

## **Implementation of Early Childhood Education in Balochistan: Policy, problem and Issues:**

By

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### **Abstract:**

*The national education policy 2009 in Pakistan emphasize the implementation of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in public schools and advised to appoint teachers for the achievement of students learning outcomes. The basic objective of this research was to identify the key issues in the implementation of Early Childhood Education; curriculum was formulated in 2007 and implemented in 2009. This research study was based on qualitative and quantitative research method. The total Population was Early Childhood Education centers of district Quetta including Zarghoon and Chiltan town. Areas of the Quetta are the focus of this study. The data was collected from educational managers, head teachers and teachers. The data was collected from 36 teachers, 15 head teachers and 10 educational managers through questionnaires and interviews, the quantitative data analyzed through SPSS and the results were presented in the shape of tubular and graphic form. The findings of the research showed that the overall enrollment was 40 To 50 students in each ECE class. It was concluded that some obstacles such as: Budget allocation, instructional, professional development for teachers, classrooms and teacher's appointment. It was suggested that the education department should arrange trainings for teachers, monitoring system should be strong for ECE centers and educational policy regarding early childhood education (ECE) should implemented with its actual spirit.*

**Keywords:** Childhood Education, Early Childhood Education, Early Grades, ECE curriculum, Formal Trainings, Infant Schools, Students Learning Outcomes.

**Introduction:** Since establishment, Pakistan, is facing political, social and economic problems confrontation which leading to poverty and social disparities. The low level of achievement and high dropout rate in primary level has been a serious problem. The allocation of huge resources made by the government. In Pakistan international donors

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are steps in the right direction to control and reduce dropout rate and enhance the quality of education in the Balochistan. A number of interventions have been launched to improve access, reduce of dropout enhance the quality education. Various measures taken in this regard include building constructions, provision of text books, training of teachers and other facilities.

The focus of educators is in introducing early childhood education is to keep children how to read, foundation conceptions in the lessons and that would support teachers and engaging students in the process of learning to increase children achievements. The education related to early childhood have been popular in last few years and recognized also by the government. In this regard a considerable amount has been spent on early education recently due to the positive impacts on students pertaining to their success in future (U.S Education department of Education, Health and Human Services in 2011). In childhood classrooms the concentration must be put on appropriate practices of development integrating children social, physical, emotional as well as cultural development with diversity of population. Literacy being a fundamental skill letting the children in developing basic abilities. This is the responsibility of teachers that they must plan instruction of literacy reflecting the stages of development of child and allowing the engagement of interested children in the process of learning and problem solutions.

The National Policy for Education 2009, Pakistan also emphasizes on the education of teachers and associated it instructional quality methodology inside the classrooms. As mostly citizens of the country are deprived of the fundamental right to get education, they do not become independent and cannot live in the environment which would certainly affect social economic setup. According to Shaheen (2013), the deficiency of education paves the way to corruption, feudal system and deprived economy etc. Therefore the people will not be able to elect good persons for government and would suffer their own lives as the state of mind and attitude cannot be able to change only if provided with education. ( P. 79-80, 84)

Saeed (2013) revealed that premature child care and education is thought to be the foremost foundation for the development of human being. Despite persuasive case for an impartial early child development plan, there include various aims related to health and education. In Pakistan about two hundred million children of less than 5 years age in the poor families are unable to fulfill the potential for the development because of the factors like poverty, meager health facilities and improper opportunities related to learning. The association among early child care and among education are solid and

mutual reinforcement. The linguistic, and the social abilities that develop among children pave the ways towards development and also for enduring the process of learning as well as wellbeing. Convincing evident by economists, neuroscientists, mentors as well as health related professionals illustrates the strong impression or affect related to good quality early child development intrusions on instant conclusion for the children as well as mothers and definitely families. In spite of these proofs the progress related to the expansion of early child development provision had been realized as very slow usually due to the indifference among government and developing agencies, rivalry for scarcity of resources or from other levels related to education etc. ( p. 01)

### **Statement of the Problem:**

It is very unfortunate that Early Childhood Education has not been considered in its real spirit by the public sector in Pakistan earlier. This sector was neglected for many years. The small children's were not able to achieve their students learning outcomes and the benchmark' were not achieved which were identified in national curriculum 2006. Now the government of Pakistan has introduced new curriculum for Early Childhood Education. The Researcher is keenly interested in knowing the causes which are blocking the way of proper implementation ECE Policy 2009 in Quetta city.

