

Quality assurance policies of Kindergarten Education in Karachi ...

Quality assurance policies of Kindergarten Education in Karachi and their implementation

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Received on: 10-10-2021

Accepted on: 14-11-2021

Abstract

This study revolves around the recent policies for Kindergarten education in Karachi. In this study the considerations regarding the policies and their implementations in Karachi city for Kindergarten institutions has been made. Also the level of the current Kindergarten education in Karachi in different regions of the city has been considered. For this purpose the literature review has been done from various sources. Then according to the requirement of the research the qualitative research has been adopted. The selection qualitative research has been more specified to phenomenological research method. Thus, the interviews from the founders of the different Kindergarten institutes have been done from different regions. By these interviews the conclusions have been made that there are no specific bodies from government providing any particular policies for initializing the Kindergarten Institute, but for checking of implementation of their basic requirements there is a process, which somehow is not applicable everywhere in the city. Some considerations also have been made from the founders regarding the current policies and implementations.

Keywords: Kindergarten Education, Early childhood education in Karachi, and Policies for Kindergarten schools.

1. Introduction:

Early childhood education is a very sensitive step in the world of child's education. As this is the first time the child is entering into any institute for the purpose of education, the age of starting the kindergarten is usually around two and a half years, which obviously is a very delicate stage of one's life. Pre-school or early childhood instruction shows up fundamental for children between three and five a long time of age making them imaginative preparing them with tasteful, social and communication abilities. They may learn how to act and respond to live with others. (Hussain, & Sultan, 2010).

The connection between the standard of early childhood education and child's development has been explained through various theories and studies. Such researches highlighted the

Quality assurance policies of Kindergarten Education in Karachi ...

impact of kindergarten education on the social and psychological structure of the child's brain, including their sense of understanding surroundings, confidence level and communication skills. (McCartney, Dearing, Taylor & Bub, 2007). Thus, effective learning can be said to have strong connections with Kindergarten education, having different and profound understandings for children at that stage. Which actually somehow prepares them for the studies in their future life. (Karoly, Ghosh-Dastidar, Zellman, Perlman, & Fernyhough, 2008).

In Pakistan the kindergarten education has different stages since the time of independence of Pakistan. since the beginning the focus of government is on primary and secondary education. Thus, there are no such recommendations by government for Kindergarten education in public sector. But later in 2000s the National action plan (Government of Pakistan, 2003) started to have a brighter focus on early childhood education. In 1970s while considering the significance of Kindergarten education the government offered Katchi courses between the age 3 to 6 which were later put on hold in 1980s. Therefore, no student aged between 3 to 5 were seem to be involved in any educational program. (Pakistan government, 1999). Kindergarten education not only build a foundation for the better and efficient primary education, it also provides the better structure for future education. (Asghar, 1994). In Karachi there are limited opportunities for training the teachers for kindergarten. Besides that the city is over populated which also trigger more issues which have an impact on kindergarten education among which the major issue is poverty. Poverty leads the life of a child to suffer with undernourishment, unhealthy growing environment even most of them who are suffering do not have clean water to drink. (Ahmed, 2011). Obviously in such situations how come one could afford to send their children to kindergarten, specifically where there is no such facility available in public sector, where as affording private sector is not possible.

1.1. Scope:

This study is based on the process of quality assessment for kindergarten in Karachi. The study covers both, the initial requirements of the policy and the process of the implementation of the policies.

1.2. Objectives:

1. To identify the current policies for quality for early childhood education in Karachi.
2. To identify the possible implementations of the present policies.
3. To understand the level of current quality assurance process for kindergarten.

1.3. Problem statement:

Kindergarten education is suffering from the severe crisis in Karachi. The gap among the institutes within the city is evident. Lack of policies from the government bodies is making it harder to maintain the uniformity throughout the kindergarten institutes in different regions in Karachi.

2. Literature Review:

Age groupings usually in Montessori classrooms are categorized as infant to age three years,

Quality assurance policies of Kindergarten Education in Karachi ...

age three to six years old, then six to nine years old, and at last nine to twelve years old. Learning stuff accessible to children including all the working materials should be there. Also, the availability should be organized according to the topics so that it would become easy to reach for children. The material should be presented in a way that children can use it even without the help of any guide or teacher. This is also an important consideration that it should be interconnected with the designed curriculum so that children can learn from more than one source on their own. (Lillard, 2013).

Different studies present different views about the impact of Kindergarten education on the growth of children's skills. Some say that there is not so huge impact of kindergarten education on child's intellectual development but some of them say that there is a brief but profound impact of kindergarten education on child's development. (Gorey; 2001, McKey, Condelli, Ganson, Barrett, McConkey, & Planz: 1985, Nelson, Westhues & MacLeod: 2003, White & Casto: 1985).

However, around the world there are many countries which have done significant investments regarding the early childhood education. Various organizations are also playing an active role with the consideration of Kindergarten education. Now a days the relation of kindergarten education with respect to child's overall development is considered to be significant. (Murtaza, 2011).

