TOWARDS AN INDIGENOUS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULUM: LOCATING INDIAN THOUGHT

A Thesis submitted to
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(Human Development and Family Studies)

Research Guide
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Vadodara

February 2013

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Certificate

In accordance with the statement under O. Ph. D.: 8, of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, this is to certify that the research titled **'Towards an Indigenous Early Childhood Education Curriculum: Locating Indian Thought'** has been carried out independently by **Namita Bhatt** under the guidance of **Prof. Prerana Mohite**, in partial fulfillment of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development and Family Studies**; and is her original and bonafide work. It is further stated that the doctoral research was carried out fulfilling the requisite attendance criteria as per O. Ph.D.:3(i) of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara.

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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Title	Page No.
1	Abstract	1-2
2	Chapter 1- Introduction and Review of Literature	3-32
3	Chapter 2- Methodology	43-69
4	Chapter 3- Results & Discussion	70-167
5	Recommendations	168
6	A Special Note	169
7	References	170-183
8	Appendices	
	A. Introductory note and consent form (English)	184
	B. Participant information form (English): Parent	185
	C. Participant information form (English): Educator	186
	D. Participant information form (English): ECCE teacher	187
	E. Curriculum ideology inventory (English) (adapted from Schiro, 2008)	188-191
	F. Semi structured interview schedule (English)	192
	G. Introductory note and consent form (Gujarati)	193
	H. Participant information form (Gujarati): Parent	194
	I. Participant information form (Gujarati): Educator	195
	J. Participant information form (Gujarati): ECCE teacher	196
	K. Curriculum ideology inventory (Gujarati) (adapted from Schiro, 2008)	197-200
	L. Semi structured interview schedule (Gujarati)	201
	M. Permission from Michael Schiro to use/modify the curriculum ideology inventory	202

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page No.
1	Indigenous education vs. Formal education	20
2	Curriculum ideology inventory sorting form	64
3	Percentage rank frequency table (dummy)	66
4	Purpose of early childhood education: comprehensive overview	95
5	Views on children: comprehensive overview	97
6	Perspectives on learning: comprehensive overview	100
7	Concepts of teaching: comprehensive overview	103
8	Conception of knowledge: comprehensive overview	107
9	Beliefs about assessment: comprehensive overview	110
10	Percentage rank frequency table: views on purpose of early childhood education	127
11	Percentage rank frequency table: views on children	132
12	Percentage rank frequency table: perspectives on learning	137
13	Percentage rank frequency table: concepts of teaching	142
14	Percentage rank frequency table: conception of knowledge	147
15	Percentage rank frequency table: beliefs about assessment	152
16	Most preferred curricular ideologies: comparative overview	154

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Title	Page No.
1	Conceptual framework of the study	39
2	Sample distribution	47
3	Purpose of early childhood education: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers	82
4	Views on children: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers	84
5	Thoughts on learning: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers	86
6	Thoughts on teachers/teaching: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers	89
7	Thoughts on knowledge: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers	91
8	Thoughts on assessment: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers	93
9	Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: purpose of early childhood education	126
10	Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: views on children	131
11	Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: perspectives on learning	136
12	Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: concepts of teaching	141
13	Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: conception of knowledge	146
14	Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: beliefs about assessment	151

ABSTRACT

Early childhood education curriculum has long been a subject of philosophical discussions and debates. Owing to tremendous diversities in children's needs, cultural traditions, parenting practices and family contexts a variety of assumptions surround its conceptualization and practice. Little attention has been paid to examination of the assumptions of national early childhood documents and views of educators, practitioners and parents regarding curriculum and the role these might play in early childhood education curriculum and pedagogy. Ancient Indian concepts of education, learning, and human development share the closest conceptual and cultural origins to its people. The radical ideas of Indian thinkers and philosophers epitomize Indian thought on education by binding the fundamental unities of Indian culture with a universal outlook. A inquiry into meanings ascribed to purpose and aims of early childhood education, views regarding children, concepts of learning, thoughts on knowledge, views on teachers/teaching and views on assessment would throw light on where preschool goals and practices comes from, what and whose purposes they intend to serve and whether they are functional in the local context.

The research study thus aimed to gain deeper insight into understanding the way in which indigenous knowledge enters into thinking about children and which guides practice with children. The study attempted to 'locate Indian thought' by analysis of the assumptions of national early childhood documents and views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children pertaining to purpose and aims of early childhood education, views regarding teachers/teaching, views on children, concept of learning, thoughts on knowledge, and views on assessment. Data was collected through conceptual overviews, curriculum ideology inventory (adapted from Schiro, 2008) and an open ended semi structured interview schedule. The preferred

curricular ideologies were computed through Chi-Square Test of Homogeneitywhile the qualitative descriptions were subject to content analysis. The results revealed significant points of departures in the assumptions of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children regarding early childhood education curriculum. Significant points of convergences were identified with the basic philosophy of developmentally appropriate practice, yet major departures were also evident. Critical investigations of assumptions to the foundations of curriculum revealed the potential within the existing philosophy underpinning early childhood curriculum and pedagogy to accommodate and strengthen its position to suit the cultural context, more so in terms of organisation of knowledge and practice with children. The results also throw light on the finer nuances of application of a developmentally appropriate curriculum in the Indian context and build a guiding framework which better equips the practitioner to create a curriculum which is able to respond to the cultural realities of children.

INTRODUCTION
AND
REVIEW
OF
LITERATURE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

पिण्डे पिण्डे मतिर्भिन्ना कुण्डे कुण्डे नवं पय: |
जातौ जातौ नवाचारा: नवा वाणी मुखे मुखे ||

Each person (pindah) has different aptitude / opinion.

Water in different ponds differs.

Different communities have their own ways of life.

Each mouth speaks different language.

The ancient Sanskrit Subhaashita (wise saying) above emphasizes that there is diversity in this world and no two things are same. We must accept that all cannot be the same. Ancient wisdom perhaps helps understand the existence of competing images and discourses surrounding the *'young child'*.

Thoughts, policies and practices pertaining to early childhood education curriculum have long been a subject of philosophical discussions and debates. Owing to tremendous diversities in children's needs, cultural traditions, parenting practices and family contexts a variety of assumptions surround its conceptualization and practice. Often, the debates revolve around what education for young children actually is or should be. Childhood education might be favoured as primarily a preparation for later schooling, while some might view it as a support to children's learning and development.

There has been a global recognition of the early years of a child's life to be the most critical for lifelong development. Recent research in the field of neuroscience has provided convincing evidence that *"experience-based brain development in the early years sets neurological and biological pathways that affect health, learning and behavior throughout life".* (Mustard, 2006) Research also suggests that in the absence of enriching environment/experiences the chances of the brain developing to its full potential maybe irreversibly reduced.

A stimulating and enabling environment helps a child by building a sound foundation for a lifetime. Investing in the educational and psychosocial development during the early years is as important as ensuring health and nutritional inputs for a sound body and mind. Learning and development are naturally cultural (Rogoff, 2003). A great extent of children's learning is shaped by the context and culture they live in. Thus, if early childhood education programs aim to create conditions in which children can thrive, a basic prerequisite for learning must be addressed. Cultural appropriateness thus assumes equal importance along with developmental appropriateness. Increasing importance is now being paid to optimization of programs to address not only the child, but also the child's milieu.

There is world-wide acknowledgment to the validity of local, indigenous ways of knowing about, and working with, children. This is evidenced in the goals for quality education formulated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's Education for All initiative. Many international development experts are calling for educational programs that are rooted in indigenous knowledge of local cultures while also providing the knowledge and skills the people may need to live in a global world. (Cleghorn & Prochner, 2003)

From earliest years of their lives, children replicate the culture of their primary caregivers and peers. Curricula for early childhood education are cultural constructions grounded in the world views, beliefs, and norms of those who conceptualize the curricula. (Boven & Morohashi, 2002) The social ecologies of which children may be a part are continuously reflected by teachers, parents and significant elders. This is evident through their encouragement of particular response styles, forms of interaction, ways of understanding the events, and enactments of implicit beliefs.

Culture is embodied in processes of communication. The meaning and value of cultural knowledge and practices are always reinterpreted within cultural communities, implicitly and explicitly, individually and in dialogue. Encouraging recognition of the value of indigenous knowledge should be understood as valuing the social process of knowledge transmission and the ongoing social construction of individual and group identities (Boven & Morohashi, 2002)

Individuals creatively and selectively recall, use, and shape both the accumulated wisdom and traditions of their culture of origin and the process of their own enculturation (i.e., of their own valuing, learning about, interpreting, and reproduction of that culture perhaps in traditional or in new, hybridized forms). Thus, encouragement should be given to emphasizing the **'generation of indigenous knowledge'** or the *'***social reconstruction of indigenous knowledge,'** rather than the 'transmission of indigenous knowledge.' (Boven & Morohashi, 2002)

National or state/provincial ministries in most countries typically issue only guidelines about early childhood programming and do not mandate a rigid national curriculum for teachers to deliver. The reluctance to offer detailed requirements is closely related to the nature of early childhood education curriculum and our understandings of society, young children and their learning (Bennett, 2004). On one hand, the early childhood education curriculum is expected to be holistic and include children's overall development. On the other there are dramatic diversities in children's needs, cultural traditions, parenting practices, and family expectations from one context to another. Very few current theories of early childhood care and education would advocate an instructional curriculum and yet in many education systems there is an emphasis on such an approach (OECD, 2006).

Early childhood education is a conceptual framework, with the potential for being interpreted as creating unique learning environments or cultures for learning. They have the potential to instigate both positive and negative consequences for children. The contemporary characteristic of early childhood education imparts it a certain ambiguity, especially when it intersects with current societal assumptions, concerns and expectations. Thus it is crucial to examine where early childhood education goals and practices comes from, what and whose purposes they intend to serve and whether they are functional in the local context.

The nature and pattern of education encapsulate a broad variety of factors. Within the realms of a temporal context, the ethnic factor, the geographical factor and the religious factor perhaps are the strongest determinants of the *nature* of education. Whereas, the *pattern* of education maybe largely determined by economics, socio-political climate and global trends. Stephen (2006) notes that curriculum is a dynamic

component of education; it refers to a way of structuring learning experiences, an organized program of activities, opportunities and interactions that is usually derived from some explicit or implicit ideological or theoretical understanding about how children learn. In addition, curriculum and pedagogy are closely linked; pedagogy will be influenced by the beliefs about learning that underpin curriculum. In turn, curriculum will be influenced by pedagogy (Stephen, 2006)

Curriculum undergoes changes in response to the needs and values of life in any society. Thus, it must be analyzed in context.

Early Childhood Education Curriculum: Contemporary Perspectives

Focus on early childhood education has increased significantly in the past decades. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development report (OECD, 2001) indicates that all member countries had committed to a national focus on early childhood education. The World Bank, UNESCO and other international organizations have invested heavily in early childhood education around the world (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). Different philosophies and approaches to children, childhood and learning are reflected in various forms of early childhood services and programs available for children and families.

Stephen (2006) notes that "the kinds of educational experiences offered to children reflect the expectations held by society in general and practitioners and policy makers in particular about appropriate outcomes and goals" (p. 5). The expected outcomes are, in turn, derived from ideas about children, childhood and learning and socio-political perspectives on the purpose and outcomes of educational provision in the early years (Stephen, 2006, p. 5).

Community discourses about children and childhood influence pedagogical theory and practice. The views pertaining to children have changed over time, according to different cultural constructions of the role and place of children within particular communities and societies (Cannella, 1997).

Different constructions of children, childhood and the role of early childhood education impact the constructions of those who work with children in different settings. The most obvious example of this is the notion that educators in child care and preschool settings fulfill the role of 'child minder', while educators in schools are considered to be 'teachers' (Moss, 1999). Current perspectives on early childhood curriculum are labeled as cognitivist, behaviorist, and situative/sociocultural views. Each of these each bring their own expectations of what is important in learning and knowing, how this can be accessed through teaching and how learning can best be assessed (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1996).

Cognitive Perspective

Cognitive perspectives of learning describe the changes that occur through learning as changes in an individual's ability to respond to, or understand, a particular situation (Woolfolk, 1993). According to cognitivist perspectives, people try to make sense of the environment, by attaching meaning to people, places and events. With growth and experience, children are described as developing more complex mental structures that enable them to process information and to extract meaning. This function develops over time and through experience, with children able to extract deeper and more complex meanings and understandings as they grow older and as their experiences broaden (McInerney & McInerney, 2006).

Behaviorist Perspective

The behaviorist view emphasizes learning as a process of forming associations between stimuli and responses. The strengthening or weakening of connections occurs through various forms of reinforcement (McInerney & McInerney, 2006). Early childhood educators are often thought to rely on behaviorist approaches in some of their everyday interactions. Taking away some of the desirable elements of the environment, using time-out strategies, or removing the toy children were fighting over, also relates to behaviorist principles (Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett, & Farmer, 2008). The influence of Piaget and his work remains strong in the early childhood field, largely epitomized by concepts of developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

Situative Perspective

Situative views of learning regard knowledge as distributed among people and their environment, including objects, artifacts, tools, books and the communities of which they are a part. Rather than regarding learning as a process of internalizing knowledge, Lave and Wenger (1991) situate learning as a social process of becoming a member of a sustained community of practice, such that an individual develops their identity as a member of a particular community. Collaboration among peers, or peers and more experienced others, and working to a common purpose characterizes models of situated learning.

Socio Cultural Perspectives

Socio-cultural theory, such as that of Vygotsky (1978) and Rogoff (2003) emphasize the contexts in which children are located and learning. The importance of the adult is increased significantly in programs reflecting socio-cultural programs, where practices such as attaining intersubjectivity and scaffolding are regarded as critical to effective learning (Berk, 2001; Rogoff, 2003).

