

Teaching Aids and Physical Facilities in Preschool EducationMr. Muhammad Kifayat Ullah^a, Dr. Uzma Syeda Gillani^a, Dr. Shafqatullah^{b*}^a Institute of Education & Research, University of Science and Technology, Bannu, Pakistan.^b Department of Education & Research, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, Pakistan.**Abstract**

Purpose of the study was to investigate the Implementation status of Early Childhood Care and Education Policy Provisions of National Education Policy 2017 in Public and Private Schools of District Karak. Population of the study consisted of all the Public and Private Schools who run Pre-Primary Classes. Sample consisted of 320 Schools (200 Public Primary Schools and 120 Private Schools). The data was collected through close ended questionnaire which was prepared based on Policy Provisions for Early Childhood Care and Education as given in Chapter 4, para 6.3 in National Education Policy 2017. The questionnaire was responded on five-point Likert Scale i.e., Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Undecided (UN), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA). The questionnaire was divided into two parameters: namely, "Physical Facilities for Pre-Primary Education", and "Teaching aids for Pre-Primary Education". Since responses were obtained in three categories only i.e., Disagree, Undecided, Agree, therefore it was analyzed on basis of Chi-square (χ^2). It was found that parameters of; "Physical Facilities for Pre-Primary Education", and "Teaching Aids for Pre-Primary Education" have been equally implemented in both Public and Private Schools. Major recommendations of the study are; (1) short in-service training for ECCE teachers may be arranged in both Public and Private schools; (2) Govt. may provide ICT facility to Public Schools and Private Schools may also be instructed to provide ICT facility to their students; (3) teacher should be provided to schools on the basis of classes, instead of strength of students; (4) financial assistance may be given to the Private Schools.

Keywords: Early Childhood Care & Education, Policy Provisions, National Educational Policy, Pre- Primary Education, Teaching Aids, Physical Facilities, Karak.

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1. Introduction

Early years of life have pivotal role on the development of children in later life. These developments include physical growth and mental potential. Scholars feel that special emphasis be laid down on the need of particular care to children. Efforts be made to create conducive environment for the children during early years of life, which may include provision of health facilities, quality food, education, and love. Different names have been given to indicate care for the children. These may be named as; Early Childhood Care and Development, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), and Early Childhood Development. (National Education Policy, 2017). These terms and concepts have special emphasis on advocating holistic approach to the development of pre-school child. ECCE plays central role in these approaches.

The introduction of these approaches require coordination, between different ministries, a common procedure and joint action plans. Most of the developed countries generally adopt coordinated approach for the development of their children. Whereas developing countries are not able to promote ECE because they lack financial resources and proper awareness. (National Education Policy, 2017). No doubt that ECE has the main focus on facilitating development process for the students. It lays foundations of learning for students, which helps them to facilitate development of physical skills and mental potentials during the early days of life. The ECCE programs mainly focusses on two areas. It educates the families, parents and society as a whole to have awareness regarding the importance of pre-primary education and have the knowledge about the needs of students at this age. ECCE also provides knowledge an understanding to the teachers with regard to the educational methodologies and activities of ECE children.

Information regarding instructional strategies, play way methods are imparted to teachers. Students are also instructed with basic academic concepts like alphabets, numbers etc. (Kouser, et.al, 2020). There is no doubt that ECE plays important role in the development of cognitive, social, and communication skills of the children. ECE develops thinking and reasoning skills in the students. It also reduces drop-out rate. Great responsibility lies on the shoulders of teachers. They have to work day and night for raising the quality of education for all level of children's education particularly at Early Childhood Education level. Pakistan has taken great steps for carrying out research studies in the areas of early childhood education.

The important goal of National Education Policy- 2017 was to provide free education to the children. Moreover it should be compulsory for the children of pre-primary classes who are in the age of 4-5 years. Another goal was to have equal access for all the children to ECE by the year 2030. To achieve this goal the policy chalked out certain policy provisions to be implemented in the schools. Since this is the fifth year of the publication of the policy, therefore a need was felt to carry out proper study for investigating the level to which these policy provisions have been implemented in the educational institutions. (Govt. of Pakistan 2017).