### **Objectives:**

- To identify obstacles and their courses in the implementation of Early Childhood Education Policy 2009 in Balochistan.
- To identify the key issues in the implementation of National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, 2007 and Early Childhood Education Policy, 2009.
- To know whether early childhood education (ECE) Policy, 2009 and Curriculum, 2007 have been implemented on the real footings in Quetta city.
- To make recommendation for the improvement of ECE in Balochistan.

### **Justification:**

This study justified the following deliberations;

1. The collected data may provide fruitful findings and this may create awareness regarding early childhood education among the parents, teachers, and general public.

2. This research covered all aspects and recommendations about early childhood education schooling in Balochistan.
3. The final report can be useful to review early childhood education Policy 2009 suggesting new approaches to accomplish task successfully in the concerned province.
4. This study can be useful for all the concerned in their respective fields enhancing their skills and improving in-depth understanding in early childhood education as well as well in research.

**Research Question:**

- What are the obstacles in the implementation of Early Childhood Education Policy 2009 in Balochistan?
- What sorts of facilities are provided by education department to early childhood education (ECE) centers?
- How the obstacles can be removed?

**Subsidiary Question:**

1. Did obstacles occur during the implementation of ECE Policy 2009 in Quetta city?
2. Is children friendly learning environment available at ECE level in Quetta city?
3. Is Jean Piaget's Theory for Cognitive Development being followed by head teachers and teachers of the concerned level?
4. Is expected learning outcomes for children from age birth to 5 years old achieved successfully?
5. Are learning resources at ECE level contextualized and localized properly?

**Limitation and Delimitations:**

The national education policy 2009 having five policy actions. So the study was limited to find out the implementation of these five policy actions. The author had to collect data and complete this thesis in very short time. The higher education authorities had very busy schedule so the researchers was bound to collect information in limited time.

**Research Tools:**

This research study was based on qualitative cum quantitative research method. Secondary data and three types of questionnaire specified for higher authorities of education department, head teachers and teachers were the research tools for the study.

**Respondents:**

The following were the respondents for the study;

- Education Secretary
- Deputy Secretary (Education)
- Director PITE
- Director BOC
- District Education Officer (DEO)
- Deputy District Education Officers (DDEOs)
- Head Masters/ Head Mistress (HM)
- School Teachers

**Population and Sample:**

Population for the study is District Quetta and the sample consisted of 10 educational managers, 36 teachers and 15 head teachers for this study.

**Literature Review:**

It is claimed by UNICEF (2011), that the notion of early child care education is having the potential to afford cognitive result, however it seems to be difficult to envisage the quality instruction may occur in dire environments of education. According to Keenan (2009), In such circumstances one has to latest try to reach every child which does looks like impossible. Like if you have enough strength in class like 70 children per class you must do your best to teach the best level of learning to at least 3/4th and if you are not having enough books you must try to be creative like using charts instead to relaying just on text books. Although early child care as well as education is a basic educational agenda, you must evaluate the existing situation of educational system. (p. 6,7,8,9,10,12)

Education of early child referring from the birth of child till 8 years of his/her life. The phrase widely used as early child care as well as education pointing to a variety related to various processes as well variety of mechanisms for sustainable and supportive development in the early lives of children. It includes proper education, physical, social as well as kind care along with rational motivation, health and nutrition care. It also requires family support, requirement of community to pay a supportive role in the healthy development of children. The initial 8 years in the life of children is the time of incredible growth as well as development. (Kim et al., 2012, p. 4,5,7,9, 12)