Neuro-scientific Perspective

Shanker (2007, p.13) highlights a theoretical perspective impacting on early childhood education comes from the field of neuroscience. The impact of early experiences is important for future neurological development: "the child's experiences in the early years of life are pivotal for how the genes that govern various aspects of neurobiological development are expressed" and "the child's capacity to learn when she enters school is strongly influenced by the neural wiring that takes place in the early years". While it is possible, and indeed important, to conclude that "enriched, stimulating, early childhood environments" have a positive impact on children's learning, it is also important to note that "there is no biological necessity to rush and put the start of teaching earlier and earlier" (Blakemore & Frith, 2000, p. 2).

While a developmental perspective emphasizes regularities in young children's physical and psychosocial growth during early childhood, as well as their dependencies and vulnerabilities during this formative, phase of their lives, the political and economic perspective is informed by developmental principles, translated into social and educational interventions. The social and cultural perspective draws attention to

how early childhood is a constructed status and recognizes the diversities of ways it is understood and practiced. Finally, a human rights perspective reframes conventional approaches to theory, research policy and practice in a way that aims to respect young children's dignity, entitlements and their capacities to contribute to their own development.

Contemporary perspectives thus reflect recognition that the social and cultural contexts of children, families and communities contribute significantly to children's learning (Berk, 2001; Rogoff, 2003). There seems to be an awareness that approaches to learning and teaching are embedded within specific contexts and that effective pedagogy and appropriate curriculum also exist within these contexts.

Pedagogy of Early Childhood Education

The early childhood years are defined as the period from birth to age eight. It is thought to be a time of rapid change in all areas of development and learning. There are constant debates on the most effective pedagogy that covers this entire period. Within early childhood, there is reference to, 'preschoolers' and 'children in the early years of school'. Effective pedagogy tends to refer to each of these groups. However, experts disagree on a consistent pedagogy as the most appropriate for all children in all contexts.

Siraj-Blatchford, et al., (2002, p. 28) state that pedagogy refers to that set of instructional techniques and strategies which enable learning to take place and provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions

within a particular social and material context. It refers to the interactive processes between teacher and learner and to the learning environment (which includes the concrete learning environment, the family and community).

Arthur et al., (2008), maintain that within early childhood education, curriculum emerges as a contested term. Many early childhood educators shy away from notions of curriculum as a specific content area (such as mathematics or science) and use the very broad notion that curriculum is all that happens across a day within an early childhood context

Bertram and Pascal (2002), in their review of curriculum guidance offered in twenty countries, highlighted the general lack of curriculum guidelines for children in the birth to age three grouping. They noted that, across the countries reviewed, a number of
common elements were identified in the curriculum guidelines for children aged three to five years. These included:

- focus on holistic curriculum – where curriculum areas were not specifically identified as framing the curriculum
- consensus that the areas to be covered in early childhood curriculum should include social and emotional, cultural, aesthetic and creative; physical, environmental; language and literacy; and numeracy
- curriculum based on children's active engagement, particularly through play
- Focus on guiding and facilitating children's learning, rather than explicit teaching or direction and emphasis on the importance of working with parents
- awareness that there was often discontinuity between curriculum in the years

before school and the first year of school.

The following are few of the wide range of pedagogical approaches used in pre-school settings:

Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP)

DAP draws heavily on Piagetian theory and promotes children's engagement in active, self-initiated activities, supported by responsive adults. Play is regarded as one of the major vehicles for promoting learning. The design of the environment, based on the observed interests, needs and strengths of children, also contributes to children's learning (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

High/Scope curriculum

The high scope curriculum originated as a targeted early intervention program for children and families from disadvantaged communities, this program also draws heavily on Piagetian theory (Schweinhart et al., 2005). High/Scope programs emphasize pedagogy that enables children to engage with a series of key experiences across the areas of creative representation; language and literacy; initiative and social relations; movement and music; and logical reasoning. Throughout the High/Scope program, children plan their activities, engage in these and then reflect on this engagement. The role of the adult in High/Scope programs involves engaging in positive interactions and authentic dialogue with children, promoting children's involvement in planning and reflection.

Experiential education

This approach identifies two key dimensions as necessary for high quality early childhood education: emotional wellbeing and involvement (Laevers, 1994; 2000; 2003). Emotional wellbeing is evident when children's physical and emotional needs are met. The dimension of involvement is characterized by sustained concentration, intrinsic motivation and supporting children to work in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Te Whãriki

The national early childhood curriculum for New Zealand draws on socio-cultural theory, emphasizing the many different social contexts in which children live and the social, interactive nature of learning (Carr & May, 1994; Ministry of Education, 1996). Te Whãriki is based on a view of children as competent learners and communicators.

Te Whãriki outlines a holistic curriculum based on the principles of:

• empowerment

• holistic development

• family and community

• relationships

Essential areas of learning and development encompass the five strands of wellbeing; belonging; contribution; communication and exploration. Goals located within each of these strands emphasize ways in which educators can support children, rather than describing specific curriculum content or skills to be learnt.

Reggio Emilia

This approach emphasizes the role of children as competent agents in their own learning. Children's active engagement with people and resources is seen as the basis for their development of understandings and relationships which link people, ideas and the environment (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1993). The Reggio Emilia approach is characterized by emphasis on multiple forms of expression as a means of seeking and articulating understanding (the many languages of children); adults who guide, listen to and provoke children's engagement in collaborative experiences; and detailed documentation of children's engagement in experiences (Stephen, 2006).

Shulman (1999) asserts that pedagogical knowledge is itself complex, incorporating knowledge of children's learning, classroom management and organization, curriculum knowledge and appropriate use of resources. Pedagogical knowledge that informs thoughts and practice with young children primarily consists of views on purpose and aims of education, views of children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment.

The principles underpinning effective pedagogy are linked to the beliefs, visions and expectations of educators. The professional dimension of effective pedagogy requires educators to engage in informed thinking about their practice and the ability to critically question, deconstruct and reason (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999).

Different philosophies and approaches to children, childhood and learning are reflected in the many different forms of early childhood services and programs available for children and families. Community discourses about children and childhood influence pedagogical theory and practice.

Different perspectives of learning carry different expectations of what is important in learning and knowing, how this can be accessed through teaching and how learning can best be assessed (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1996). Contemporary approaches to learning incorporate elements of each of these theoretical approaches. Approaches to learning and teaching are embedded within specific contexts. Effective pedagogy and appropriate curriculum take cognizance of these contexts.

Effective pedagogical decisions, which are context based, might thus be identified through an inquiry into the meanings associated with purpose of education, views of children, learning, teaching, knowledge and assessment. Gaining a contextual perspective requires an inquiry of not only the professional dimension of pedagogy, which includes educators and early childhood teachers, but also the socio-political perspectives of national early childhood documents and the perspectives of mothers and fathers of young children.

Curriculum for Young Children: Current Discourse

The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 asserts that in the present day educational discourse of India the term 'curriculum' is one of the most ambiguous. It may be used to denote a mere subject-wise list of topics to be taught in a particular class and something that encompasses, "the total experience provided to the children in as well as out of school. In India there is a tendency to take too wide a definition of curriculum in much of recent literature. (NCF, 2005)

The National Curriculum Framework 2005, further reiterates that a critical analysis of the Indian school education system projects a monolithic system perpetuating a set of practices adopted for development of curriculum, syllabus and textbooks essentially guided by the patterns and requirements of the examination system, rather than by the needs determined by a mix of criteria based on the child's learning requirement, aims of education and the socio-economic and cultural contexts of learners. One of the key problems in the present crises of education is the burden that it imposes on children. This burden arises as much from and incoherent curriculum structure that is disassociated from the life and culture of children as from the inadequate preparation of teachers who are unable to make connections with children and respond to their needs in imaginative and dynamic ways. (NCF, 2005)

In an attempt to make a meaningful notion of curriculum it is important to note that in spite of all differences the main question that curriculum is concerned with is what sort of things ought to be taught in educational institutions. This is the question of curriculum choice.

Critics are questioning the overly dependent relationship between developmental theory and early childhood curriculum. These challenges come from the disciplines of philosophy, anthropology, linguistics, and curriculum studies, as well as early childhood education. In identifying the legitimacy of developmental theory as the primary determinant of early childhood curriculum problematic, a growing number of early childhood educators and theorists and early childhood curriculum theorists recommend that determination of educationally worthwhile experiences should be derived from discussions of our commitments, including community and societal values, and issues of equity and justice (Swadener & Kessler, 1991a)

Now, more than ever before, there is a realisation of the fact that by intellectual standards, India cannot flourish merely by importing or borrowing what is happening abroad, or by showing proficiency in solving problems that have been faced abroad. In concrete terms, this shift in thinking calls for evolving an approach to curriculum preparation based on thinking, experiences and innovations rooted in its indigenous tradition.

Ball (2010) affirms that the point is not to eschew an imported approach just because it is foreign or to favour a local approach just because it is indigenous. Rather there is a need for a critical examination of the perspectives of educators, practitioners and parents on where various preschool goals and practices have come from, what and whose purposes they are intended to serve, whether they are functional in the local context.

Curriculum and Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous knowledge refers to knowledge that is unique to a particular culture or a society. Indigenous knowledge systems consists of an integrated body of knowledge, researchers interested in learning more about traditional knowledge systems tend to focus on discrete aspects of the knowledge system. (Nakashima, Prott, & Bridgewater 2000)

Some of them can be outlined as the following:

- *Learning systems* — indigenous methods of imparting knowledge; indigenous approaches to innovation and experimentation; indigenous games; and indigenous specialists;
- *Local organizations, controls, and enforcement* — traditional institutions for environmental management; common-property management practices; traditional decision-making processes; conflict-resolution practices; traditional laws, rights, taboos, and rituals; and community controls on harvesting;
- *Local classification and quantification* — a community's definitions and classification of phenomena and local flora and fauna; and indigenous methods of counting and quantifying.

Table 1 identifies some differences between education systems based on indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge (Ulluwishewa et. al., 1997)

Table 1

Indigenous Education vs. Formal Education

Aspects of Education	Indigenous Education	Formal Education
View of Knowledge	• Sacred and secular together; includes the spiritual • Holistic and integrated - based on a whole systems view of knowledge • Stored orally and in cultural practices • Powerful predictability in local areas (ecological validity) • Less valued in distant areas	• Secular only; often excludes the spiritual • Analytical or reductionist - based on sub-sets of the whole • Stored in books and computers • Powerful predictability in natural principles (rational validity) • Weak in local use of knowledge
Objectives	• Long-term wisdom • Cultural and ecological sustainability • Practical; for use in everyday life • Integration of critical thinking and cultural values in decision making	• Short term recall • Economic sustainability • Abstract; to pass examinations • Use of logical and critical thinking in making decisions
Methods of Teaching and Learning	• Lengthy period of acquisition • Learning through experience • Teaching through example, modeling, ritual and storytelling • Tested in practical life situations	• Rapid acquisition • Learning by formal education • Teaching through abstract concepts and didactic methods • Tested artificially in examinations

Although it may not be feasible to completely reorient formal education to an indigenous system, however, there may be some lessons that can be learnt.

It would be wise to sustain indigenous knowledge and integrate it into the school curriculum where culturally and educationally appropriate. (Ulluwishewa et. al., 1997)

Curriculum for Young Children: Indian Thoughts

Ancient Indian thought is rich in both metaphysical as well as the psychological thought. Vedic thinkers were concerned not only about the order in the outer universe but also about the order of the inner world. (Kuppuswamy, 1990). The aims and organization of ancient Indian education were largely determined by the people who lived there and the character of the environment in which their inherited capacities were called into active development (Das, 1996).

A rough correspondence to the modern word of 'education' can be found in ancient Indo-Aryan literature. The word *'shiksh'* found in Vedic hymns means 'to learn to recite'. In the Brahmanic, Upanisadic and Sutra literature the word *'adhyayana'* means 'to go near' and expresses the idea of pupils going to some teacher for education. The word *'vinaya'* comes from a root meaning 'to lead out in a particular way' or 'an action in which (one) leads (oneself) in a particular manner'. Thus an idea of all sided development of man was conceived by the Indo- Aryans. The object of ancient Hindu education was made three-fold: the acquisition of knowledge, the inculcation of social duties and religious rites and above all formation of character.

Education in Ancient India was not merely concerned with the instruction of the young, nor even with the formation of habit and the development of will-power. It sought to build up the whole being of the individual and to enable him to lead the best and the highest kind of life possible for him in the circumstances in which he was

placed. Educational influences were so planned as to mould his life from the moment he was conceived to the moment of his death. (Das, 1996)

Elementary schools, as we know them today, probably did not exist in the earliest times. Even in the Sutras' there is no mention of different curricula for the different stages of education. It was left upon the teacher to mark the capacity of the pupil to enter upon a study. Authorities differ as to the earliest age for the commencement of studies. Works on astrology permitted education to begin as early as the third year. Charaka, insisted on the postponement of the school-going age to the fifth year.

The Vishnu-Purana (I, XII.18) regards the period from birth to fifth year of the child as a time for play, after which study commences. According to Kautilya, (Arthsastra) "having undergone the ceremony of tonsure the student shall learn the alphabet (lipi) and arithmetic. After investiture with the sacred thread he shall study the triple Vedas etc". However, in some cases, there was introduction to letters at the age of three and initiation to Vedic studies a few years later.

The Siksa enumerates the course of elementary study as comprising the art of writing *(lipi)*, prayers and psalms *(stuti)*, meanings of words and their mutual relationships *(nighantu)* and elementary grammar including terminations and tenses, declensions and inflections *(sabha).* The Divyabadana has reference to school-room *(lekha-sala),* to sciences taught *(ketubham),* to stories which delight the young learners *(parikatha),* to pencils used in writing *(tula)* and the abacus *(janitra)* used in teaching arithmetic.

Chinese travelers like Yuan Chwang furnish us with some idea of the curricula of studies carried on in Buddhist Monastic schools. Children began learning the alphabet and the *'siddhir-astu'* – a primer of twelve chapters. Then began the study of the five Vidyas- the *'Sabda-vidya'* (grammar), *Silpasthana-vidya* (arts and crafts), *'Chikitsa-vidya'* (medicine), *'Hetuvidya'* (logic) and *'Adhyatma-vidya'* (philosophy). Education was imparted through the medium of Pali and not through Sanskrit as was the case in Brahmanic schools.

