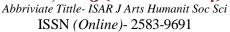


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3 OPEN ACCESS

ECCE Education in the Global context: A Comparative Study of Private And Public ECCE Service Providers in the State of Bihar, India

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Received: 19.02.2024 Accepted: 03.03.2024 Published: 17.03.2024 **Abstract:** A The right to education of any child born in any country in the world starts from birth. But unfortunately, new UNESCO data shows that one in four children aged 5 never receives any form of pre-primary education (ECCE) in their lifetime. This report represents 35 million of the 137 million 5-year-old children worldwide. Early Childhood Care and Education Despite research proving the benefits of ECCE, only half of the countries worldwide guarantee free pre-primary education. Political will and ownership are vital to transforming the ECCE. The UNESCO review highlights progress in some countries, but much more is needed to successfully strengthen the capacity of these systems.

This research has been done in the context of Bihar, India. The objective of this study is to assess the daily classroom activities conducted by private and public service providers of ECCE in Bihar and to identify the differences in various classroom activities and the facilities provided by them. In the study, 100 private and 100 public service providers from all areas of Bihar district were selected through the interview method. Teachers and children were selected using random sampling. In the research, the service systems of most of the private service providers were found to be of high quality, while the public service providers were found to be suffering from various deficiencies in classroom operations. Comparatively, the school service and classroom maintenance systems of private service providers were better than those of public service providers, while both types of service providers were trying their best to conduct ECCE classes. Research studies indicate that the government needs to focus on highlighting the issues related to ECCE and implementing special provisions for it. There is a need for various facilities, new standard norms, and new policies for private and public service providers in this area. The state government needs to take the necessary steps in this area. Through this process, ECCE will be able to develop in its new form. What the country needs most.

Keywords: service providers, private, public, standards, norms, provisions, classroom activities, ECCE.

INTRODUCTION

From a global human rights perspective, expanding the quality of early childhood education (ECCE) is considered an important means of realising the right to education globally in the context of lifelong learning. ECCE provides important preparation for children in their basic education and lifelong learning journey. In 2021, 22% of the United Nations member countries will declare pre-primary education compulsory. And 45% of countries provide at least 1 year of free pre-primary education. 46% of countries have adopted free and compulsory pre-primary education in their laws. Overall, there has been significant global progress in achieving high-quality ECCE. Globally, the proportion of pre-primary education has increased from 46% in 2010 to 61% in 2020. The global proportion of participation in organised education 1 year before the age of official primary school entry also increased to 75% in 2020. In low- and middle-income countries, less than two out of three children participate in organised education a year before the official primary entry age, and the proportion of children receiving a positive and stimulating home environment is much lower. Only 64% of children get a positive and nurturing home environment from the government. Great regional disparities remain the biggest challenges for ECCE. Only 40% of children in

Sub-Saharan Africa have received positive peer-motivated home learning experiences, compared to 90% of children in Europe and North America. All countries globally recognize that ECCE is a prerequisite for fulfilling the right to learning and development. All children in the world have the right to access pre-primary education and basic education, including literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional learning. Now is the right time for society and the government to implement relevant policies to reclaim and transform their ECCE systems. In the field of pre-elementary education, ECCE can be seen as an important part of addressing the country's social, inclusion, economic, and other challenges, including sustainable development challenges. According to the 2022 Global Education Monitoring Report, 150 out of 209 countries have set their targets for pre-primary education participation by 2025 or 2030. The proportion of countries monitoring participation in pre-primary education is expected to increase to 75% in 2015. This number is expected to increase to 92% in 2025 and 95% in 2030. UNESCO is projecting that preprimary participation will exceed 90% for all regions by 2030. ECCE has also expanded impressively in India. The government and state governments of the country are committed to increasing ECCE facilities. NEP 2020 talks about emphasising the importance of early childhood education. The new education policy includes the Foundational Stage (3-6 years) as an important stage in the development of children's brains. That is why the informal education of children aged 3-6 years has been changed and included in the formal school curriculum under the provision of 3 years of Anganwadi Preschool. It includes the basic stages of childhood as foundational stages. The 5+3+3+4 structure of the National Education Policy 2020 has brought better provisions than the old education policy as a foundation stage for ECCE. This education pattern includes classes 1 and 2 as nursery and kindergarten classes and brings play school under the ambit of "formal education.". Under this policy, the curriculum structure of pre-primary school education has been changed. In the policy documents, importance has been given to a sports activity-based, inquiry-based curriculum. This policy advocates the holistic objective of ECCE education, under which children's physical, motor, cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, moral, cultural, artistic, and communicational development are integrated in the curriculum along with early literacy development. Due to this, an advanced, systematic curriculum structure for pre-elementary classes has been prepared. The objective of this policy is to prepare children aged 3 to 6 years for formal education in grade-1 with universal access to a quality education system by 2025.