Problem Statement

To investigate implementation status of Policy Provisions of Early Childhood Care and Education in National Education Policy 2017 in District Karak.

The primary aim of the study was to evaluate the implementation status of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) policy provisions outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2017 in schools within District Karak. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the implementation status of ECCE policy provisions in public primary schools and analyze the same in private schools. Furthermore, the study aimed to compare the current implementation status of these provisions between public and private schools in District Karak. To achieve these objectives, two null hypotheses were formulated. The first hypothesis (Ho1) posited that there is no significant difference in the implementation status of ECCE policy provisions related to physical facilities for pre-primary education between public and private schools. The second hypothesis (Ho2) proposed that there is no significant difference in the implementation status of ECCE policy provisions concerning teaching aids for pre-primary education between public and private schools in District Karak.

2. Methods

2.1 Sample: There are three tehsils in District Karak, namely, Karak, Takht-e-Nasrati and Banda Daud Shah. Simple Random Sampling Technique was used for the selection of sample from each tehsil using proportionate allocation technique. The sample consisted of 320 Schools (200 Public Primary Schools and 120 Private Schools). Population of the study included all the Public Primary Schools and Private Schools, conducting Pre-Primary Classes, of District Karak. There are 435 Public Primary Schools and 180 Private Schools in District Karak.

2.2 Research Instrument and Data Collection: A close ended questionnaire was developed in the light of the Policy Provisions of NEP 2017 and administered to the sample. The questionnaire was prepared on the basis of Policy Provisions for Early Childhood Care and Education as given in Chapter 4, para 6.3 in National Education Policy 2017-2025. The questionnaire was required to be responded on five point Likert Scale i.e., Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Undecided (UN), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA). The questionnaire consisted of 29 items. It was divided into two parameters; namely, "Physical Facilities for Pre-Primary Education", and "Teaching aids for Pre-Primary Education". The response rate was 188 (94%) for Public Schools, and 110 (92%) for Private Schools.

2.3 Data Analysis: The questionnaire was required to be responded on the basis of five response categories i.e., Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly Agree. However no response was obtained in the categories of Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree. All the responses were obtained in three categories only i.e., Disagree, Undecided, Agree. So, the data was tabulated into three response categories. The data was categorical in nature therefore statistical tool Chi-square (χ^2) was used for its analysis.

2.4 Data Interpretation: Ho1: There is no significant difference in the implementation status of ECCE Policy Provisions of NEP 2017 (Physical facilities for pre-primary education) between Public and Private Schools of District Karak.

3. Results

Table 1
Physical Facilities for Pre-Primary Education.

S.No	Statements	School Categories	N	Response of Head Teachers			df(2) p
				DA	UD	A	
1	Availability of infrastructure facilities to ECCE classes	Public	188	31(16.5 %)	8(4.3 %)	149(79.3 %)	0.804
		Private	110	15(13.6 %)	5(4.5 %)	90(81.8 %)	
2	Separate classrooms for ECCE children	Public	188	19(10.1 %)	8(4.3 %)	161(85.6 %)	0.235
		Private	110	5(4.5 %)	5(4.5 %)	100(90.9 %)	
3	Inclusive teacher for ECCE children	Public	188	150(79.8 %)	18(9.6 %)	20(10.6 %)	0.000
		Private	110	10(9.1 %)	10(9.1 %)	90(81.8 %)	
4	Availability of playground for ECCE children	Public	188	15(8.0 %)	10(5.3 %)	163(86.7 %)	0.000
		Private	110	30(27.3 %)	10(9.1 %)	70(63.6 %)	
5	Trained teacher for ECCE children	Public	188	150(79.8 %)	18(9.6 %)	20(10.6 %)	0.246
		Private	110	95(86.4 %)	5(4.5 %)	10(9.1 %)	
6	Availability of Ayya to ECCE children	Public	188	170(90.4 %)	18(9.6 %)	0(0.0 %)	0.000
		Private	110	20(18.2 %)	10(9.1 %)	80(72.7 %)	
7	One teacher for maximum students not more than 25	Public	188	160(85.1 %)	10(5.3 %)	18(9.6 %)	0.000
		Private	110	15(13.6 %)	5(4.5 %)	90(81.8 %)	
8	Availability of health Care facility	Public	188	20(10.6 %)	18(9.6 %)	150(79.8 %)	0.261
		Private	110	19(17.3 %)	10(9.1 %)	81(73.6 %)	
9	Provision of Recurring and Development budget	Public	188	8(4.3 %)	10(5.3 %)	170(90.4 %)	0.00
		Private	110	110(100.0 %)	0(0.0 %)	0(0.0 %)	
10	Physical facilities for pre-primary education	Public	188	80(42.5 %)	13(6.9 %)	95(50.6 %)	0.156
		Private	110	35(31.8 %)	7(6.3 %)	68(61.9 %)	