The first Arab contacts with India brought about an advent of Madrasa Education in India. The Arab soldiers and commanders were not only fighters, but teachers and preachers as well. In medieval India, the Madrasas were established in the principal cities and towns and were mostly attached to mosques. Apart from the *Qitar*- recitation of the Quran, little is known about the early year's curricula. However, historically traced early curricula consisted of the Quran and Qirat, calligraphy, grammar, poetry, the traditions, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, geography, astronomy, Fiqh or Islamic law, Isnad- scrutiny of genealogy, biography, history, medicine and alchemy (Kaur, 1990)

The aims and objectives of education of the Muslims were similar to those of the Hindus. The basis was religion and the ideal was to produce religious-minded and pious persons. Every Maktab and Madrasa, therefore had a mosque attached to it. Their education was a blend of religious and secular instruction. Character formation was also a great objective of education. They wanted to discipline the intellect of the young and inculcate in them the essentials which should promote their moral and material improvement. Elementary education was provided in primary schools and private houses. The new student was at first introduced to the alphabet. He was taught correct

pronunciation, punctuations and signs of accents. Then he was taught to combine these letters into words and phrases. Writing was practiced on *'takhti'* with chalk pens. After teaching him reading and writing, elementary arithmetic was taught. Such schools were found almost wherever there was a mosque. (Pruthi, 2005)

When the British came to India; as merchants, interested in developing trade relations, two systems of education were in existence. One was the Brahmanical system of education and the Islamic system of education. Also present were the village schools which imparted rudimentary knowledge to the children of the village peasants, artisans and craftsmen to earn their livelihood. The Buddhist Viharas which came into existence after the death of Buddha, were organized educational institutions and were housed in erected structures where students and teachers who had renounced the world lived to achieve nirvana. These were demolished in the middle ages by Muslim invaders. The Vedic schools grew through the Guru-Shishya parampara and were able to survive the Muslim onslaughts through the patronage extended to it by the Hindu Kingdoms in North and South. (Ghosh, 2001)

The Vedic schools imparted lessons in the four Vedas- *Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva* and Six Vedangas- *Shiksha, Jyotisha, Kalpa, Nirukta, Chhanda* and *Vyakarana*, as well as in various arts and crafts including military science and ayurveda. The Vedic schools were centers of creative learning till Vedic learning was simplified and codified in various sutras to meet the challenge of Buddhism to the Brahmanical religion.

The Vedic learning was monopolized by the priestly class or the Brahmanas, the other three classes- Kshatryias, Vaishyas and Shudras- learnt military science, ayurveda and various arts and crafts. The educational requirements of the people other than these

were met by village schools or *pathshalas*, these were usually the children of peasants, artisans, craftsmen, small traders and merchants.

The medium of instruction was in regional *prakrit* and the curriculum consisted of reading, writing and arithmetic, both written and oral. Printed books were minimal and locally made slates and pencils were only equipment the pupils needed. These village schools were extremely adaptable to local environments and existed for centuries through a variety of economic conditions or political vicissitudes.

The Islamic system of education came with Muslim rulers who adopted India as their homeland. The education imparted was to meet the needs and requirements of a growing Muslim administration and a growing Muslim community increased largely through conversion of the conquered people. Arabic language was introduced to study the Quran and in the Madrasas the medium of instruction was Persian to facilitate the transportation of Persian culture and etiquettes. The subjects taught were largely irrelevant to the needs and aspirations of the conquered people (Ghosh, 2004) Aurangzeb was the first Muslim emperor to question the relevance of an education which did not inform one about the country and its people, geography and history, arts and crafts. Sanskrit was soon replaced by Persian as the court language.

The late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the British transform from merchants to rulers. This served to boost both the Vedic learning and Islamic education. On one hand the British started publishing Sanskrit manuscripts, helping Sanskrit scholars and establishing Sanskrit colleges and generally developed a love for Sanskrit learning for preserving, and cultivating the laws, literature and scriptures of the Hindus.

On the other hand, in 1771 Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrasa to impart teachings of Muslim law and jurisprudence. The East India Company assumed responsibility for the education of the people of British India and soon in 1835; Persian was replaced by English in all official works.

The British rulers did give serious thought to the education of the people, and even appointed the General Committee of Public Instruction. However, the policy they followed to revitalize the country's educational system was geared to win over the confidence of the people from the upper class of the society who had lost their political influence due to British conquest (Biswas, 1999)

The main intention of the policy is evident in the following words of Macaulay, "*We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the million whom we govern- a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue*" (Sharp, 1920) With the introduction of this policy, the primary education of people in their mother tongue shriveled.

Three distinct patterns of education were evident during the British rule. The first had a revivalist outlook. Rejection was expected for any model that was not derived from ancient heritage. There was a return to *Gurukul* system and the contents of courses were confined to *Vedic* and *Upanishadic* literature and philosophy. The second stream attempted Indigenization of education. This did not reject modern foreign learning. The aim was to make education more relevant to Indian conditions and to impart it with a nationalistic flavor. In course of time these institutions suffered a dilution of their objectives and moved towards the colonial educational system

(Sachchidananda, 2004) The third stream comprised of colonial models, aimed at producing western style educated class which would help the rulers govern the country, education of the masses however, was outside the purview of this stream.

From the middle to the nineteenth century, the Indian renaissance movement spread and there was phenomenal growth in national consciousness and a realization that the educational system must be in tune with the social, cultural and economic life of the people. Major attempts were made to reorient education towards national objectives, with different kinds of institutes offering alternate models of education (Sachchidananda, 2004)

Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore epitomized Indian thought on education by binding the fundamental unities of Indian culture with a universal outlook. Gandhiji and Tagore were not only thinkers but also practitioners.

Gandhiji conceived of Basic Education and envisaged an education which draws out the best in the child; body, mind and spirit. He strongly advocated beginning child education by teaching it as a useful handicraft. He held that the highest development of mind and soul is possible if such a system of education is implemented. He wanted that all boys and girls be given free education during the formative years of life sans any discrimination or distinction of caste, sex or religion. He believed that while education should promote the all round development of personality, the students should actively contribute to their learning. In his view the quantum of knowledge was not as important as its functionality. He recommended the inclusion of only that knowledge which was relevant to the pursuit of productive activity and to the understanding of the social and physical environment. Gandhiji's basic principle of

education as a community centered tool for social change holds true even today, in its tailored approach to meet the socio-cultural needs of changing times.

Tagore envisaged many new ideas to address the needs of the child, and provided opportunities for the teaching of crafts, music, dance, painting, fine arts etc, in the curriculum at Shantiniketan. He welcomed the movement of scientific thought and included scientific subjects in the curriculum. He emphasized teaching through the medium of mother tongue but was not against the teaching of English at higher level. He recommended a curriculum satisfying the spiritual, the creative, the aesthetic and vocational aims of education.

The structure of education and the curriculum in the Indian society in earlier times thus drew largely from its own cultural heritage, and also from the outside influences to which it was exposed to. While greatly influenced by its traditions rooted in the past, it also tried to adopt a contemporary perspective.

However, formal education introduced by the colonial government was essentially based on abstract knowledge systems - scientific knowledge - that evolved in the western industrialized world. Formal education systems had little place for indigenous knowledge or indigenous methods of education. The experience of colonialism is often seen as the beginning of the decline in importance of indigenous knowledge.

Early Childhood Education Curriculum: Opportunities and Challenges

The review highlights the variety of assumptions pertaining to early childhood education. These assumptions play a significant role in giving direction to the design, implementation and experience of educational experiences for young children. Early childhood researchers themselves seem to assume different perspectives related to the significance of early education for young children. These different expectations reflect the social, political and economic contexts of particular countries, communities and organizations. This impacts the nature of and provision of early childhood education, and guides the thoughts related to what is regarded as important for young children.

Visions of childhood

Ball & Vincent (2005) portray early childhood education as a service that enables parents to remain in the workforce, which in turn helps alleviate poverty and deprivation within families. Dahlberg & Moss (2005) recognize early education as an economic imperative which is seen to contribute to the future benefit of society by producing a competitive workforce.

Cuban (1992), Seefeldt & Wasik (2002) consider early year's education as a context for children to engage with and explore their worlds, without pressure and to engage in formal learning or instruction. It is also seen as an investment linked to future savings in terms of special education and rehabilitation services (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2003; Dickens et al., 2006; Ludwig & Sawhill, 2006; Schweinhart et al., 2005), and a site for preparing children for later stages of education (Bertram & Pascal, 2002; Moss & Petrie, 2002).

Visions of effective pedagogy

Sylva et al. (2004) evidence effective pedagogy in the early years through the following conclusions:

•warm and responsive interactions of teaching staff with children result in better child outcomes

• A higher qualified staff links to greater quality of service for young children and improves the service provision.

• the nature of experiences offered in early childhood education, with adequate provision for numeracy, literacy and science experiences, with a focus on catering to diversity is linked to higher quality outcomes

Sylva et al. (2004) characterize the following pedagogical approaches for effective early childhood settings:

• provision of balanced child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities

• views play as a potentially instructive activity

• demonstrates a complementary focus on social and cognitive outcomes

• requires educators to have a good understanding of curriculum areas and content

• has a strong focus on educators planning and initiating group work

• involves educators providing feedback to learners

• expects educators to draw on a repertoire of pedagogical practices as appropriate

• implements social and behavior policies focused on conflict resolution.

Moyles et al. (2006) highlights the following components of an effective early years pedagogy:

• practice-based

• dependent on reflective pedagogical perceptions

• informed by consciously articulated principles and philosophy.

Moyles et al. (2002) suggested that early childhood educators tended to be more comfortable describing what they do (their practice) than they were describing what guided their own interactions. This inability to engage in discussion about pedagogy is regarded as a constraint to promoting effective pedagogy.

The review of literature highlights the following:

- Need to engage educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children in discussions about pedagogy for early childhood education.
- Worldwide recognition of the need and importance of incorporating indigenous perspectives into the development of early childhood education curriculum.
- There is a need for analysis of current curriculum thought which is influencing early childhood education curriculum and practice by mapping the curricular philosophies preferred by or influences the views of primary stakeholders, namely policy makers, educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children.
- Need to critically examine the assumptions of early childhood policy documents, educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children regarding purpose and aims of education, views of children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and

beliefs about assessment and explore the profound influence it can exert on thought and practice with young children

- Very few researches in the Indian context have tried to examine how and in what ways curriculum beliefs are related to curriculum building and to instructional practice
- There is a need to better understand and attempt to explain the origins of the curricular disagreements that occur amongst stakeholders.

Rationale for Study

An overview of the existing literature reveals the importance of understanding early childhood education curriculum from an indigenous perspective. There is a need to gain deeper insight into understanding the way in which indigenous knowledge enters into thinking about children and which guides practice with children. Reviews indicate that little attention has been paid to a critical analysis of curricular assumptions/ideologies as evidenced in national early childhood documents. There is also a dearth of researches which examines the curricular beliefs/ideologies and assumptions of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children and the crucial role these might play in conceptualization of early childhood education curriculum in context.

There is a need to analyze current curricular thought and understand the ways in which it influences thought and practice with young children. Examination of conjectures surrounding early childhood education curriculum from a broader conceptual scaffold would throw light on where educational goals and practices come from, the purposes they intend to serve and whether they are functional in a local context. There is also a need to better understand the origins of curricular disagreements that occur amongst stakeholders and attempt to explain the reasons for the same.

The present study was thus conceptualized to examine the assumptions underlying 'early childhood education curriculum' from a broader conceptual scaffold. It aimed to examine the perspectives of Indian thought, select national early childhood

documents and views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children with respect to the following:

- purpose of early childhood education
- views on children
- perspectives on learning
- concepts of teaching
- conception of knowledge
- beliefs about assessment

Concerns about education for young children are not new and have been debated for long. However, the study attempted to portray how underlying assumptions, personal educational/ curricular philosophies shape beliefs and thinking and consequently impact the education of young children in myriad ways.

The study tried to go beyond highlighting the varied visions of education for young children as they might exist today and tried to consider them from the historical context in which they emerged. The study further attempted to understand how these assumptions might be utilized to conceptualize an indigenous early childhood education curriculum framework.

The research questions that emerged from the literature review are highlighted in the following section.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions that emerged from the literature review.

- What are Indian thoughts pertaining to purpose and aims of education, views on children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment?
- What are the assumptions of national early childhood documents with respect to purpose and aims of education, views on children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment?
- What meanings are implicit in the views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children with regards to purpose and aims of education, views on children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment?
- Which are the preferred ideological positions of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children in relation to purpose and aims of education, views on children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment?
- What implications might be drawn for conceptualization of early childhood education curriculum framework?

Meanings of terms which represented the perspective of the research inquiry are highlighted in the next section.

Meanings of Terms

The following are the meanings of important terms which represented the perspective of the research inquiry.

Curriculum: interpreted from a broader conceptual scaffold to include assumptions regarding purpose and aims of education, views on children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment.

Indigenous: Indicated construal of phenomena by the people in a context. A model of conceptualization that emerges from the language and practice of people in concrete interactional or transactional situations (Misra, 2000)

Indian thought: represents an overview of the insights available from Indian philosophical systems like Vedanta and Yoga; as interpreted by scholars of Indian psychology and education. These thoughts developed continuously over thousands of years, and are found to be valid from Indian epistemological perspectives. The overview focused on ideas regarding purpose and aims of education, views on children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment as they existed in ancient India.

The conceptual framework of the study is described in the following section.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the study (Figure 1) was developed from the research questions that emerged from literature reviewed. The basic premises of the study included an overview of Indian thought on early childhood education curriculum from a broader conceptual platform. Selected works of scholars of Indian psychology and education were chosen for inclusion in the overview. The study further consisted of critical examination of the assumptions/beliefs of selected national early childhood documents, views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children. The views were elicited on selected domains of early childhood education curriculum, as mentioned earlier and were derived from the above mentioned theories and concepts. The study further attempted to infer embedded meanings, draw comparisons and endeavored to draw implications on conceptualization of early childhood education curriculum from an indigenous perspective.