The nationwide policy of 2009 towards education is an ingredient part related to educational policies. The 18th amendment led towards the most important shifting related to the entitlements, making of decisions as well responsibilities throughout the federation, dictating evaluation of nationwide policy of education 2009. The inclusive suggestion related to early child education includes:

- All children from the ages 3 to 5 must be enrolled in early child education program
- All schools have to arrange separate early child education classrooms and that must be equipped fully by learning aids.
- There must introduce special early child education certification related to teacher's trainings.
- The hiring of early child education teachers must be on long term basis
- Budget has to be increased and allocated towards the program of early child education.
- Appointment of educational councilors be made so they can be able to deal with the requirements of early age children as well as helping and supporting their mental along with emotional growth. (National Education Policy. 2016. p . 4,9,19)

Nearly 15 percent population of Pakistan is of 5 years of age or below. According to the report by ASER (2012) about 39 percent children are going to or attend several forms of early child education programs the age group of which is from 3 to 5 years in the rural areas whereas about 62 percent in urban vicinity. Worldwide the worth of early child development is from 0 to 8 years and early child education is about 3 to 5 years and these have been acknowledged as serious investment towards helping children as well as families to engage as early in the survival stage of children along with protection, growth as well as transition from pre-schooling to primary level education. The history of early child education in Pakistan can be traced since the inception and country's first conference on education held in November 1947.

The existing policy related to education in Pakistan is having a significant impact on early child education as well as an element of EFA objectives; the government is too indomitable towards mainstreaming early child education into the system of education. The initial focus is given to most deprived children. The national policy of education as agreed five policy procedures in reference to early child education: (Primary Education Board .2009, pg 1-2,4)

According to Mahmud (2014), Pakistan being a low income state with having estimated population of about 180.7 million. The country is

classified as transient and deprived state which is weakened through political feudalism, lesser foreign investments, increasing population as well as considerable incursion. The early years in the life of a child are very important towards psychosocial, knowledge acquiring as well as educational growth. Various researchers analyze that the experience gained in the early days of life can contribute in reduction of poverty and improvement in social mobility from generation to generation. In Pakistan the early child education do not take into account the researches made by specialists in the field of early child education. More specifically no finances are allocated by education departments of districts one of the reason is they are not have sufficient funds that are received by federal level. However early child education have been benefited greatly by private schoolings through presenting nursery, KG levels of education, the matter is that these institutions are mainly located in the urban areas of the country. Now the early child education is regaining importance in the education system of Pakistan as well as policy makers following EFA goals. Towards the commitments that are made by Pakistan is in a stage of developing an inclusive national action plan which is formulated on long term scaffold. According to the plan about 40000 early child education centers will be established and almost 3000 early child education teachers will be appointed and annually trained as well. For younger age students the day to day challenges while arriving at school, working with various groups as well as learning to read and write can be easier if an association is made with teachers along with the sense of security. Among various other challenges Pakistan has made important institutional progress over past years. In this regard the national action plan has become vital related to NEP 2009. ( p. 6,7,8,9,16)

In most of Pakistani schools the younger children exceptionally receive the opportunities or options of their own choices in expressing creative ideas as well as thoughts. They are being exposed towards tracing letters, copying what is written on blackboard and filling of workbooks. The creative writing abilities are not what is written by student but while writing is involved through continuous process of thinking as children are luminous thinkers. On the contrary the situation in our country is entirely different like teachers act like controllers; they are transmitting or can be said pushing their knowledge to students. The writing abilities are although a significant component in early child development.

**Methodology:****Research Design:**

This research study was based on mixing approach i-e qualitative cum quantitative.

**Sample:**

The total Population was ECE center of district Quetta including Zarghoon and Chiltan town. The ECE centers were located in the difference areas of Quetta city and surroundings. The data was collected from educational managers, teachers and head teachers. The samples were selected randomly. The educational managers include district education officers, deputy district education officers, director BOC and additional and deputy secretary concerned with education department. The data was collected from 36 teachers, 15 head teachers and 10 educational managers

**Instrument:**

Two types of questionnaire and one interview questions were distributed among the respondents. Each questionnaire consisted of 20 questions. And there were 15 interview questions. The data through interview was collected from educational manager

**Data Analysis:**

The collected data was analyzed through SPSS and the results were presented in the shape of tubular and graphic form.