As there are several concepts regarding the early childhood education Gordon and Browne, 2000 have presented this concept with several words such as pre-school, Kindergarten, Nursery, Montessori and primary education which is considered to start from two years and goes till the age of eight.

Similarly, according to Bertam and Pascal, 2002, this aspect of childhood education has been profoundly accepted that the most sensitive stage of human life in sight of development lies in the first eight years of human life. (Rehman, 2006).

This is also a vital consideration that while talking about development process for a child the early childhood life is the most significant stage where the influences of development can be seen widely such as the physical requirements including immune system, tissues and other physical growths and also the cognitive, intellectual and skill developments are influences. (Mustard, 2002).

All these requirements can be fulfilled when a child can have the sociable and friendly environment with teachers in kindergarten. Thus, the teacher plays a vital role in the growth and development of child and that is why it is very important that teachers of kindergarten must be trained and skill full in this regard.

Education of person begins at birth time changing within the changing environment. In any case, preschool education begins at the age of two or three up to five a long time and kids learn in 'social learning environments' out of family. It is given as a rule between the age of three and five a long time in kindergarten schools, day care centers, nursery schools and pre-primary schools etc. This all usually based on Froebel's Kindergarten theory. (Hussain, & Sultan 2010).

2.1. Froebel's Kindergarten theory of early childhood pedagogy:

Friedrich Froebel was the German educator who was also the inventor of Kindergarten. The preschool education basically concerns with identity characteristics and social improvement

Quality assurance policies of Kindergarten Education in Karachi ...

of the children within the school environment. Children learn and discover through contact with their age colleagues in play-way circumstance. According to the British Association of early childhood education, Froebel's principles are described by the Prof. Tina Bruce. Which can be defined as follows:

- (a) Stage of childhood should be considered as a part of human's life itself and not just the phase of life to prepare the child for future.
- (b) Every aspect of child's life should be considered significant including mental and physical health, feelings and imaginations and even the spiritual perspectives.
- (c) Learning should not be classified or sorted.
- (d) Motivation and self-directed exercises should be considered vital.
- (e) Self-discipline should be maintained in a friendly environment.
- (f) At different stages of growth there are repetitive learning process and stages.
- (g) Dos should be addressed more in a child's education in stead of Don'ts.
- (h) Child's mind requires favorable and affectionate circumstances in order to flourish the inner life.
- (i) Everybody with whom a child interacts is significant, as for child every interaction is pure.
- (j) Quality education revolves around three factors: the child, the circumstances and perspectives in which the process of education is going on and the comprehension which child develops through the process of learning.

2.2. Maria Montessori Theory:

Maria Tecla Artimisia Montessori was the one who established the first Montessori school in 1907. She was an Italian physician and educator. She is famous for her theory and methods presented for Montessori education. According to American Montessori Society, Maria's first priority in theory for Montessori is child's natural development. Yonkers public schools organization defined that the Maria Montessori theory has a child centered scope of Montessori environment. Where the main focus and emphasize is on the child's own skill and capability of learning from the environment rather than giving him/her any particular path to follow for learning. In this theory the fundamental aspects to consider are freedom and independence of child, following the activities and interests of the child, observing and guiding the child friendly in case of need, preparing the environment for child which should be friendly and understandable for that stage of life, the work of trained teachers on the mind of a child in a way that it could be absorbent as well as independent for learning thinking explained by Carrots are orange. This theory can be applied on various stages of child's life other than kindergarten phase.

3. Methodology:

As the social realities of human life structure is complicated, and the requirement of understanding this life structure is also a necessity, thus research is a very clear option to understand and go through the complications of human life. While entering into the research world the social structure can be analyzed through different means where the most commonly used approach is phenomenological approach specifically in researching the social phenomenon. (Van, 1997). Similarly, in this research the qualitative approach has been

Quality assurance policies of Kindergarten Education in Karachi ...

selected with respect to its requirements. The research goes on by means of interviewing different founders of kindergarten institutes in order to gain the information through different aspects and experiences in the same field.

Moreover, as research has been conducted on the bases of qualitative research method, the research continues with the interviews with the founders of Kindergarten institutes in Karachi.

3.1. Population:

Founders of Kindergarten institutes in Karachi.

3.2. Sample Size:

4 interviews have been conducted from the founders of Kindergarten institutes from different regions of the city.

3.3. Theme of Interviews:

Interviews has been conducted on the basis of the following themes:

Theme	Sequence of Questions	No. of Questions
Main authorities looking after kindergarten education in Karachi.	1 & 2	2
The process of implementation	3, 4, & 5	3
Considerations of founders	6 & 7	2

4. Discussion:

While looking at educational policies and plans in Pakistan, this is evident that these policies are there with no consideration of Kindergarten education. The present situation in Pakistan regarding kindergarten education is possibility of a child going to kindergarten depends on his\her family’s financial status. Therefore, children with well-off families do attend kindergarten, while form the middle class families they get not so good kindergarten facilities and then moving to the population living near or below the poverty line their children almost lack kindergarten education completely. And government has the focus on primary education in their policies. (Hussain, and Sultan, 2010).