Selected literature on curricular theory and ideologies/visions helped shape part of the study which relied on mapping preferred curricular ideologies of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children. The framework was adapted from the work of renowned curricular theorist Michael Schiro's (2008) philosophical approach on curricular beliefs/ideologies. The approach was subjected to a careful scrutiny and a pilot study was carried out to ascertain the feasibility of the framework within an Indian context. The framework was applied with modifications and permission from the author.

Schiro's work highlights four curricular ideologies/visions or curricular philosophies; namely:

- Scholar academic ideology
- Social efficiency ideology
- Learner centered ideology
- Social reconstructionist ideology

The four ideologies advocate very different goals of education and very different methods of achieving those goals. Each of the four visions of curriculum consists of distinct beliefs about the purpose of education, views regarding children, views on how children learn, how children should be taught, the concept of knowledge and how children should be assessed. Each of these ideologies has a long history and have been known by different names in the field of education. These ideologies can influence people's way of thinking about curriculum in powerful ways and consequently shape and direct curricular thought and practice with children.

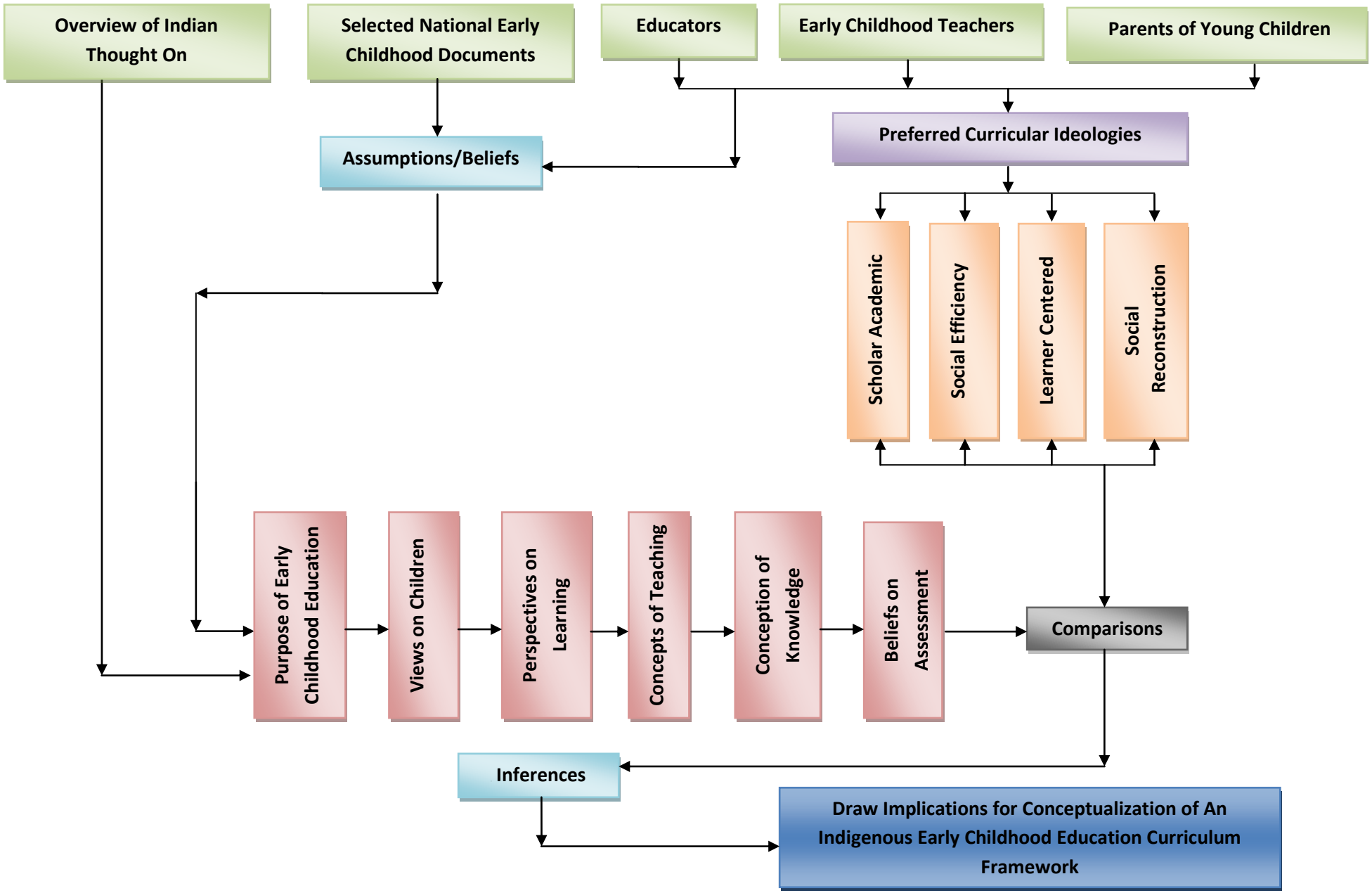

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

The following is a brief description of curricular ideologies/visions as highlighted by Schiro's work.

Scholar Academic Ideology*:* Scholar Academics believe that over the centuries our culture has accumulated important knowledge that has been organized into the academic disciplines found in universities. The purpose of education is to help children learn the accumulated knowledge of our culture: that of the academic disciplines. Acquiring an understanding of an academic discipline involves learning its content, conceptual frameworks, and ways of thinking. Teachers should be mini-scholars who have a deep understanding of their discipline and can clearly and accurately present it to children.

Social Efficiency Ideology*:* Social Efficiency advocates believe that the purpose of schooling is to efficiently meet the needs of society by training students to function as future mature contributing members of society. Their goal is to train students in skills and procedures they will need in the workplace and at home to live productive lives and perpetuate the functioning of the society. They believe the essence of learners lies in their competencies and the activities they are capable of performing. Teachers manage instruction by selecting and using educational strategies designed to help learners acquire the behaviors prescribed by their curriculum.

Learner Centered Ideology*:* The focus is not on the needs of society or the academic disciplines, but on the needs and concerns of the individual. They believe schools should be enjoyable places where students develop naturally according to their own innate natures. The goal of education is the growth of individuals, each in harmony with his or her own unique intellectual, social, emotional and physical attributes.

Students are viewed as the source of content for the curriculum, the concept of growth is the central theme of their endeavors and education essentially is about drawing out the inherent capacities within an individual. Learning is considered a function of the interaction between a person and his or her environment. Curricula are thus thought of as contexts, environments or units of work in which students can make meaning for themselves by active interaction with others.

Social Reconstructionist Ideology*:* Social reconstructionists are conscious of the problems of our society and the injustice done to its members, such as those originating from racial, gender, social, and economic inequalities. Curriculum is viewed from a social perspective. They believe education is a social process through which society is reconstructed. The nature of society as it is and as it should be, becomes the determinants of most of their assumptions. They consider human experience to be shaped most powerfully by cultural factors-and assume that meaning in people's lives is determined by their social experiences. The aim of social reconstructionists is to eliminate from their culture aspects that they consider undesirable, substituting in their place social values that they consider desirable, and by doing so to reconstruct culture.

The four visions of curriculum provide intellectual perspectives on how ideological struggles dominate curricular work in a social context and help understand the seeming disagreements about curriculum that occur amongst and even within the views of national early childhood documents and thoughts and practices of educators, teachers and parents of young children.

The broad and specific objectives of the study emerged as follows and are discussed in the next section.

OBJECTIVES

Broad Objectives

Locate Indian thought with reference to early childhood education curriculum and draw implications for conceptualization of an indigenous early childhood education curriculum framework.

Specific Objectives

1. Gain an overview of Indian thought on purpose and aims of early childhood education, views on young children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment.
2. Analyze the perspectives of selected national early childhood documents on purpose of early childhood education, views on young children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment.
3. Examine the assumptions of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children on purpose of early childhood education, views on young children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment.
4. Map the preferred curricular ideological positions of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children.
5. Draw implications for conceptualization of an indigenous early childhood education curriculum framework.

METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the present research is detailed in the following chapter. The section is organized under the following sub-themes:

- Research Design
- Sample
    - Criteria for Sample Selection
    - Sample Size and Distribution
- Tools for Data Collection
- Pilot Study
- Procedure of Data Collection
- Data Analysis

Research Design

The study attempted to gain deeper understanding into the way in which indigenous knowledge enters into thinking about children and guides practice with children. The study aimed to ‘locate Indian thought’ by attempting to gain an overview of Indian thought on curriculum, map the preferred curricular ideological positions of educators, teachers and parents of young children and examine the assumptions of select national documents on early childhood education, educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children regarding:

- purpose of early childhood education
- views on children
- perspectives on learning
- concepts of teaching
- conception of knowledge
- beliefs about assessment

The research design was thus exploratory in nature. The study utilized a quantitative and qualitative approach, and the methods within each were dovetailed to the research questions.

Sample

Purposive sampling technique was used to identify the samples of the study. The sample for the study comprised of the following:

- Selected essays/documents/books on Indian thoughts on education
- Selected national documents on early childhood education
- Educators
- Early childhood teachers
- Parents of young children

The following were the criteria for sample selection.

Criteria for Sample Selection

*Selected essays/documents/books on Indian thoughts on education***:** Conceptual overviews were derived through a literature review of educational ideas from the Vedanta and Yoga schools of thought. The selected documents, texts and essays were authored by scholars of Indian psychology, eminent educationists and thinkers. The broad points of inquiry were purpose of education, views on children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment

*Selected national documents on early childhoo*d: The documents that represented national visions and perspectives on early childhood care and education were reviewed for the study. The final selection of documents was based on the broader rubric of early childhood education as defined for the study, namely;

- purpose of early childhood education
- views on children
- perspectives on learning
- concepts of teaching
- conception of knowledge
- beliefs about assessment

The following were the selected documents:

- Position Paper on Early Childhood Care and Education, National Curriculum Framework (2005) (NCERT)
- National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education. NCTE, 2009
- Report of the working group on Child Rights. (For the 12th Five Year

Plan, (2012-2017)

- Early Childhood Education in the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) (MWCD)
- Five Year Strategic Plan (2011-2016) Ministry of Women and Child Development Government of India
- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), 1975
- National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and Plan of Action (POA), 1992

Educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children were chosen from two cities of Gujarat, namely Vadodara (where the investigator was based) and Bhavnagar.

Educators: 50 individuals possessing a substantial experience in research, teaching or training of teachers were identified as educators. Majority of them had education, child development or psychology as their areas of expertise. Their work profiles ranged from retired professors, consultants, senior professors, school principals, supervisors and teacher trainers, active in public/private organizations and schools.

Early childhood teachers: 50 teachers who were trained in or possessed either a diploma/degree in early childhood education and were presently working with pre-primary sections of English and Gujarati medium schools were chosen to be part of the study. They had a minimum of two years and a maximum of seven years of experience in working with young children within a preschool setup.

Parents of young children: 100 parents; including 50 mothers and 50 fathers, having at least one child in pre-school and were active and voluntarily involved in a variety of school activities were chosen for the study. Early childhood teachers chosen for the study were asked to give reference of two mothers and two fathers from their class who were active and voluntarily involved in various school activities. The mothers and fathers were informed of their selection through the school authorities.

Sample Size and Distribution

The sample size and distribution of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children is depicted in Figure 2

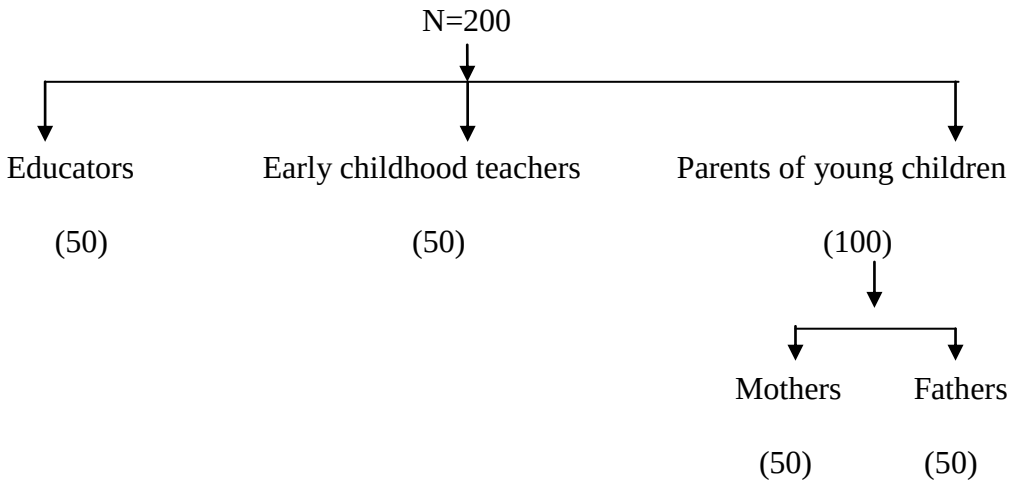

Figure 2. Sample distribution

Tools for Data Collection

Qualitative methods represent a growing trend in early childhood research. (Spodek & Saracho, 2006). The broad aim of the research study was to provide an in depth understanding of already identified broader themes pertaining to early childhood education curriculum and further seek their implications on curriculum practices in

context. Thus, in order to home in on the multiple levels of the chosen themes, the following were the tools used for data collection.

Curriculum Ideology Inventory (Adapted from Schiro, 2008)

Part of the study focused on the analysis of prevailing curriculum ideologies of early childhood educators, practitioners and parents of young children. The tool used was the Curriculum Ideology Inventory, adapted from Schiro, 2008. The inventory was adapted and modified for use in the Indian context with due permission and acknowledgement from its author (Appendix M).