The table shows the frequency of responses of Head Teachers regarding implementation status of ECCE Policy Provisions of NEP 2017 in the Parameter of, "Physical facilities for pre- primary education" in their schools. The table indicates that p value (0.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance so the null hypotheses 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9 are rejected. Meaning thereby that inclusive teacher for ECCE children is available in private schools but not in public schools; playground is available in public schools but not in private schools; ayya is available in private schools but not in public schools; one teacher for maximum students not more than 25 is available in Private schools but not in Public schools; and funds are provided to public schools but not to private schools. Whereas the p value (0.804, 0.235, 0.246, 0.261) is greater than

0.05 level of significance, so the null hypotheses 1, 2, 5, and 8 are accepted. This means that the Policy Provisions of Availability of infrastructure facilities to ECCE classes; Separate classrooms for ECCE children, and Availability of health Care facility are available in both Public and Private schools. However the policy provision of trained teacher for ECCE children is not available in both Public and Private schools. For the difference between Public and Private schools on parameter 2, "Physical facilities for pre-primary education." the p value (0.156) is greater than 0.05 level of significance. So the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that this parameter of the Policy Provisions has been equally implemented in both the stream of the schools.

Ho 2: There is no significant difference in the implementation status of ECCE Policy Provisions of NEP 2017 (Teaching Aids for Pre-

Primary Education) between Public and Private Schools of District Karak.

Table 1

Physical Facilities for Pre-Primary Education.

S.No	Statements	School Categories	N	Response of Head Teachers			df(2) p
				DA	UD	A	
1	ECCE education is activity based	Public	188	20(10.6 %)	8(4.3 %)	160(85.1 %)	0.031
		Private	110	8(4.3 %)	160(85.1 %)	8(4.3 %)	
2	ECCE education is through play way method	Public	188	8(4.3 %)	160(85.1 %)	8(4.3 %)	0.110
		Private	110	8(4.3 %)	160(85.1 %)	8(4.3 %)	
3	ECCE education is not allowed through textbook	Public	188	168(89.4 %)	10(5.3 %)	10(5.3 %)	0.015
		Private	110	85(77.3 %)	10(9.1 %)	15(13.4 %)	
4	ECCE class are equipped with teaching material	Public	188	30(16.0 %)	8(4.3 %)	150(79.8 %)	0.008
		Private	110	30(27.3 %)	10(9.1 %)	70(63.6 %)	
5	ECCE class are equipped with instruction material	Public	188	30(27.3 %)	10(9.1 %)	70(63.6 %)	0.008
		Private	110	95(86.4 %)	5(4.5 %)	10(9.1 %)	
6	ECCE class are equipped with A.V Aids	Public	188	15(8%)	10(5.3 %)	163(86.7 %)	0.110
		Private	110	15(13.6 %)	10(9.1 %)	85(73.3 %)	
7	ECCE class are equipped with ICT	Public	188	163(86.7 %)	10(5.3 %)	15(8.0 %)	0.110
		Private	110	85(77.3 %)	10(9.1 %)	15(13.6 %)	
8	Teaching aids for Pre-Primary education	Public	188	63(33.5 %)	9(4.8%)	116(61.7 %)	0.249

