

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE SCHOOL READINESS OF
PRESCHOOLERS EXPOSED TO CONTEMPORARY PRESCHOOL
CURRICULUM AND A NEED BASED DESIGNED PRESCHOOL
CURRICULUM**

(Study supported by UGC Major Research Project Funding)

**Dr Rajalakshmi M.S., Associate Professor, Department of ECEA, Smt. V.H.D.
Central Institute of Home Science and Ms. Mythri D, Research Fellow**

ABSTRACT

Globally, school readiness is gaining currency as a viable strategy to close the learning gap and improve equity in achieving lifelong learning and full developmental potential among young children. School readiness has been linked with positive social and behavioural competencies in adulthood as well as improved academic outcomes in primary and secondary school, both in terms of equity and performance. A potential avenue for improving school readiness among young children is through early childhood education through its curriculum.

There are many different types of preschools all with their own curriculums and schedule of activities. Each type addresses various areas of a child's development, such as motor skills, social and emotional development, oral language, print knowledge, phonological skills and math concepts. However, there is a lack of evidence of the effects of these curricula on children's school readiness.

The present study was taken up to assess the early environments offered by different types of preschool programs, their preparation of preschoolers for formal school readiness and also assess the influence of a need based designed curriculum.

The present study assumed that today there exist different types of pre-school programs; the curriculum offered in these different pre-school programs is "content centric"; the curriculum stresses on memorization of facts; The curriculum in these

programs is designed to address a majority of the children population and that there is a lack of formalized pre- school curriculum in the current scenario.

The study hypothesised that there would be no significant difference in the preschool environment of preschools offering different types of curriculum; no significant difference in the academic component of school readiness of preschoolers attending different types of preschool programs; no significant difference in the behaviour and emotional component of school readiness of preschoolers attending different types of preschool programs and also there will be no significant difference in the school readiness of children exposed to the need based designed program.

The research design was carried out in 11 phases. Sampling was carried out in two phases: The first phase involved selection of the preschools for the study and the second phase involved selection of the preschoolers for the study.

The Early childhood environment rating scale developed by Thelma Harms, Richard M Clifford, and Debby Cryer, published in 2005; Kaufman Survey of Early Academic and Language skills (K-SEALS) and Preschool Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale (PreBERS) were the tools shortlisted for the study.

Data collection for the present study was carried out in four phases: Assessment and rating of the early childhood environment in selected preschools offering different types of preschool programs; control School data collection for assessing their formal school readiness; Introduction of the designed curriculum for one academic year and Assessment of formal school readiness of children exposed to the designed curriculum.

Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was carried out. Upon testing the

hypotheses using the data obtained and applying statistical analysis the hypotheses formulated had to be rejected. Taking circumstances and situations into consideration, a need based curriculum works best as this study has shown, although the long term impact/effects of this research will be available after a few years, when a follow up study is carried out.

Key Words: School readiness, Curriculum, early environment.