The inventory presents and contrasts the respondent's belief about instructional purposes, teaching, learning, knowledge, childhood and assessment from four ideological positions as posited by Schiro, 2008. The respondents' beliefs did not have to fall entirely within the confines of only one ideological position, as the ideological positions are ideal types rather than mutually exclusive belief systems. The following are the four ideological positions:

- Scholar academic ideology
- Social efficiency ideology
- Learner centered ideology
- Social reconstructionist ideology

The inventory consists of the following six sections:

- purpose of early childhood education
- views on children
- perspectives on learning

- concepts of teaching
- conception of knowledge
- beliefs about assessment

Each section consists of four descriptive statements; each corresponding to any one of the above mentioned ideological position, with a blank in front of each. The respondents were expected to read each statement carefully and rank the statements 'one' to 'four' with regards to the statement they prefer the most to the statement they prefer the least. Each of the numbers (one, two, three, four) could only be used once in each section of the inventory.

The inventory was translated in the local language Gujarati and was administered in English (Appendix E) and Gujarati (Appendix K) as per the choice of each respondent.

Semi Structured Interview Schedule

A semi structured interview schedule for use with educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children was developed, focusing on the following themes:

- Early childhood education: purpose of early childhood education and its importance for young children
- Teachers/teaching: what should teachers of young children be like and their role in education of young children
- Learning: concept of learning and in what different ways young children learn new concepts
- Knowledge: how is knowledge conceptualized

- Children/early years: why are early years important and what is a child like during the early years
- Assessment: purpose of assessment and different ways in which young children can be assessed

The interview schedule was translated in the local language Gujarati and was administered in English (Appendix F) and Gujarati (Appendix L) as per the preference of the respondent.

Tool Validation

The research tools were validated for their construct and content. Experts from the field of Human Development and Family Studies, Education and Psychology and Language Studies were instrumental in validation of the tools.

Pilot Study

Two pilot studies were carried out for the present research. The details of the same are as follows:

Pilot Study 1 (P1)

P1 was carried out with the following objectives:

- To check the feasibility of the research tools for the target group
- To gain feedback on the administration of tools and make pertinent changes if required

The pilot study was carried out on a separate target group comprising of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children, ensuring a proportionate homogeneity with the actual sample.

Learning's from P1

As per the learning's of the pilot study the following changes were made to the research tools and the process of administration of the tools:

Curriculum ideology inventory (adapted from Schiro 2008): Statements within each domain of the inventory were simplified

*Semi structured interview schedule***:** The results of the pilot study revealed a preference of respondents to either note down their responses for the said questions or respond to the questions through personal interview. The respondents were thus given a choice to choose their preferred mode of response. The qualitative paradigm is sensitive to knowledge, not as fixed, but "created in interaction amongst people" (Rowe & McAllister 2002).

Pilot Study 2 (P2)

P2 was carried out with 20 respondents; 10% of the actual sample with the following objectives:

- Ascertain the trends of responses obtained through the research tools
- Determine the appropriateness of the data analysis methods

Learning's from P2

- A pattern of responses were ascertained for data obtained through curriculum ideology inventory and semi-structured interview schedule. This helped the researcher further strengthen the conceptual framework of the study.
- The broad themes and specific points of inquiry chosen for the study were found to be appropriate in terms of what they sought to inquire. However, additional probes were incorporated to elicit relevant responses based on chosen themes/constructs.
- The data analysis methods were found to be appropriate for the study; however the methods were constantly monitored to address any issues of inconsistencies.

Learning's from both the pilot studies were incorporated into the research.

Procedure of Data Collection

Selected Essays/Documents/Books on Indian Thoughts on Education

Review of literature was carried out to identify essays/documents/books highlighting educational thought from the Vedanta and Samkhya schools of thought. Conceptual overviews of the broad themes chosen for the study were derived through review of the selected essays/documents/books.

National Early Childhood Documents

The identification of national early childhood documents was done at the sample identification stage. The selected documents were reviewed and critically analyzed on the basis of broad themes chosen for the study.

Curriculum Ideology Inventory (adapted from Schiro 2008) and Semi Structured Interview Schedule

Certain basic steps were followed while administering the curriculum ideology inventory and the semi structured interview schedule for educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children.

A brief introductory note was presented to each respondent before administering the tools. The note explained the aim of the research and an assurance of confidentiality of responses. The note was signed by the research guide and the investigator and was presented in English (Appendix A) or in Gujarati (Appendix G).

All respondents from the four groups, namely; fathers, mothers, educators and early childhood teachers were requested to fill up a short 'Participant Information Form' which highlighted basic details like name, age, sex, educational qualification, occupation and contact details. The forms were presented in English (Appendices B, C, D) or Gujarati (Appendices H, I, J). The information was sought to keep a record of the participants and to seek clarification of their responses if required.

Educators

*E*ducators from the cities of Baroda and Bhavnagar were identified through snowballing technique. Individual meetings were setup with the educators. They were explained the purpose of the research and were presented with an introductory note for informed consent. The responses on the Curriculum ideology inventory were sought first and the responses to the semi structured interview schedule were sought once the participant had completed responding to the inventory. Some educators chose to respond to the interview schedule through written descriptions, while the others preferred interviewing by the researcher. The educators who chose to respond in writing took a minimum of four days to a maximum of ten days to return the responses on both the tools. Reminders were sent through short message service (SMS) or telephonic conversations.

Early childhood teachers

Authorities of various English and Gujarati medium schools in the cities of Baroda and Bhavnagar were contacted. They were explained the purpose of the research and permission was sought to administer the Curriculum Ideology Inventory and Semi structured interview schedule for early childhood teachers. Their responses were sought by individual meetings, conducted either in respective schools or their homes, according to their convenience.

Parents of young children

The sample of parents was chosen from the cities of Baroda and Bhavnagar. Early childhood teachers chosen for the study were asked to give reference of two mothers and two fathers from their class who were active and voluntarily involved in various

school activities. The mothers and fathers were informed of their selection through the school authorities. About half of the sample comprised of parents selected through this method. The rest were identified through snowballing techniques. Parents responses on the Curriculum ideology inventory and Semi structured interview schedule was sought by individual meetings, conducted either in respective schools or their homes, according to their convenience.

Data Analysis

The following section describes the procedure of analysis of data. The description of the analysis is presented according to the sequence of study objectives.

Selected Essays/Documents/Books on Indian Thoughts on education

Conceptual overviews were derived through a literature review on education in India from the Vedanta and Samkhya schools of thought. The broad points of inquiry were purpose of education, views on children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment

Selected National Documents on Early Childhood Education and Semi Structured Interview Schedule

Data obtained through selected national documents on early childhood education and the responses obtained on the semi structured interview schedule were subjected to qualitative and descriptive analysis; adapted from the framework of Schiro 2008.

The following were the broad domains of inquiry:

- purpose of early childhood education
- views on children
- perspectives on learning
- concepts of teaching
- conception of knowledge
- beliefs about assessment

The following were the specific points of inquiry within each of the above mentioned domains.

Purpose of early childhood education

- What is the purpose of early childhood education?
- What are the aims of education of young children?
- What are the sources of aims of education for young children?
- What kind of ideals children must achieve?
- How is educational development of children linked to their psychological development?

Views on children

- Are the early years of a child's life important? Why?
- Are children treated as active or passive agents in their world?
- Are children viewed as having or missing something of worth?
- Are educators focused primarily on children's minds or their behavior?

- Are children viewed as integrated organisms or as atomizable organisms?
- Efforts should be to focus efforts on children themselves or on the acts or attributes of children?
- Are concerns about children as they are or as they ought to be?
- Are children viewed as unique individuals or in relation to standardized norms?
- Are children viewed in a social context (and if so, what type?) or outside of a social context?

Perspectives on learning

- How do young children learn new concepts?
- From whose perspective should learning be viewed? The receiver or the transmitter?
- Is learning primarily a function of natural growth or as a function of societal transmission?
- Is learning an integrated or an atomistic process?
- Is learning primarily a change in mind or behavior?
- Is the desired result of learning a change of mind or a change in behavior?
- Is the primary factor during learning the learner or another agent?
- Under what conditions can learning proceed best?

Concepts of teaching

- What is the purpose of teaching?
- Are teachers to be concerned about the whole child? (If not, what aspect of the child should they be concerned about?
- How important are teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and visions? Why?
- What is the teacher's role during instruction?
- Are teachers' considered as transmitters of knowledge or preparers and supervisors of the classroom?
- What standards should be used to measure teacher effectiveness?
- Are teachers to stimulate student diversity or uniformity?
- Are teachers to directly implement curricula unchanged or creatively adapt curricula to their situations?
- Do teachers or developers plan for children's individual differences?
- What types of media should be employed during teaching?

Conception of knowledge

- What is knowledge?
- What is the source of knowledge?
- What kinds of abilities does knowledge give to a person?
- Where does worthwhile knowledge reside: within the individual or outside the individual?
- What is more important about knowledge: the source from which it originates or the use to which it can be put?
- When does knowledge become most useful?

Beliefs about assessment

- What is the purpose of student assessment as it relates to the person who receives the results of the assessment?
- What is the intent of assessment as it relates to the assessor?
- Are assessment measures considered to be an integral part of the curriculum development process?
- What should be the nature of the assessment instruments used in assessment?
- Are subjective or objective instruments used to assess?
- Is assessment viewed from an atomistic or holistic perspective?
- To whom are the results of assessment to be directed or beneficial?
- During assessment, is the focus on the individual, group norms, or a fixed criterion?
- Does assessment take place during the instructional process or after the instructional process?
- How are the criteria's for successful assessment defined?

Selected National Documents on Early Childhood Education

The document analysis was qualitative and descriptive in nature. The documents were individually reviewed on the basis of purpose of early childhood education, views on children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge, beliefs about assessment

Based on these, each document was critically studied to derive the assumptions pertaining to early childhood care and education. The descriptions were subjected to textual analysis. The contents of the texts were initially sorted according to the delineated themes, and A-priori codes. Inductive codes were further added as per the nature of data. Data enumeration was carried out by charting the **number of times a particular code was applied** to the data. Throughout the process of data analysis, reflexivity was maintained. Multiple confirmations and negative case analysis were carried out to address confirmation bias.

The researcher requested 'independent checks' by a retired university professor with a degree in language studies, and by a mid-career professional with an advanced degree in Education to objectively review the researcher's coding and correctness of data interpretation. Appropriate modifications were made if necessary after discussion and consensus amongst the individuals and the investigator. Salient features that emerged from the data were documented where relevant in the results and discussion chapter.

The investigator further ascertained inter-coder and intra-coder reliability. The inter coder reliability was calculated by the calculation of an *intercoder agreement coefficient*.

The intercoder agreement coefficient for the analysis was the ‘percent agreement and was calculated by dividing the number of agreed upon items between two coders by the total number of items they both coded.

The coefficient was calculated using the following formula:

$$PA_o = \frac{2A}{(n_1 + n_2)}$$

Where, PA_o was the proportion agreement observed, A was the number of agreements between two coders, and n_1, n_2 are the respective number of items coded by each of two coders.

Inter coder reliability for selected national documents on early childhood education were formally assessed at two levels; during the pilot study and during the actual analysis. The inter coder agreement was 68.4% during the pilot study and 95.3% during the actual analysis.

Intra coder reliability was ascertained by the investigator through constant monitoring of the consistency of coding. The investigator used the method of time gaps to ascertain the same. It was found that increase in the intra coder reliability was directly related to an increase in the inter coder reliability.

Semi Structured Interview Schedule

The semi structured interview schedule was administered to educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children. Responses on the semi structured interview schedule were obtained in two different forms. Some participants chose to respond through written descriptions, while others preferred to be interviewed by the investigator. The analysis of written descriptions as well as interview data was qualitative and descriptive in nature. Each description was individually reviewed and responses within each question were critically studied to derive the assumptions regarding selected areas of early childhood education curriculum.

The obtained responses were subjected to qualitative analysis. The responses were initially sorted according to the delineated themes, and A-priori codes. Inductive codes were further added as per the nature of data. Data enumeration was carried out by charting the **number of respondents who reported the code**. Throughout the process of data analysis, reflexivity was maintained. Multiple confirmations and negative case analysis were carried out to address confirmation bias. The investigator further ascertained inter-coder and intra-coder reliability.

The researcher requested ‘independent checks’ by a retired university professor with a degree in language studies, and by a mid-career professional with a degree in Education to objectively review the researcher’s coding and correctness of data interpretation. Appropriate modifications were made if necessary after discussion and consensus amongst the individuals and the investigator. Salient features that emerged from the data were documented where relevant in the results and discussion chapter.

The investigator further ascertained inter-coder and intra-coder reliability. The inter coder reliability was calculated by the calculation of an *intercoder agreement coefficient*.

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The coefficient was calculated using the following formula:

$$PA_o = \frac{2A}{(n_1 + n_2)}$$

Where, PA_o was the proportion agreement observed, A was the number of agreements between two coders, and n_1, n_2 are the respective number of items coded by each of two coders.

Inter coder reliability for semi structured interview schedule were formally assessed at two levels; during the pilot study and during the actual analysis. The inter coder agreement was 61.3% during the pilot study and 93.7% during the actual analysis.

Intra coder reliability was ascertained by the investigator through constant monitoring of the consistency of coding. The investigator used the method of time gaps to ascertain the same. It was found that increase in the intra coder reliability was directly related to an increase in the inter coder reliability.

Curriculum Ideology Inventory (adapted from Schiro, 2008)

The curriculum ideology inventory was administered to educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children. Data obtained from the curriculum ideology inventory was analyzed quantitatively. Data were initially computed separately for respective groups to ascertain differences in trends of responses, if any. Further, data from all groups were merged together to avail a holistic picture. For each group of participants, individual responses in the form of ratings (1 to 4) on all the sections of the inventory were transferred on a pre-set curricular ideology inventory sorting form.

The curricular ideology inventory sorting form is depicted in Table 2.