India's pluralistic and culturally diverse society, composed of many regional and local cultures, requires a flexible and relevant approach to ECCE. It also demands sensitivity on the part of the teacher to link the ECCE program to the child's culture and to take the child's existing experiential knowledge as the basis for the ECCE programme. Considering the following aspects along with their components while planning a developmentally appropriate program for this age group has a positive impact on the quality of learning and enhances the achievement of learning outcomes for children participating in ECCE programmes. Learning/Activity Corners in ECCE centres are established spaces with resources that vary according to the topics/subjects in focus and provide opportunities to explore according to the skills that need to be developed and practised. In recent times, many children are receiving early education and care outside the home in child care centres, preschool programs, and other community-based early education settings. Whether children receive early education and care at home or in the community, it is important that their early learning experiences are based on the unique strength of their relationships with their families. Diversity in social contexts and family structures needs to be appropriately addressed so as to bring about balanced parenting, including inputs from fathers, mothers, and other caregivers in the family through enabling provisions in programmes. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of services to ensure quality care and education for children in the early years is a priority for India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Research Methodology: Area of the presented research: Patna (a district of Bihar, India) was selected as the research study area for the presented research study.

Population: For the present research study, the centres of private and public ECCE service providers, the number of teachers teaching in the centres, and the number of children studying in them have been taken as numbers. 100 private and 100 public service providers have been selected for the study. A checklist and

interview method have been used to obtain relevant data to complete the research study. Second source: After collecting the data obtained from the Internet, books, booklets, and government reports, it was analysed in percentages, then the information was classified on a homogeneous basis and tabulated to understand the mutual relations of the items and their nature. Apart from this, the data was also analysed, and bar graphs were used to understand the percentage and its nature.

Significance of the Study: The rate of numerical growth of ECCE since its inception is very good, and the possibility of increasing it above the graph is also bright, but qualitatively, the situation is completely opposite. There are many factors behind this and many challenges, which are probably not at all difficult to know, but efforts to know them do not seem to be worth it. The presented research is an important step in this direction. Education (at any level) is undoubtedly important, but along with it, access to quality education also matters. Even if education is accessible, if it is not of quality, then it is of no use. The situation at ECCE is also similar, at least prima facie. Ultimately, efforts will have to be made to understand it, test it, and find solutions. Evaluation of ECCE is essential, which is not being done at present or is not being done properly, in the absence of which it is difficult to estimate the actual situation. Anyway, such an important topic should be much more than a guess. All components of ECCE: instructors, learners, content, teaching materials, equipment, physical facilities, non-teaching staff, infrastructure, and stakeholders contribute significantly to the holistic development of children. All components have their own merits and limitations. Having information about both will make it easier to move forward and take related steps. In the presented research, all the components related to both the service providers (public and private) of ECCE will be evaluated in detail. The strongest aspect of the evaluation done under the presented research will be an honest and unbiased evaluation, which will be more reliable.

Children express their thoughts and emotions through play and also gain information about their environment through play. All kinds of activities of children are called playing, and on this pretext, education starts among children through play. Inclusion of various mediums of child education like drama, dance, music, stories, and poetry gives children the opportunity to express their thoughts and emotional experiences. For a child, playing is a natural, spontaneous, and enjoyable process.

Where the child is actively engaged physically and mentally. There is enough challenge for the child to help him/her practice and apply his/her skills and knowledge in a variety of situations. It enables children to learn in a joyful and interesting way.