The table shows the frequency of responses of Head Teachers regarding implementation status of ECCE Policy Provisions of NEP 2017 in the Parameter of, "Teaching Aids for Pre-Primary Education" in their schools. The table indicates that the p value (0.031, 0.015, and 0.008) is less than 0.05 level of significance, so the null hypotheses 1, 3, 4, and 5 are rejected. Meaning thereby that Policy Provisions of ECCE education is activity based, ECCE classes are equipped with teaching learning material and instructional material are available in both Public and Private school but Public schools are more concerned. Moreover the Provision of ECCE children is not allowed through textbook is equally not available in both Public and Private schools. Whereas the p value (0.110) is greater than 0.05 level of significance, so the null hypotheses 2, 6, and 7 are accepted. This means that the Policy Provision of ECCE education through play way method, and ECCE classrooms are equipped with AV Aids are available in both Public and Private schools. On the

other hand the ECCE classes in both Public and Private schools do not have ICT facilities. For the difference between Public and Private schools on parameter 4, "Teaching Aids for Pre-Primary Education" the p value (0.249) is greater than 0.05 level of significance. So the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that this parameter of the Policy Provisions has been equally implemented in both the streams of the schools.

4. Discussion

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data, several conclusions were drawn regarding the implementation of policy provisions outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2017 for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The conclusions were categorized into two parameters: Physical Facilities for Pre-Primary Education and Teaching Aids for Pre-Primary Education.

Under Parameter I: Physical Facilities for Pre-Primary Education, nine elements were assessed. Some elements, such as the availability of infrastructure facilities, separate classrooms for ECCE children, and healthcare facilities, were available in both public and private schools. However, the availability of trained teachers for ECCE children was found lacking in both types of institutions. Certain elements, such as playgrounds and the provision of recurring and development budgets, were exclusive to public schools. Conversely, private schools excelled in other areas, including the presence of inclusive teachers, availability of support staff (Ayya), and maintaining a teacher-student ratio of 1:25.

Under Parameter II: Teaching Aids for Pre-Primary Education, seven elements were analyzed. Key elements, including activity-based education, the use of play-way methods, the presence of teaching-learning materials, instructional materials, and audiovisual aids, were found in both public and private schools. However, ICT-based education and the play-way method were notably absent in both public and private institutions.

Overall, the two parameters—Physical Facilities for Pre-Primary Education and Teaching Aids for Pre-Primary Education—were implemented equally across public and private schools, with some variations in specific elements. These findings highlight both the progress made and the gaps that need to be addressed for the effective implementation of ECCE policy provisions in District Karak.

5. Recommendation

Based on the interpretation of the data and the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the implementation of the policy provisions outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2017. The recommendations are categorized under two key parameters: Physical Facilities for Pre-Primary Education and Teaching Aids for Pre-Primary Education.

Under Parameter I: Physical Facilities for Pre-Primary Education, it was observed that private schools assign inclusive teachers to each class and section, while public schools allocate teachers based on overall student strength rather than the number of classes. To address this, it is recommended that public schools receive teacher allocations based on the number of classes, ensuring dedicated teachers for ECCE classes. Additionally, head teachers from both public and private schools highlighted the lack of trained teachers for ECCE. It is recommended that short in-service training programs be organized for teachers in both sectors to provide essential knowledge and skills for ECCE education.

Furthermore, recurring and development budgets are exclusively provided to public schools, while private schools, particularly in rural areas, struggle financially due to minimal tuition fees. To support these schools in their mission to educate young children, it is recommended that financial assistance be extended to private schools, enabling them to sustain their operations and improve educational standards.

Under Parameter II: Teaching Aids for Pre-Primary Education, both public and private schools lack ICT facilities in their classrooms. To bridge this gap, it is recommended that the Education Department provide ICT facilities to public schools. Similarly, private schools should be directed by the Private Schools Regulatory Authority (PSRA) to incorporate ICT facilities for their students, ensuring equal access to modern teaching aids.

These recommendations aim to address the challenges identified in the study, improving the overall implementation of ECCE policy provisions in both public and private schools.

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