Table 2

Curriculum Ideology Inventory Sorting Form

Part 1 Purpose	**Part 2 Teaching**	**Part 3 Learning**	**Part 4 Knowledge**	**Part 5 Childhood**	**Part 6 Evaluation**
C _____	D _____	D _____	A _____	D _____	D _____
D _____	C _____	A _____	B _____	A _____	B _____
A _____	B _____	B _____	D _____	B _____	C _____
B _____	A _____	C _____	C _____	C _____	A _____

The responses were transferred in the same order in which they were recorded in each part of the questionnaire.

On the basis of the sorting form, data matrices were computed. The following were the three levels of computing the data matrices:

Level 1: The first level included computing individual data matrices for each respondent.

Level 2: The second level consisted of computing data matrices for all respondents within respective groups, namely; group of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers, according to the specific domains of the inventory:

- purpose of early childhood education
- views on children
- perspectives on learning
- concepts of teaching
- conception of knowledge
- beliefs about assessment

Level 3: The third level involved computing data matrices by combining all respondents according to the specific domains of the inventory.

The matrices were further converted into rank frequencies and percentage and the obtained data was converted into percentage rank frequency tables. The percentage, rank, frequency tables were computed for the following:

- Combining data of all respondents within respective groups; namely group of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers.
- Combining data of all respondents according to the specific domains of the inventory

Table 3 is a dummy table, which explains the conversion of data obtained through matrices into percentage, rank, frequency tables.

Table 3

Percentage Rank Frequency Table (Dummy)

(N=200)

Rank **Statement ***	**1 (Most Preferred)**	**2 (Preferred)**	**3 (Somewhat Preferred)**	**4 (Least Preferred)**
1 (C) (Social Reconstruction)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
2 (D) (Social Efficiency)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
3 (A) (Scholar Academic)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
4 (B) (Learner Centered)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)

*****Sequence of the statements and corresponding ideologies retained in the order of their appearance on the inventory.

On the basis of the percentage, rank, frequency tables, Chi square test for homogeneity of populations was carried out.

The Test of Homogeneity is a chi-square technique used to study whether different populations are similar (or homogeneous or equal) or heterogeneous in reference to some characteristic or attribute.

Thus, the Chi square test for homogeneity of populations was carried out to ascertain homogeneity or heterogeneity of the most preferred curricular ideologies of the four groups of respondents; namely educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers of young children with respect to the following:

- purpose of early childhood education
- views on children
- perspectives on learning
- concepts of teaching
- conception of knowledge
- beliefs about assessment

Separate percentage, rank frequency tables were computed through combining the data matrices of all respondents according to the specific domains of the inventory.

The observed value of the Chi Square was calculated and reported thus,

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(\text{Observed frequency} - \text{Expected frequency})^2}{\text{Expected frequency}}$$

$$\chi_c^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

The critical value was calculated and reported at 0.05 level of significance.

$\chi^2_{Critical} = \chi^2_{0.05}$

df= (R-1) (C-1)= 3x3= 9

The percentage, rank, frequency tables were further converted into graphs. The following were the three levels of computing the graphs:

Level 1: The first level included computing bar graphs for all respondents within respective groups; namely group of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers according to the specific domains of the inventory namely:

- purpose of early childhood education
- views on children
- perspectives on learning
- concepts of teaching
- conception of knowledge
- beliefs about assessment

Level 2: The second level included computing bar graphs by combining the data of the groups of educators and early childhood teachers, and fathers and mothers. The graphs were computed according to the specific domains of the inventory to depict a comparative overview.

Level 3: The third level consisted of computing bar graphs by combining the data of all four groups according to the specific domains of the inventory.

The computation and presentation of the data was carried out with a **focus on the type of preference** received by each of the four ideologies under **specific domains of the inventory**. The following was the theoretical premise for the same:

- The ideological positions are ideal types rather than mutually exclusive belief systems (Schiro 2008)
- The respondents' beliefs do not have to fall entirely within the confines of only one ideological position (Schiro 2008)

The computation of the statistical data was carried out by the investigator under the guidance of a statistician.

Comprehensive Data Analysis

The qualitative and quantitative data obtained through the various data sources were further subjected to a comprehensive and integrated data analysis. The quantitative data helped derive interpretations regarding preferred curricular ideologies, whereas the analysis of qualitative data helped cull out the assumptions related to selected domains of early childhood education curriculum.

Verbatims obtained through interviews were reported and Inter coder reliability was established. Spradley's (1979) Universal Symantic Relationships were applied to the data, to ascertain inclusion or exclusion of data within the domain boundaries. Placement of data in comprehensive categories and sub-categories helped build an understanding of a phenomenon from the perspectives of multiple social actors. The analysis of data through symantic relationships helped the investigator understand perspectives in the context of larger, socially produced patterns.

RESULTS
AND
DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected were analyzed according to the specific objectives of the study. The major findings that emerged are presented in the following section. The results are arranged according to the study objectives to maintain a logical sequence and help draw out conclusions as per the research questions.

Overview of Indian thought on purpose and aims of education, views on children, perspectives on learning, concepts of teaching, conception of knowledge and beliefs about assessment

The following section highlights an overview of Indian thought on selected aspects of curriculum as delineated in the study objectives. Conceptual overviews were derived through a literature review on education in India as documented in texts and essays authored by eminent educationists and thinkers.

Aims of education

The terms *shiksha* and *vidya* have been used as the equivalents to education in ancient India. Shiksha has been conceptualized as not only dealing with the correct pronunciation and recitation of mantras and hymns, but also inclusive of a variety of contexts and meanings. Besides *uccharana* (recitation), it means *vidyopadane* (teaching and learning), *vidyadane* (imparting knowledge), *adhyapane* (teaching), *abhyase* (knowledge), *adhyayane* (learning), *dande* (punishing) and *upadeshe* (preaching). Vidya is used for *gyane* (knowledge), *labhe* (usefulness), *vicharene* (thinking) and

sattayam (existence). Education was conceptualized as the process of acquisition of knowledge by applying one's own mind.

Self realization (*atma-sakshatkar* or *swarupaanubhuti*) was the main objective of education as it was believed that self or *atma* was the centre of all activities. It was believed that after realizing the self, nothing remained worth realizing as it removed the duality between the self and the universe. The development of the intellectual power alone was not the aim of education. Along with it a most desirable quality needed was the inculcation of the sense of discrimination or *viveka* (*satyaasatya vicechana*). Intelligence itself was not considered enough for promoting *viveka* or the power for discrimination. *Tapas* of the mind was emphasized in order to achieve a state of settled intelligence (*sthitipragya*), considered of prime importance towards the goal of self realization.

Views on children

The Vedanta philosophy consists of an integrated approach to understand an individual, which was closely linked to the education of a person. The individual was understood through five hypothetical/categorical constructs; namely body, energy, mind, knowledge and bliss. The individual was thought to be composed of five sheaths or 'koshas (sheaths)' wherein the 'self' manifested. They were the *annamayakosha (the sheath composed of food),* the *pranamayakosha (the sheath composed of vital air),* the *manomayakosha (the sheath composed of mind),* the *vijnanamayakosha (the sheath composed of intelligence)* and the *anandamayakosha (the sheath composed of bliss).* The emphasis was on the inter-correlations among these five selves and the emphasis on attaining 'ananda' (bliss) through valid knowledge. It emphasized the process of

development of an individual from the physical-physiological to the spiritual. They roughly correspond to the cognitive, conative and affective domains of modern psychology.

Views on teachers/teaching

Teaching was considered as a social and moral duty (*brahma karma swabhavajam*). Guru was the general term used for teachers. He was expected to remove the darkness of ignorance from the student's mind and empower him to realize the ultimate truth. Self-realization was thought to be impossible without the guidance of the guru. For becoming a teacher the highest intellectual, moral and spiritual qualities were required. They were expected to be self-realized and individuals with settled intelligence. They were expected to be well versed in the art of teaching (*adhyapanam*), be a good communicator (*vakta*) and a commentator (*vishleshaka*). Clarity of thought and speech, proficiency in discussion, debate, giving examples, art of explanation, elaboration and illustration were the other qualities.

The teacher was expected to know the art of reading child's mind and providing a suitable learning opportunity to *alp-pragya* (below normal), *pragya* (of normal mental power) and *mahapragya* (gifted) children. Thus, teaching was expected to be based upon the learning potentialities of the students. Question method, lecture method, discussions and debates were common teaching techniques. Children with higher mental power were essentially encouraged towards self learning, whereas for students of lower ability, story method was common. Explanation of subtle ideas proceeded through elaboration and illustration, with the guru giving examples and making

comparisons'. Observation and study of nature were also considered important strategies for teaching.

Views on learning

The students were known as *shishya* (disciple), *vidyarthi* (student), *vidyarati* (devoted to learning) and *brahmachari* (engaged in the quest of higher learning). Invariably, the students used to utter the name of their gurus while introducing themselves. The life of a student was not easy. *Sukharthi va tyajet vidya vidyarthi va tyajet sukham* (the pursuit of pleasure and learning could not go together, one had to choose either). The study was conducted under strict discipline and the service to guru; strict obedience and single mindedness in study were thought necessary. For full comprehension of an idea or a concept, careful attention to the teacher was thought to be essential. It was called *shravanam* (listening to the guru and remembering what was taught by him). This was followed by *mananam* (reflection, deliberation and argumentation) by the pupil himself. Then came the stage of *nididhyasana* (meditation and concentration on the theme of *shravanam* and *mananam*) for understanding the essence or hidden meaning behind a concept.

Thus, *shravanam*, *mananam* and *nidhidhyasana* were the main steps of learning. In addition, *adhyanen (*study of texts), *mananen* (reflections and deliberations on the essence of what has been learnt), *pravachanen* (discussing with other pupils) and *prayogena* (application) were considered as the basics of learning. It has been told that one-fourth of learning is achieved from the guru, one- fourth from other students', one-fourth by one's own experience and one-fourth by putting it into practice. Thus, in the

process of teaching and learning, the pupils played a major role and guru acted only as friend, philosopher and guide.

Views on knowledge

The notion of knowledge has been approached by Indian thinkers in diverse ways. It has been conceptualized as ‘relation’, ‘act’, ‘quality’, and ‘self-subsistence’. The terms are interlinked and do not refer to inter-linked categories. *Jnana* (cognition), *upalabhdi* (attainment) and *buddhi* (intellect) are often used independently as well as interchangeably to refer to knowledge. As an activity, knowing is characterized as a process of consciousness. A valid cognition is one which is free from doubt (*samsaya*), indefiniteness (*anadhyavasaya*) and error (*bhrama*), and which therefore reveals things as they are (*yathartha*), furnishes the basis of successful activities (*samvadi-pravrttyanukula*) and is not contradicted (*abadhita*) by any other experience.

The process of knowing involves four factors, that is, subject (*pramata*), object (*prameya*), method (*pramana*) and the resulting knowledge (*prama*). The validity of knowledge may be determined by focusing on the functional aspects of reality. This empirical world is treated as a field of action (*karmamayam jagat*). Everything therefore, is meant for some action and every action has an end. We can test when a given object serves the end for which it is meant (*arthakriyakarin*). It is believed that novelty is the major feature of knowledge. The validity of knowledge is regarded natural by some schools of Indian thought, for example Mimamsa and Vedanta, who think that the conditions of validity lie within the very conditions which generate the knowledge. Thus knowledge is known from the knowledge itself (*svatah-pramana*).

True knowledge (*vidya*) leads to the awareness of the unity incorporating all the manifestations.

Views on assessment

The evaluations of students were oral in which knowledge, ability for exposition and elaboration, ready wit, use of proper and correct language, power of expression, oration, analysis, synthesis and to defend one's own point of view were tested. Evaluations in subjects involving skills and competencies for performance were theoretical as well as practical.

Overall, the prime purpose of education was self realization through inculcation of the sense of discrimination and achieving a state of state of settled intelligence. Views regarding children consisted of an integrated approach to understand an individual, who was understood through five hypothetical/categorical constructs; namely body, energy, mind, knowledge and bliss. The emphasis was on the inter-correlations among these five selves and the emphasis on attaining 'ananda' (bliss) through valid knowledge. It emphasized the process of development of an individual from the physical-physiological to the spiritual. Teaching was considered as a social and moral duty and required the highest intellectual, moral and spiritual qualities. They were expected to possess excellent skills in the art of teaching and communication and base teaching upon the learning potentialities of the students. Observation and study of nature were also considered important strategies for teaching.

Learning was essentially thought to revolve around listening, reflection and concentration skills and was preceded by study of texts, deliberations of what was learnt, discussions with others and application. The notion of knowledge has been conceptualized as ‘relation’, ‘act’, ‘quality’, and ‘self-subsistence’. Cognition, attainment and intellect were often often used independently as well as interchangeably to refer to knowledge. The process of knowing involves four factors, that is, subject, object, method and the resulting knowledge. It is believed that novelty is the major feature of knowledge. The validity of knowledge is regarded natural by some schools of Indian thought, for example Mimamsa and Vedanta, who think that the conditions of validity lie within the very conditions which generate the knowledge. The evaluations of students were generally oral in which knowledge, ability for exposition and elaboration, ready wit, use of proper and correct language, power of expression, oration, analysis, synthesis and to defend one’s own point of view were tested.

Conceptualizations surrounding the various domains of education were thus viewed from a broader purview; consisting of enhancing and uplifting the life of an individual at various levels through education.

Perspectives of selected national documents on early childhood education

The following section highlights the perspectives regarding above mentioned curricular domains from the purview of select national early childhood documents. The documents were reviewed and analyzed individually to obtain insights into the above mentioned domains. Further on an integrated analysis of these select documents were carried out to obtain a collective view of early childhood education curriculum. The selected documents represent views on early childhood care and education from a holistic perspective, thus in addition to reviewing the whole document, the sections concerning the curricular domains selected for the study were studied in detail and subjected to greater scrutiny. The major findings are highlighted as follows:

Purpose of early childhood education

The purpose of education seems to be on eliminating certain aspects from culture which are presumed to be undesirable. Education is viewed as a tool to replace the unwanted elements of the society by introducing social practices and values which are believed to be more desirable and make efforts at reconstructing the culture, so that its members and attain maximum satisfaction of the material, social, cultural needs. Efforts are at making the society more just, democratic and egalitarian than it currently is. The attempt seems to be geared towards gaining social consensus on the curricular aspects of the child's education by highlighting the differences that exist in the society. Thus, the aspirations of a society as envisaged 'or as ought to be' seem achievable through education.