Child Centred Activity Approach: For early childhood education, special types of experiences are given to children through play, which promotes developmental processes like problem solving, creativity, etc. It helps in the development of physical, social, and linguistic skills. This is called a child-centred activity approach. Children do not feel tired and have the freedom to do any sport. Through this approach, language development, intellectual development, social construction, organisational development, and independent creative expression develop in the child. Teacher Centred Activity Approach: In this approach, teachers keep children together and help them learn new experiments and reach conclusions about something. Teachers

engage children in activities like drawing pictures, presenting stories through drama, celebrating a child's birthday, celebrating a festival, or giving strict punishment to a particular place. It is so simple that it can be adapted into child-centred activities at any time. The above discussion proves that the best way to impart education in early childhood is through a play system and childcentric activities.

Results and Discussions:

1. Assessment of daily activities taught to children through teacher collaboration in public and private ECCE classrooms.

Graph 1: Situations of daily activities taught to children by the teachers in public and private ECCE classrooms.

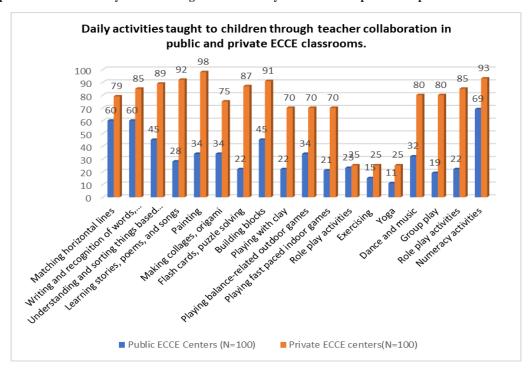


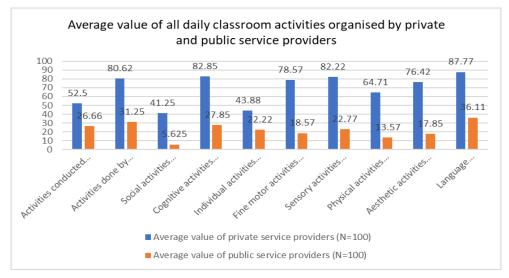
Table 1: Assessment of daily activities taught to children through teacher collaboration in public and private ECCE classrooms.

Assessment of daily activities taught to children through teacher collaboration in public and private ECCE classrooms.	Public ECCE Centres (N=100)	Private ECCE Centres (N=100)
Matching horizontal lines	60	79
Writing and recognition of words, letters, and numbers	60	85
Understanding and sorting things based on their properties	45	89
Learning stories, poems, and songs	28	92
Painting	34	98
Making collages, origami	34	75
Flash cards, puzzle solving	22	87
Building blocks	45	91
Playing with clay	22	70
Playing balance-related outdoor games	34	70
Playing fast paced indoor games	21	70
Role play activities	23	25
Exercising	15	25
Yoga	11	25
Dance and music	32	80
Group play	19	80
Role-play activities	22	85
Numeracy activities	69	93

Teachers have the most important contribution in the ECCE programme. All the programs conducted in the centre every day are organised and conducted in his presence. The research study found that teachers of public centres were not organising prayer meetings and conducting activities like daily attendance of children, good morning, and goodbye circles in their centres every day. In these centres, the teachers were not even getting the activities done throughout the day repeated. The number of daily indoor and outdoor activities organised for children was also being reduced. Even in private centres, this work was not being done every day. In public centres, teachers were providing only mid-day meals to the children every day. There was no fixed time for the arrival of children in public centres; hence, parents were found to bring their children to the centre as per their wish. Work like handing over children to parents was not being done in the public centre. Teachers in private centres were found to be more dedicated to their duties as compared to those in public centres. The teachers here were conducting the above activities better than in the public centres.

The research study found that even private centres do not organise physical activities for children on a regular basis. Most of the private centres do not have grounds for outdoor activities or open spaces for playing; they are only able to arrange space for tricycles to be driven on small verandahs. Whereas in public ECCE centres, only 20% of centres were found to have sufficient space to run tricycles. 70% of private centres are able to arrange various physical activities, including playing outdoor games, fast-paced indoor games, outdoor games involving body balance, roleplay, etc. Whereas such activities were being organised in only 34% of Anganwadi centres. Daily activities like PT and yoga were being organised in 15 to 25% of private centres, whereas no such activities were found in public centres. 80% of private centres were regularly conducting activities like group play with small children. In public centres, such activities were found only in 19% of Anganwadi centres. On observation of public centres, only 34% of centres were regularly organising daily activities for young children like painting, making building blocks, playing with clay, and making arts and crafts. Most of the centres organised these types of daily activities to some extent, but in some centres, due to children not coming on a regular basis, it was difficult to organise these activities. There was no arrangement for this type of teaching material. On observation of private centres, 94% of daily activities like making paintings, art, and crafts were being organised daily in all the centres, but 34% were making collages, origami, puzzles, and flashcards. Such daily activities were being organised on a weekly basis. The research found that such daily activities were not being organised for children on a daily basis in any public or private centres. There were only a few private centres in which 75% of these activities were being conducted regularly.