While looking at the current system in this regard the issues and loops can be observed where as the consideration of the government regarding kindergarten education can also be seen. According to the respondents of the interviews the following aspects of the system have been highlighted:

4.1. Main authorities looking after kindergarten education in Karachi:

For providing any initial policy with respect to initializing the kindergarten institute there is no particular policy presented from any government authority. But the registration is required in this regard for the institute which can be done by submitting the detailed Performa about the institute to Sindh board. The policies have been made by school’s

Quality assurance policies of Kindergarten Education in Karachi ...

management which are usually made in accordance to the managements' perspective. Whereas other requirements are considered by Sindh board which includes the description of the building, furniture, training equipment, curriculum details, decoration (with respect to kindergarten requirements) and faculty should be mentioned in the Performa. In all these details also the basic emphasize of the authority is in on the faculty and the available human resources of the institutes. Where the faculty must be trained for kindergarten teaching and other relevant people also must have the required skills enhanced for running the kindergarten institutes.

4.2. The process of implementation:

The implementation of the policies presented in the Performa to Sindh board relating to the kindergarten is usually checked by different ways. Such as the inspection by IOI (Inspector of Institution) or inspection by the team of PMA (Pakistan Montessori Association). Such authorities have the check. According to the process in case of absence of any requirement by the authority the institution gets the Notification at the beginning, if not implemented again the reminder is sent to the institute and they rechecked if the requirement has been done or not and if there is still the lack of fulfillment of the requirements the authority cancels the registration or may keep the renewal of the registration withheld until the requirements are met. The registration should get the renewal from the government authority after every three years in case of kindergarten. But unfortunately, this process is not been implemented everywhere, at some places its just a simple check without any particular considerations of proper process.

4.3. Considerations of the founders:

As Karachi is big city with high number of population. So different regions may vary the experiences of the process as the lack of uniformity is highly evident in kindergarten institutes. While the founders of kindergarten in the city are there with different considerations regarding the policies, issues and betterment. Such as the requirement of the proper process of registration, rechecking and inspection should be presented online for the management bodies of kindergarten institutes, they must have their own separate website as the number of kindergarten institutes in Karachi is high and this is in need of proper guidance for initializers. The requirement of physical resources could be decreased so that more institutes can easily provide the kindergarten education from private sector as there is no consideration of kindergarten institutes in public sectors yet. The curriculum must be improved and try to divert the system towards the digitalized world specifically for kindergarten as technology and digital system are now the necessity for any education system, and while talking about kindergarten obviously they are the fresh learners, so this would be very impactful to include digital and technical resources to enhance the learning capabilities of the fresh learners of the city. Also in case of keeping the track of good quality throughout the given time of inspection and rechecking the institution must be given the quality maintenance certification this will help firstly to motivate the management team and also the standards can be maintain more easily and evidently.

5. Contribution of The Study:

This study has been done with the perspective that the present loops in the education system specifically related to Kindergarten education in Karachi city can be minimized. The requirement of policies and their implementations are also been highlighted so that the

Quality assurance policies of Kindergarten Education in Karachi ...

profound scenario can be presented in this regard. The phenomenological research has been adopted in order to understand the current situation of kindergarten institutions in different regions of the city. The study reveals the importance of the kindergarten education and the possible steps are also presented in order to overcome the current issues described by the experienced personnel in the relative field.

6. Conclusion:

The concept of Early childhood education is vital in the development of a child, but still this can be seen that in Pakistan this concept is not considered as vital as it is. Even in research field not so much of research work has been done in this regard. It can be said that the reason behind this is not specified to Pakistan only, but overall in most developing countries the awareness and familiarization is required for public to understand the significance of Kindergarten education. This can also have another perspective that the government also is not paying much attention towards kindergarten education, instead the all the policies in this regard has been presented highlighting the importance of Primary education. (Murtaza, 2011). Although while realizing the importance of Kindergarten education specially it's effect on child's achievements and progress, provision was presented in National Education policy 1998-2010. That the learning year of primary education will be increased and Katchi will be added as a formal class. However, no implementation is evident which is mainly due to lack of resources and other issues. Right now the emphasize of the Government is on primary education. this was discussed in 2000, UNESCO, Education for all that once the desired target for primary education will be achieved the further priority will be kindergarten education.

Specifically, in Karachi although there are several kindergarten institutes available now but still the lack of policies given by official authorities and the required implementation of the policies or defined focuses is affecting the kindergarten institutions. Among those institutes some of them are able to cope up with acceptable standards of kindergarten some of them are lacking specially the trained teachers and the child friendly and hygienic environment. This situation is making the situation even worse as it is deeply impactful on the child's mental and physical development.

Spreading the awareness and initializing new concepts of kindergarten education can have fruitful consequences towards the betterment of the current position of kindergarten education in Pakistan. (Arshad, & Zamir, 2018).

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