Views on children

To a large extent, children are viewed as potential contributing members of society who are products of the society they live in and can help create a better society in the future. The underlying perception of the role of education is to guide the development of the child in a direction as deemed 'correct' by the society. There is a lot of emphasis on the kind of education which is given to the child, thus more acknowledgment is given to honing their potentials to act in the future 'in spite' of their past histories, their socio-economic situation, community etc. There seems to be an inherent bias to say that probably where they come from is not sufficient to make them into contributing members of the society, thus education must be 'all inclusive' and efforts must be geared at provisioning access to maximum possible children. Children are perceived as possessing a bundle of potentialities, which can be molded in manifold directions.

Views on teaching

The teacher is viewed as or expected to be someone whom the children can look up to and further on it is expected that teachers must be capable of reflecting on themselves and on their society. The teachers are expected to be preparers of the classroom and the environment such that children can be actively engaged in learning. They should encourage and guide children's' innate curiosity and self exploration tendencies. Teachers must be open to differences amongst children, and respect children and their potentialities. Distinction is made between abstract and concrete learning and teachers are expected to work accordingly. They are expected to be

carefully observant of children, respect where they come from, and to not let the distinctions of class, caste and gender, bias their views against children and consequently damage their self concept. The teacher must also function as the facilitator to children during the process of learning.

Views on learning

Learning is regarded as active assimilation of new experiences into learners meaning structures. Learning requires not only that a social group acquires knowledge, but also that it reaches a consensus both the nature and truth of the learning, and also towards achieving social consensus and/or agreement. They also believe and emphasize that learning takes place when people interact with the world around them and make meaning for themselves out of those interactions. For learning to occur, a stimulating environment is thought to be crucial, direct experiences are also thought to be important. They also emphasize that not just experiences but what meanings are made out of the curricula which will decide the type of learning.

Views on knowledge

Knowledge is typically viewed from the lens of organization of content in different curricular areas. The authority of knowledge emerges from the kind of impact it has in providing individuals with the skills they need to function within society.

Views on assessment

Focus is on stress free, pressure free careful monitoring of children's progress, through continuous and consistent observation. No quantitative assessment or standardized testing is recommended. Observations of behavior and skills are thought to be the best ways of assessing and keeping a track of the progress of the child in the major domains of growth.

Overall, the purpose of education seems to focus on eliminating certain aspects from culture which are presumed to be undesirable. Education is thought to be a tool to replace the unwanted elements of the society like differences that emerge due to caste, class, socio-economic status and there is a strong effort to reconstructing the culture, so that its members and attain maximum satisfaction of the material, social, cultural needs. Children are viewed as potential contributing members of society who are products of the society they live in and can help create a better society in the future.

There is a lot of emphasis on the kind of education which is given to the child, thus more acknowledgment is given to honing their potentials to act in the future 'in spite' of their past histories, their socio-economic situation, community etc. Children are perceived as possessing a bundle of potentialities, which can be molded in manifold directions. Learning seems to be primarily conceptualized as a social act rather than an individual act. In both process and product, in both means and end, it aims mainly at social self-realization (Brameld, 1950). For learning to occur, a stimulating environment is thought to be crucial, direct experiences are also thought to be

important. Emphasis is not just on experiences but what meanings are made out of the learning.

It is expected that teachers must be capable of reflecting on themselves and on their society and encourage and guide children's' innate curiosity and self exploration tendencies. Teachers must be open to differences amongst children, and respect children and their potentialities. Distinction is made between abstract and concrete learning and teachers are expected to work accordingly. The teacher must also function as the facilitator to children during the process of learning. Interactions are based on adults' knowledge and expectations of age-appropriate behavior in children balanced by adults' awareness of individual differences among children'. (Bredekamp, 1987, p.13)

In terms of assessment, pressure free and careful monitoring of children's progress is advocated; through continuous and consistent observation. Observations of behavior and skills of children across time are thought to be the best ways of assessing and keeping a track of the progress of the child in the major domains of growth.

Thus, thoughts pertaining to various domains of education seem to navigate both the learner centered and social reconstruction dimensions. National documents typically function from a larger canvas; however, the extent to which these dimensions play out in curricular decisions and implementation remains a debatable premise.

Assumptions of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children

Educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children shared certain common views regarding purpose of early childhood education. Figure 3 indicates their views on purpose of early childhood education.

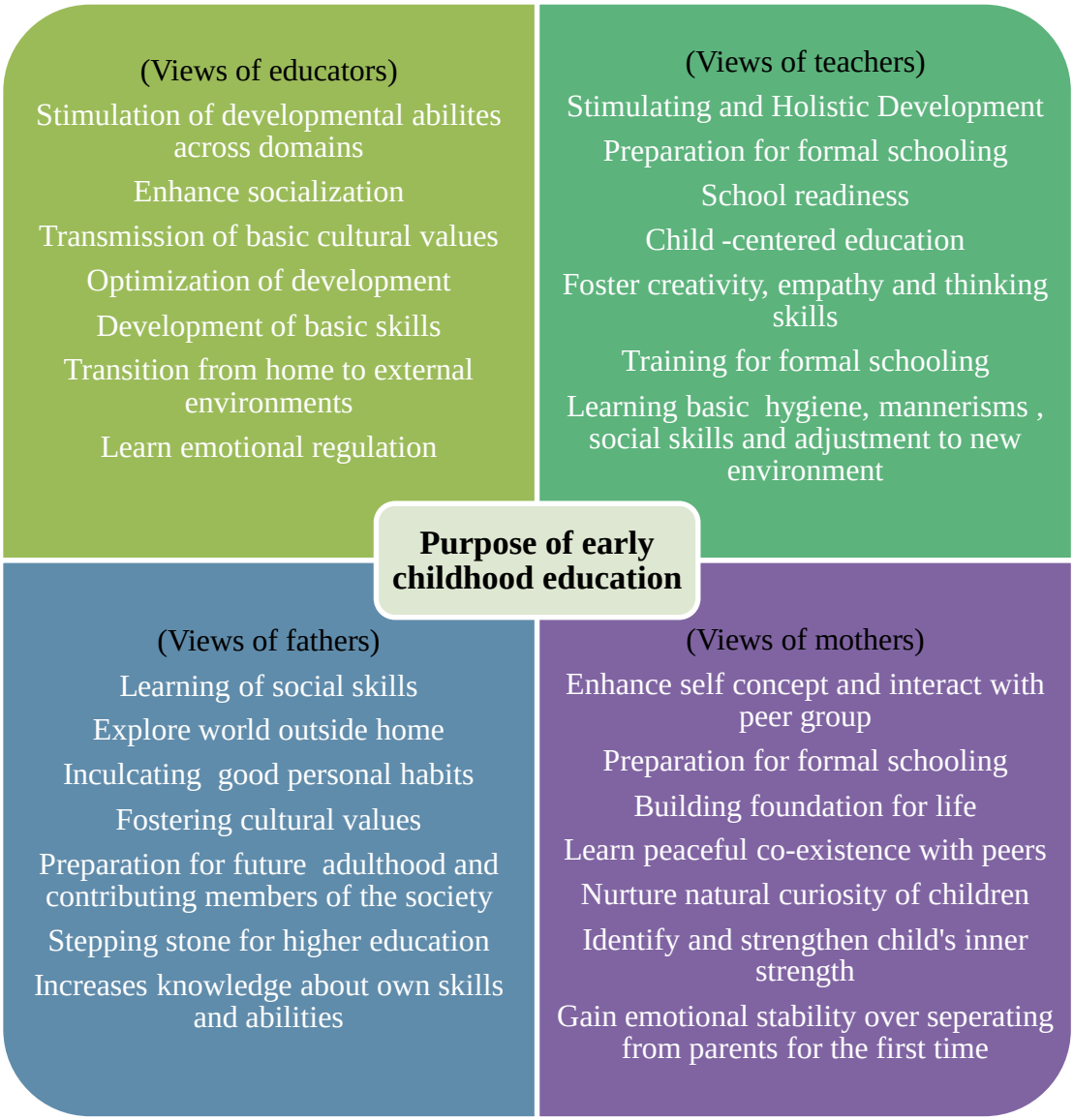

Figure 3. Purpose of early childhood education: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers

Nearly 82% educators (41 of 50 respondents) and 86% EC teachers (43 of 50 respondents) emphasized the purpose of early years education was to stimulate growth by providing children with stimulating environment. While majority of fathers 94% (47 of 50 respondents) and 82% mothers (41 of 50 respondents) felt the purpose of early years education was to lay the foundation for future adulthood. However, in terms of the sources of aims of education for young children, early childhood teachers perceived themselves to be the 'transmitters' of aims as setup by agencies 'external' to the child. This pattern replicates in their views on ideals which must be achieved by young children. Stark distinctions are observed in the perceived links between educational and psychological development of the child, with educators' reporting that educational development leads to psychological development, whereas parents felt that psychological development was influenced in part by educational development.

A distinction is made between the 'self expressed needs of the child' and the 'needs of the child as inferred by the adults' i.e. what adults think the needs of children are (Noddings, 2003). Overall, the assumptions' regarding purpose of early years education seems to be guided by needs of children as inferred by the adults. Whereas, the 'self expressed' needs of the child seem to play little role in deciding the aims of education at large.

Figure 4 indicates views on children/importance of early years.

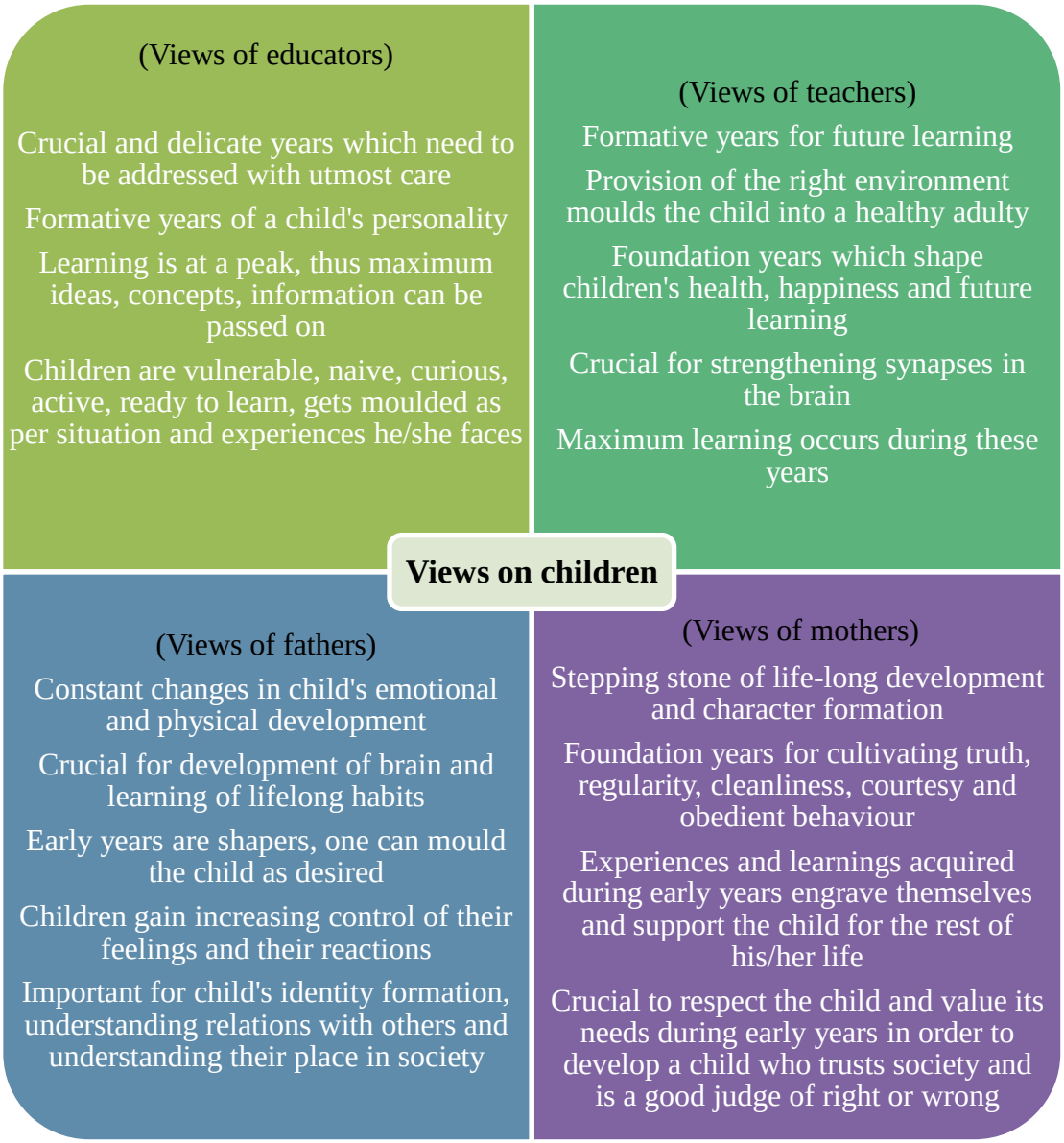

Figure 4. Views on children: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers

Nearly 50% educators (25 of 50 respondents), 72% EC teachers (36 of 50 respondents) and 72% fathers (36 of 50 respondents) feel that children are active agents in their world. They view children as having something of worth. They reported that education should be concerned about processes which are internal to the child. They view children as integrated organisms and feel that children themselves should be the

focus of educational efforts and not the acts or attributes of children. They feel that children should be accepted as the way they are and that children are thought to exist for themselves and not to further ends external to themselves. They reported they viewed children as unique individuals and within a particular social context.