The average value of all daily classroom activities organised by private and public service providers.



Graph 2: Situations of value of all daily classroom activities organised by private and public service providers.

Table 2.: Assessment of daily activities taught to children through teacher collaboration in public and private ECCE classrooms.

Average value of all daily classroom activities organised by private and public service providers	private service providers %	Average value of private service providers (N=100)	public service providers %	Average value of public service providers (N=100)
Activities conducted by service providers	310	52.50	160	26.66
Activities done by teachers in the centre every day	645	80.62	250	31.25
Social activities conducted by teachers	330	41.25	48	5.625
Cognitive activities conducted by teachers	580	82.85	195	27.85

Individual activities taught by teachers	395	43.88	250	22.22
Fine motor activities taught by teachers	550	78.57	130	18.57
Sensory activities conducted by teachers	740	82.22	205	22.77
Physical activities conducted by teachers	453	64.71	95	13.57
Aesthetic activities conducted by teachers	535	76.42	125	17.85
Language communication activities taught by teachers	790	87.77	325	36.11

Graph 2- Assessment of various activities organised by service providers in their own centres Through interviews with parents of private centres, it was revealed that, on average, 31.25% of extracurricular activities were being organised in public centres. Sevaks were organising programs like organising educational tours, organising various sports events, organising 41.25 cultural programs, and various types of competitions (on average, 5.625) in their centres. The operators were holding parent teacher meetings with the parents only once a year. Through interviews with parents and service providers of private centres, it was confirmed that the service providers were organising parent teacher meetings every 6 months in their centres. Private service providers and parents appeared to be very alert and serious about children's education. Private service providers were organising cultural programs for children in their centres at an average of 645-80.625 per year, and educational tours were also being organised at an average of 645-80.625 per year. The research found that most of the private centres were organising various types of sports and extra-curricular activities in their centres and various competitions were also being organised in these centres. The study found that private service providers understood the importance of extracurricular activities and responded well to them compared to public centres. The average of public centres was 52.5, and the average of private centres was 26.666667.

Average of social activities conducted by teachers: According to graph 2.- In the assessment of essential activities done by the teachers in the centre on a daily basis, the activities to be conducted by the teachers of the public centre include: (organisation of prayer, daily inspection of children, organisation of good morning circle, indoor outdoor activities, lunch of children) Time: Repetition of all the activities done (goodbye circle, handing over the children to parents) The teachers of the public centre were conducting activities like this at an average rate of 41.25, whereas the teachers of the private service centre were conducting all the above activities at an average rate of 5.625.

According to graph 2. creative activities are completely ignored in public centres. In most of the public centres, the attendance of children is negligible; sometimes, in some centres where children are present in the class every day, and creative activities like painting, puzzles, building blocks, art, and craft are done in the class. It was being done as. Even in private centres, creative activities like making origami, collages, mud clay, etc. are

organised less. In most of the private centres, works like painting, art, and craft were being conducted as creative activities in the daily class.

Conclusion:

The study found that there were many problems and challenges related to creative qualities in public centres. 40% of teachers were present, and 30% of centres were opening on regular time. Only 15% of Anganwadi centres were implementing the daily curriculum, conducting daily classes, and organising daily activities. Good behaviour towards children was found in only 60 percent of the centres. All the arrangements in the rights and public centres were found irregular. The operator was facing various types of problems and challenges in implementing them. The study found that the management of private centres is run in a very systematic manner. Due to this, they have to face fewer problems and challenges related to class conduct. The research found fewer problems and challenges related to class conduct by private centres. Private centres were working on creative and qualitative aspects of operations. Due to which fewer problems and challenges were being faced in class conduct.

