with their own interest (NCTB; National Curriculum and Textbook Board, 2011).

Daily challenges in pre-primary classroom

Answering this question, 2 out of 4 teachers mentioned that they regularly face difficulties in attendance of all children in the class. Almost all teachers said that lack of logistics that is specially playing materials and lack of awareness among the parents. In addition, 3 out of 4 teachers mentioned crowded class room that is more than 30 students in one class. Teacher-1 and 3 commented about lack of playground and special need children management. Teacher quoted on this specific question:

"In my daily work in Pre-Primary classroom I have faced the problem to ensure the regular attendance of all students." (Teacher 1)

"Parents are not conscious to their child" (Teacher 2)

"Special child students in a class but no training on that" (Teacher 3)

"Lack of updated knowledge on ECD and pre-primary" (Teacher 4)

Hence, the student's number and classroom size are one of the significant factors in classroom management for teachers.

Ensure to promote the interests of the child when planning learning opportunities

In reply to this question, all teachers mentioned that they used to engage the children by their classroom activities and by giving priorities of the children's' interest as well. Two of them also mentioned about individual needs. As teacher 1 and 4 stated in the following way:

"I ensure to promote the interests of the child where planning learning opportunities by emphasizing on every children's individualism." (Teacher 1)

"Ensured the individualized needs" (Teacher 4)

So, according to the teachers, a prior assessment to get all information about the children and maintaining a portfolio to preserve the development of the individual child may help. According to Momen, (2010) it is most significantly important of teacher's individualism and styles of teaching helps the child to bring them to school setting.

Further training/ professional knowledge and skills need to overcome the challenges during implement pre-primary education

Regarding the further training/ professional knowledge and skills need to overcome the challenges during implement pre-primary education- all teachers mentioned about induction training, 03 out 04 teachers requested for assistant teacher and inclusive training. In addition, they have also asked for the training on arts and craft and singing.

"Arts and craft and songs training" (Teacher 2, 3, 4)

So, continuous professional refreshers training would help the teachers to overcoming the challenges especially on specific areas namely arts & crafts training and music & physical training. Necessary training and support to

get ready teachers for this significant role must be a priority (UNICEF, 2009). So, it is realized that early childhood teachers training helps the teacher's complete development.

Recommendations to improve the quality of the pre-primary education training

Regarding this issue, almost all teachers mentioned about the usages of multimedia in the classroom, more participatory among the trainees and also further practical oriented sessions, more field visits with sharing the good examples of the global context to improve the quality of the pre-primary education training- Which is further suggested by Venille (2002) who said that teachers need to be provide practical guidance as well.

"I think Pre-Primary education training is sufficient for Pre-Primary education." (Teacher 1)

"The teacher should be given more training on teaching techniques and training on child psychology." (Teacher 2)

Therefore, during the training, the teachers should be provided more practical understanding such as showing good classroom of PPE, VIDEO of the activities of good schools and settings and the use of multimedia. Only the teacher-1 mentioned that pre-primary education training is sufficient for pre-primary education.

Expectations from the school authority/Government in terms of providing opportunities for continuous professional development

In response to this matter, teacher's expectations are more and proper training for the educators is needed. Teacher-1 expected supportive attitude and more teaching materials in-terms of providing opportunities for continuous professional development from the school authorities'. Teacher-4 further added that for professional knowledge and skills development one day or 7 days training may have needed to learn new skills. Quotes from teacher 1 and teacher 4 are as follows:

"As a teacher, I expect from the school authorities' helpful attitude and more teaching materials in terms of providing opportunities for continuous professional development." (Teacher 1)

"To Professional knowledge and skills developed we need one day or 7 days training. Then we learn new skills." (Teacher 4)

Harwell, (2003), Kramarz, (2008) and Burns, (2011) also mentioned about the teachers training to be very essential so that teachers can develop their professional skills as a teacher and improve quality in the learning process.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Teachers of pre-primary school need a variety of professional development skills along with knowledge of their subject matter and experience in order to be an effective teacher. In this modern, digital age, teachers need to be flexible and be able to adapt to whatever is thrown their way. New technologies are developed every day that can change the way children learn, and the way teachers teach. Likewise, administrators are changing and updating expectations and learning standards. Being able to adapt is a skill that every modern teacher must have. If it's being able to adapt to the way students learn, the behaviour their classroom exhibits, or their lesson plans, it is a definitely a trait that is a must-have. Application of pre-primary educational training is the major professional skills of the practitioners. It is evident that, training improves the productivity, morale, and motivation of the employee. Specially, it supports the newly employed persons to be familiar with the programme and also shows them technique to deal with it. Nevertheless, effective training results in best outcomes. Keeping this in mind, Bangladesh government has developed a rigorous training for the pre-primary teachers to improve their awareness, knowledge and expertise on pre-primary education. This training covers the areas of becoming pre-primary teacher and dealing with the young children besides giving them new knowledge. This current study has observed the effectiveness of the above-mentioned training programme.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS

Upgrading of the pre-primary teachers' training has led to a spectacular increase in student achievements in countries like Bangladesh. The development of rationalizing this training involves a rearrangement of training materials, institutions, trainers (rather than increasing their number) and therefore does not need additional financial resources. Most institutions have poor infrastructure for teacher training, not even reaching the standards typical of an average primary school. Training on special child care and management should need to be incorporated in the training curriculum. Continuous refresher and induction training for the elementary

teachers are also needed for proper application of their pre-primary training's knowledge and skill. More practical orientations, additional school visits and sharing of the experiences of the teachers' may led to best practices of their training.

One of the findings of pre-primary education programme is to implement the activities safeguarding with quality standards. In-addition, large class size having more than 30 children in the pre-primary classes is hard to manage for the pre-primary teachers.

Through quality trained preschool teachers, the children will acquire essential potentialities and optimistic impression. It can aid educators changing their viewpoints about young children and measures of education and learning method in pre-primary classrooms. Trained teachers can create a friendly atmosphere and setting at the schools for the children. Therefore, their training is the mostly needed and obligatory. Hence, experienced and trained teachers could assist the children with their cognitive development. Training has the ability to change teacher's practices in the classroom and inspires the effective learning procedure (Banu, 2014). This indicates the importance of teachers' training in conducting education process in the pre-primary setting. Training helps constructing the capacity of the teachers in teaching-learning process.

Bangladesh is a developing country with various problems in its preschool training programs (ibid.). Bangladesh government is making an effort to render quality education to all children. Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) has arranged a 15 (fifteen) days training program for pre-primary teachers of all government elementary school in Bangladesh in order to ensure quality. Special child needs careful and distinctive approaches at preschool level in Bangladesh. Research validates that; special children should be enlisted in schools and should be handled generously and with gentle voices by the teachers as suggested.

Due to time and resource constraints, this study was carried out in a small scale. Therefore, additional comprehensive studies are required on application of the pre-primary teachers' knowledge and skills gained during their pre-primary training provided by the government.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of the study, the researcher has come to a point where some recommendations can be made to the pre-primary teachers. The teachers should be given more training on teaching techniques and in child psychology. They need to use multimedia by developing multimedia classroom and share the good experiences and examples of the global context in the training session which will be practical. The teachers should be authorised some school visits to see that their learning could be useful or not. Thus, they can improve their understanding in a fine level and use their gained knowledge appropriately in the classroom (Hyson et al., 2009).

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