**Analysis and Results:**

Table 4.1.1 shows appointment of teachers as an ECE teacher.

Status	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Teachers	4.1667	36	1.50238
Total	4.1667	36	1.50238



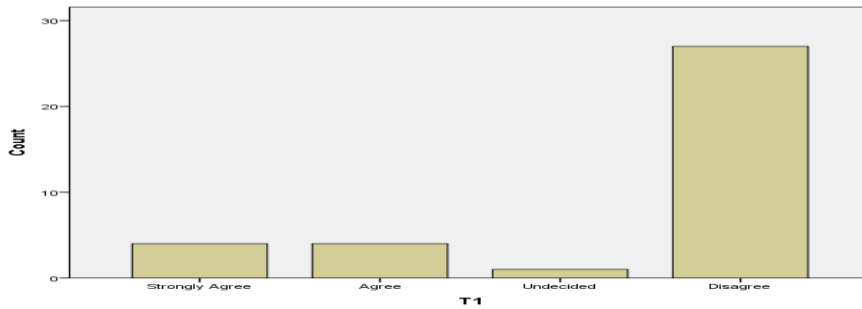


Figure 4.1.1 shows appointment of teachers as an ECE teacher.

**Analysis 4.1.1**

The mean analysis of the above table 4.1.1 shows that all the teachers disagree with this question that they were appointed as an ECE teacher.

Table 4.1.2 shows teachers satisfaction with physical resources provided for ECE.

status	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
teachers	2.9722	36	1.55813
Total	2.9722	36	1.55813

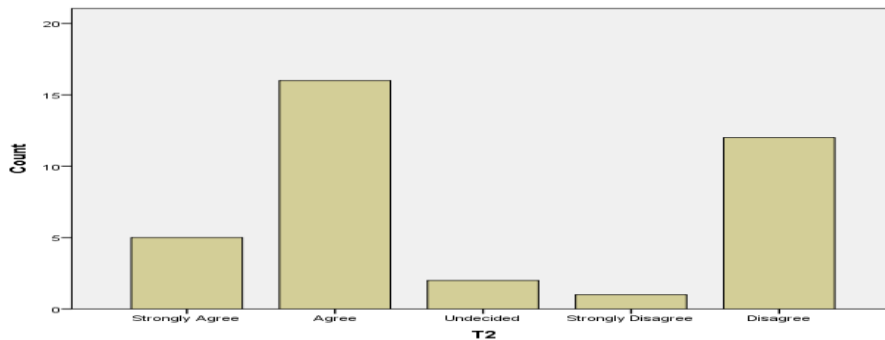


Figure 4.1.2 shows teachers satisfaction with physical resources provided for ECE.

**Analysis 4.1.2**

The above table 4.1.2 shows that teachers agreed with this point that they are satisfied with physical resources provided to ECE and the teachers are using these physical resources for the achieving of educational goal specified for Early Childhood Education.

**Discussion:**

There are many challenges that inhabiting the provision of education at primary level of schooling are obvious in discussions that are made with teachers as well as administrators of government schoolings.

While discussion with teachers about various challenges in developing countries, they frequently responded: The main and important challenges faced by teachers of ECE classes are the lacking of teaching material as well as infrastructure, lesser spaces and not having enough books. (Keenan, 2009. pg .6,7,8,9,10,12).