Recommendations:

Following are some recommendations based on research: There has been an impressive expansion of ECCE in India, but the service quality coverage of early childhood care and education by private and public service providers remains sky-high. The conditions of service delivery norms and regulations are also skyhigh. Mainly, there is an inadequate understanding of its basic premises, its philosophy, and its significance among all stakeholders. The objective of the research is to focus on governing the centre based on service delivery norms and regulations, to promote awareness of ECCE among stakeholders and providers, and to mitigate the problems and challenges related to it. Recommendations based on the research are: (1) The challenges and problems faced in running any centre depend on the provisions and facilities associated with the centre. Challenges and problems are directly related to available space, basic facilities and provisions: suitable space for the centre, internal and external infrastructure, available It is related to the facilities and resources. activities conducted within the centre, management of the centre, and participation of stakeholders. Therefore, public service providers continue to face some problems related to them. The research study found that both types of service providers face different types of problems and challenges related to their service management systems.

There are two types of service providers providing Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) services in India. Both the service providers face various types of operational problems and challenges in running the centre. The reason for this is the difference in the operating systems of both services. Nevertheless, some basic challenges and problems are common to both types of service providers. Mainly, the location, infrastructure, and lack of basic learning resources within ECCE centres pose a challenge for both types of service providers.

Since private service providers operate it as an enterprise, they charge parents a fee for providing this program. Due to this, the education system provided by them is better than that of public centres. He tries to provide better facilities to the children coming to his centres. At the private level, some of the reputed ECCEs provide a very advanced education system and infrastructure. Since it is not possible for all types of parents to educate their children in these centres, there are very limited centres of this type that are capable of providing high-quality ECCE education transmission. Generally, the facilities of middle-class ECCE centres are similar, and the operational challenges and problems are also similar. The educational and mental level of parents in private centres is higher and more sensitive than that of public parents. Parents are eager and dutiful towards the responsibilities of their child's progress and education. Parents, being very conscious of their children's education, get involved in their children's educational work and try to expect better performance and support from the school. In private centres, the participation of parents is much more organised and better than in public centres. That is why the methods of daily central operation of both types of service providers, daily activities, educational level of teachers, and the challenges and problems arising from them are also different from each other. And there is a difference in the challenges and problems of both types of centres.

Interactions received by ECCE Centres. There is a difference in the participation received by both types of service providers in ECCE centres. In private centres, the participants are parents, centre operators, principals, and teachers. Whereas in public centres, ICDS officers, education officers, officers of rural areas, and all administrative services related to education are available. The contribution of various types of voluntary organisations in public centres also remains constant. However, ECC service centres in the public sector suffer from various challenges and problems. Comparatively, private centres try to provide a higher-quality education system and facilities as compared to public centres. The main reason for this is the commercialization and entrepreneurship of ECCE education at the private level. Despite better participation in public centres, poor-quality ECCE services are broadcast. The main cause behind this is the monitoring system used by the government in this area. Due to a poor monitoring system, public ECCE centres function only as caterers. The government sees the need to pay special attention to this.

Appropriate reviews have made it clear that, despite constitutional directives and various laws, policies, and programs promulgated from time to time, there is a huge gap between the actual provisions and not just the quality assessment or how many services are actually being provided. There is also not enough information available about what is being provided; moreover,

imbalances exist at both spatial and social levels, ultimately resulting in some sections being more neglected. ECCE has not yet been accepted as an integral part of the education system in India. The second consequence is polarisation between government and private services, with private services catering to the rich urban classes and the former catering to the rural poor. As a result, there is widespread polarisation in the ECCE education system. The ECCE program is comprehensive in concept but appears to be implemented satisfactorily at the ground level. There is a wide gap in its quality. No direct services exist for children. There are wide variations within the private sector. Some centres in the private sector are providing excellent education to the upper class, while some private schools exist in large numbers, are unsatisfactorily run, have a huge number of students, have no infrastructure of their own, and are provided with inefficient efforts to teach on the basis of reading, writing, and arithmetic principles. There are some very expensive model schools that cater to the needs of the urban upper class. Overall, private and public ECCE service providers are conducting ECCE at their own levels. There is no monitoring system of any kind of standard norm in their operation by the government. It is ignored by the government, due to which the ECCE is unable to express its values and importance in India.

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