In most of the government schools there are no separate teachers available for early child care and education whereas there noticed an increase of teacher in private sector schooling. The country is in dire need of having proper primary level of education, proper curricula, allocation of funds, incorporated programs, appropriate networking as well as public private affiliation. (Shami, et al., 2009. Pg . 238-240,246,247)

Early Childhood Education in Pakistan has not been recognize formally. The provincial government had no policy for early childhood education. The public schools starts education from Kachi class. Which is an early schooling stage for small children aged between four to six. But the aims and objectives of this class and teaching methodologies are different from early childhood education system. In education policy 2009 the early childhood education was included and the funds were issued to all provinces. Now it is the duty of provinces to utilize the funds establish early childhood education system in all schools. The findings of the question that what is the number of ECE centers/schools in Quetta, shows that there were most probably 96 to 106 ECE centers/schools for both boys and girls in Quetta district. In which 42 to 52 centers are specified for boys and 54 centers are specified for girls. The findings of the question that what is the total number of students in ECE classes shows that there were most probably about 40 To 50 students in each ECE class. The findings of the question that which type of physical resources were provided by government for ECE. The answer to this question was that no such facilities were provided by government to ECE classes but some normal class rooms were changed into ECE classrooms and some Physical resources were provided by the ESP like Charts, Portfolios. Some class rooms were made by an organization named (Save the children organization) SCO.

### **Conclusion:**

The main policy actions of the national education policy regarding early childhood education are to improve the quality of early childhood education by providing stimulating and interactive environment to children in early grades. The age criteria should be 3 to 5 years and the ECE center must be provided to primary schools with additional teachers and budget. Two years training for teachers regarding ECE became must and necessary requirement and the training should be based on ECE curriculum. There is a very limited number of ECE center in Quetta. The few ECE center were working in old and damaged building of primary schools. New rooms for ECE classes were constructed in limited number of schools. In Quetta national education policy 2009 regarding ECE is implementing gradually. The findings of the question that how many teachers were appointed for ECE, the results revealed that most probably 28 numbers of teachers were appointed for ECE in Quetta. And totally 96 teachers were concerned with ECE. 68 teachers were untrained. The findings of the question that what were the main funding agencies concerned with the promotion of ECE shows that the authorities those were providing funding to ECE were UNICEF, IDSP, SCSPEB and save the children organization (SCO). These organizations are in coordination with Balochistan Education department. According to education department 500 ECE centers will be established in near future. According to current finding the government is still failed to fulfil the target of ECE centers/schools. Political interference and incapable bureaucracy is the basic reason behind this failure. According to government authorities some obstacles faced by the government authorities regarding the implementation of ECE such as:

1. Budget allocation
2. Provision of instructional material
3. Training of teachers
4. Construction of classrooms
5. Appointment of teachers.

The reasons behind the obstacles for the implementation of ECE were as follows:

1. Teachers trainings
2. The government is still confused to accept as their own property.
3. Poor understanding and implementation strategy at DEA level.
4. Lack of co-ordination and fragmentation among concerned directors.

The education department has very limited budget for ECE program the future of ECE is totally dependent on donor agencies, provision of physical facilities, construction of new rooms and training programs for teachers is completely depended on the donor or project based support. The community has supported the ECE in public schools

**Recommendation:**

- The Education Department of the government of Baluchistan should introduce ECE classes in all public schools in the premises of Primary level.
- ECE classes need budgets and government should provide this budget to all centers to make the program successful.
- The education department should arrange teacher's trainings.
- Monitoring system should be strong for ECE centers.
- Policy of the ECE 2009 may be implemented with its actual spirit from the department of education.
- For ECE classes, government should take ownership and support it.
- ECE policies at provisional level need to be promoted after 18<sup>th</sup> amendment.
- PTSMCs and community role must be strengthened on regular basis.
- Supervisory staff responsibilities be reviewed and matched with ECE.
- BOC and PITE should introduce research projects regarding ECE center and should find its weaknesses and strength.
- Non-government organizations should build strong communication system with education department.
- The curriculum for ECE should be revived from time to time keeping in view the needs and requirement of children.
- More trained teachers should be appointed by government at ECE centers.
- The directorate for primary level should be established separately.
- The management of ECE centered should be under control of primary directorate.
- The teachers appointed for ECE centers should be highly qualified.
- Teachers without having teachers' professional degrees should not be appointed at ECE centers.

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