Nearly 48% educators (24 of 50 respondents) and 82% mothers (41 of 50 respondents) reported that children are passive agents in their world, are missing something of worth and that education should be concerned about process internal to the children. They view children as atomizable organisms and felt that the acts and/or attributes of children should be the focus of educational efforts and not on children themselves. The respondents felt that the purpose of education is to be concerned about making children as they ought to be rather than accepting them as they are. They think that children exist not for themselves but to further ends external to themselves. The respondents viewed children and their education in relation to standardized norms of the society and in the broader context of academic disciplines.

The respondents' shared certain common meanings in their opinions regarding learning. However, educators and mothers of young children and early childhood teachers' and fathers were divided in some of their opinions regarding views on learning.

Figure 5 represents the respondents' thoughts on learning.

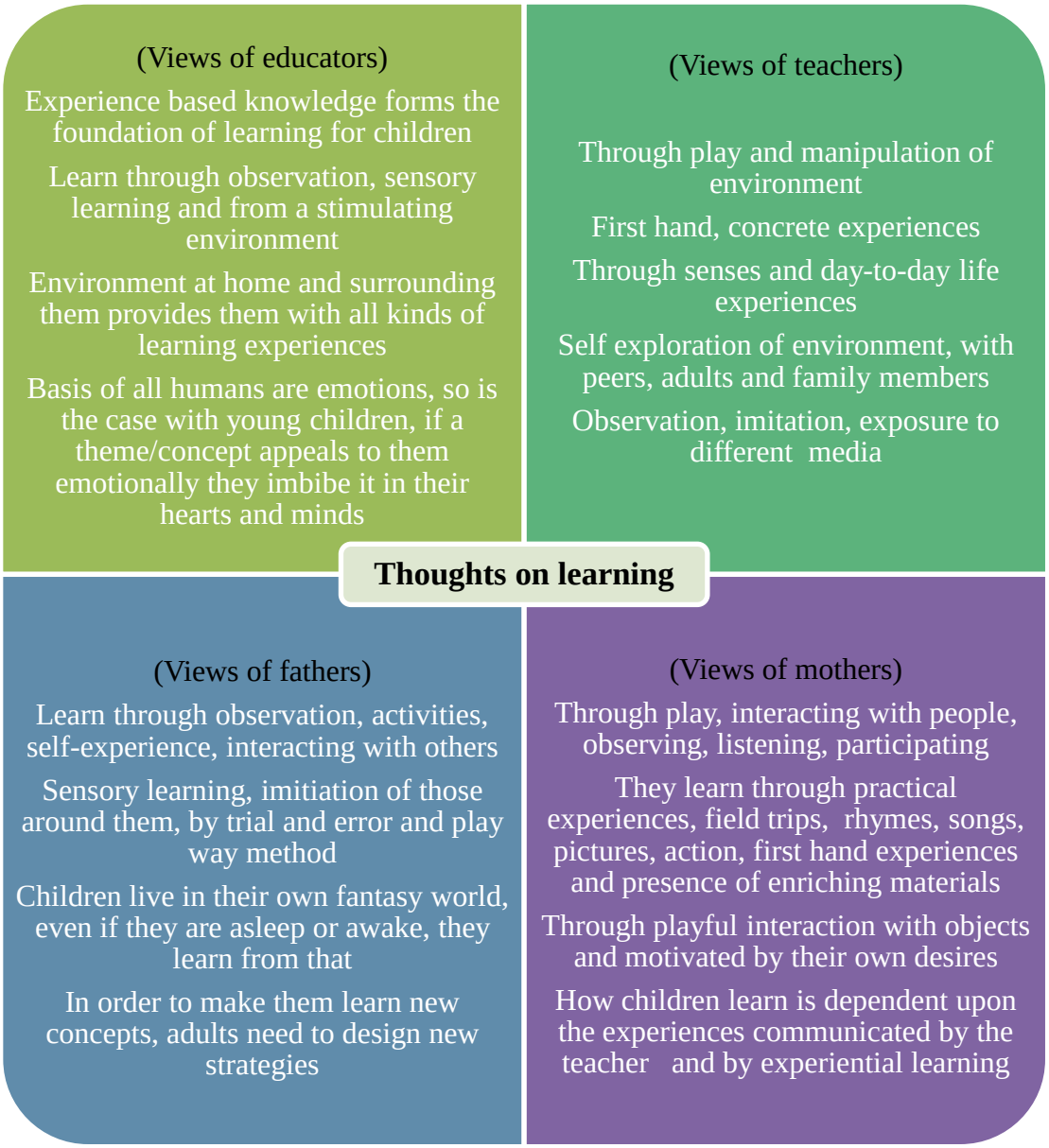

Figure 5. Thoughts on learning: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers

Nearly 56% educators (28 of 50 respondents), 44% EC teachers (22 of 50 respondents), 52% fathers (26 of 50 respondents) and 56% mothers (28 of 50 respondents) view learning from the perspective of the receiver. Learning is viewed primarily as a function of natural growth of young children. They consider learning as an integrated process, wherein the children learn multiple constructs in a holistic manner. The

respondents primarily viewed learning as change in mind and that the desired result of learning is also a change in mind. The respondents reported that the primary actor during learning is the learner itself rather than any other agent. The respondents stated that learning can best proceed when that which is to be learnt is in harmony with the stages of the growth of the child and when individual development of the child is facilitated.

Nearly 40% educators (20 of 50 respondents) and 44% mothers (22 of 50 respondents) view learning from the perspective of the transmitter. Learning is seen primarily as a function of societal transmission, and is considered as an atomistic process. The respondents feel that learning primarily changes the behaviour of a person and that the desired result of learning is a change in behavior. The respondents feel that the primary actor during learning is the agent as well as the learner. The respondents felt that learning can best proceed when children are provided with guidelines as to what behaviors' are expected from them. The respondents felt that learning will also proceed best when all children are given a standard task but the variations in learning rate and styles are recognized.

Nearly 44% EC teachers (22 of 50 respondents) and 48% fathers (24 of 50 respondents) view learning from the perspective of the transmitter. Learning is seen primarily as a function of societal transmission, and is considered as an atomistic process. The respondents feel that learning primarily changes the mind of a person and that the desired result of learning is a change in mind. The respondents feel that the primary actor during learning is the agent. The respondents felt that learning can best proceed when children are provided with subject content which is simplified, especially

those themes which are difficult. The respondents' felt that learning will also proceed best when all children are grouped together in terms of achievement and then taught accordingly.

Educators, early childhood teachers and mothers of young children were divided in their opinion regarding views on teaching, whereas majority of fathers shared common meanings in their opinion regarding views on teaching.

Figure 6 highlights the respondents' views on teaching.

Figure 6. Thoughts on teachers/teaching: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers

Nearly 42% educators (21 of 50 respondents), 42% early childhood teachers (21 of 50 respondents) and 40% mothers (20 of 50 respondents) felt that the intent of teaching was to stimulate the growth of the child and be concerned about the holistic development of the child. They also reported that teachers' own attitudes, beliefs and

visions regarding teaching and children play a significant role in the life of the child. The respondents' felt that the role of teacher is that of a facilitator to children's growth and development. They reported that teachers are preparers and supervisors of the classrooms. They felt that teacher effectiveness can be measured by observing the child's growth and the ways in which teachers facilitate the growth of the child. The respondents' felt that within classrooms teachers must encourage diversity amongst the students and modify and creatively adapt curriculum based on children's needs and situations. They felt that teachers and curriculum developers must plan the curriculum by accommodating children's individual differences. During teaching teachers must encourage the interactions of children with the environment.

Nearly 46% educators (23 of 50 respondents), 38% EC teachers (19 of 50 respondents), 68% fathers (38 of 50 respondents), and 44% mothers (22 of 50 respondents) felt that the intent of teaching was to acculturate children into the vision of education as setup by educators and at the same time be concerned about the holistic development of the child. They reported that teachers own attitudes, beliefs and visions regarding teaching and children play a significant role in being good teachers. They felt that the role of a teacher is that of a companion, to whom children can look up to and be guided by. They reported that teachers are preparers and supervisors of the classrooms, and that the effectiveness of the teachers can be measured by observing whether the teacher is able to effectively transfer to children the vision of education as envisaged by the society. The respondents' felt that while teachers may accept individual differences in performance of behavior, the ultimate aim was to stimulate uniformity in terms of values and the kind of human being we want children to be. The respondents' reported that teachers should plan the curriculum and adapt the curriculum based on the social

concerns and expectations. During teaching teachers must encourage children to build cohesiveness with the group and act according to the group dynamics.

Figure 7 highlights the respondents' perceptions regarding knowledge.

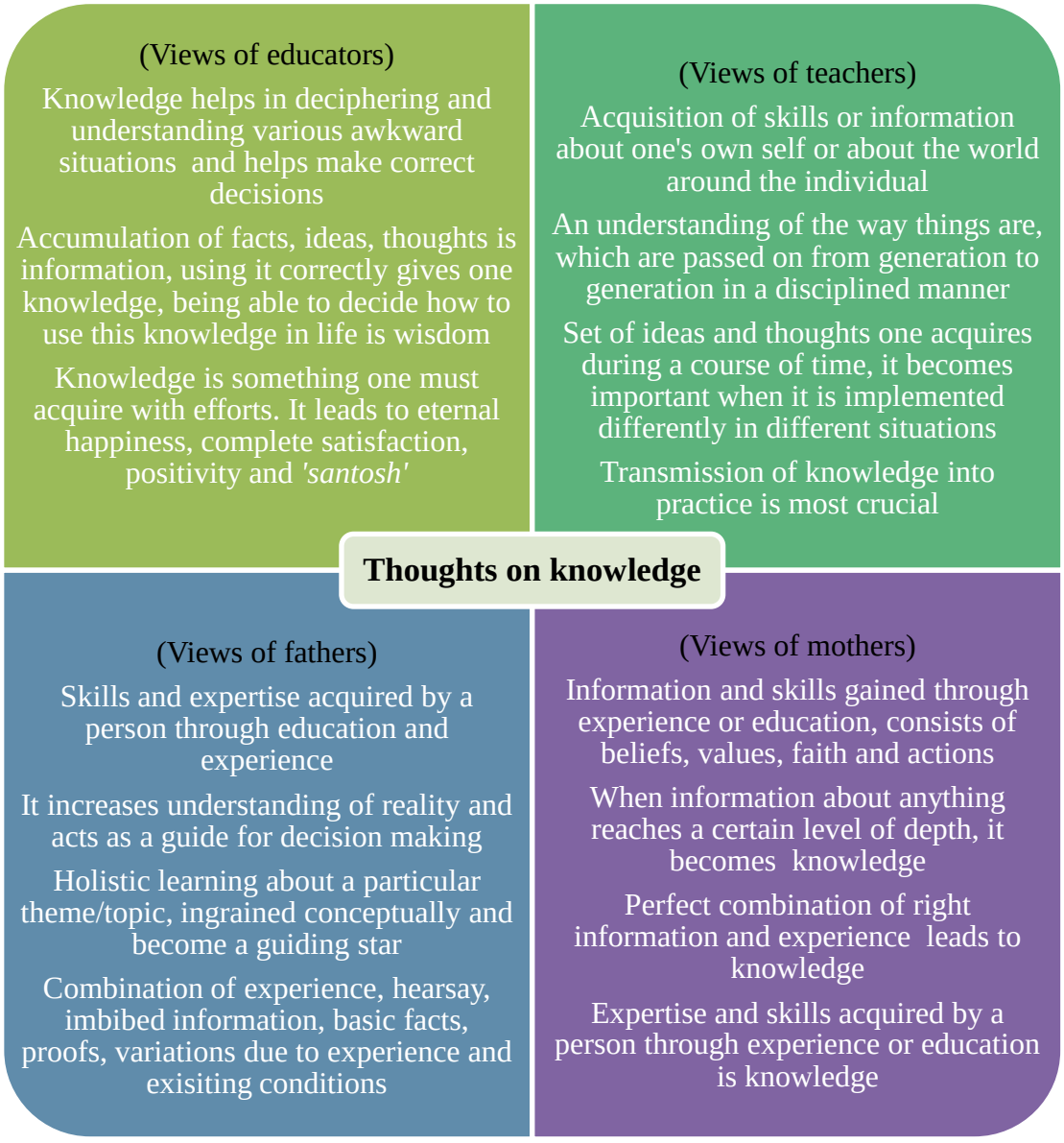

Figure 7. Thoughts on knowledge: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers

Nearly 58% educators (29 of 50 respondents), 42% EC teachers (21 of 50 respondents), 40% fathers (20 of 50 respondents) and 44% mothers (22 of 50 respondents) view knowledge as personal meanings accorded by individuals to things around themselves. The respondents feel that knowledge gives the ability to make own decisions and meanings about the things surrounding themselves. The respondents feel that the source of knowledge is individuals' personal and creative response to his/her experience. It is unique to each individual. The respondents reported that knowledge derives its authority from the meaning it has to the one who possess the knowledge. The respondents feel that learning and growth both lead to increase in knowledge.

Nearly 42% educators (21 of 50 respondents), 44% EC teachers (22 of 50 respondents), 42% fathers (21of 50 respondents) and 52% mothers (26 of 50 respondents) reported that knowledge is the capability for action. The respondents feel that knowledge gives children the ability to do things. They feel that knowledge arises from reality as it is interpreted by the members of society. Knowledge derives its authority from the impact it has in perpetuating society by providing individual with the skills that they need to function within society. The respondents feel that apart from the ability to do things, knowledge is something that corresponds to the society's view about reality and how things should be.

The respondents' shared certain common meanings in their views regarding children. However, educators and mothers of young children and early childhood teachers' and fathers were divided in some of their opinions regarding views on children. Figure 7 indicates respondents' views regarding children/importance of early years.

Figure 8 indicates respondents' perceptions on assessment.

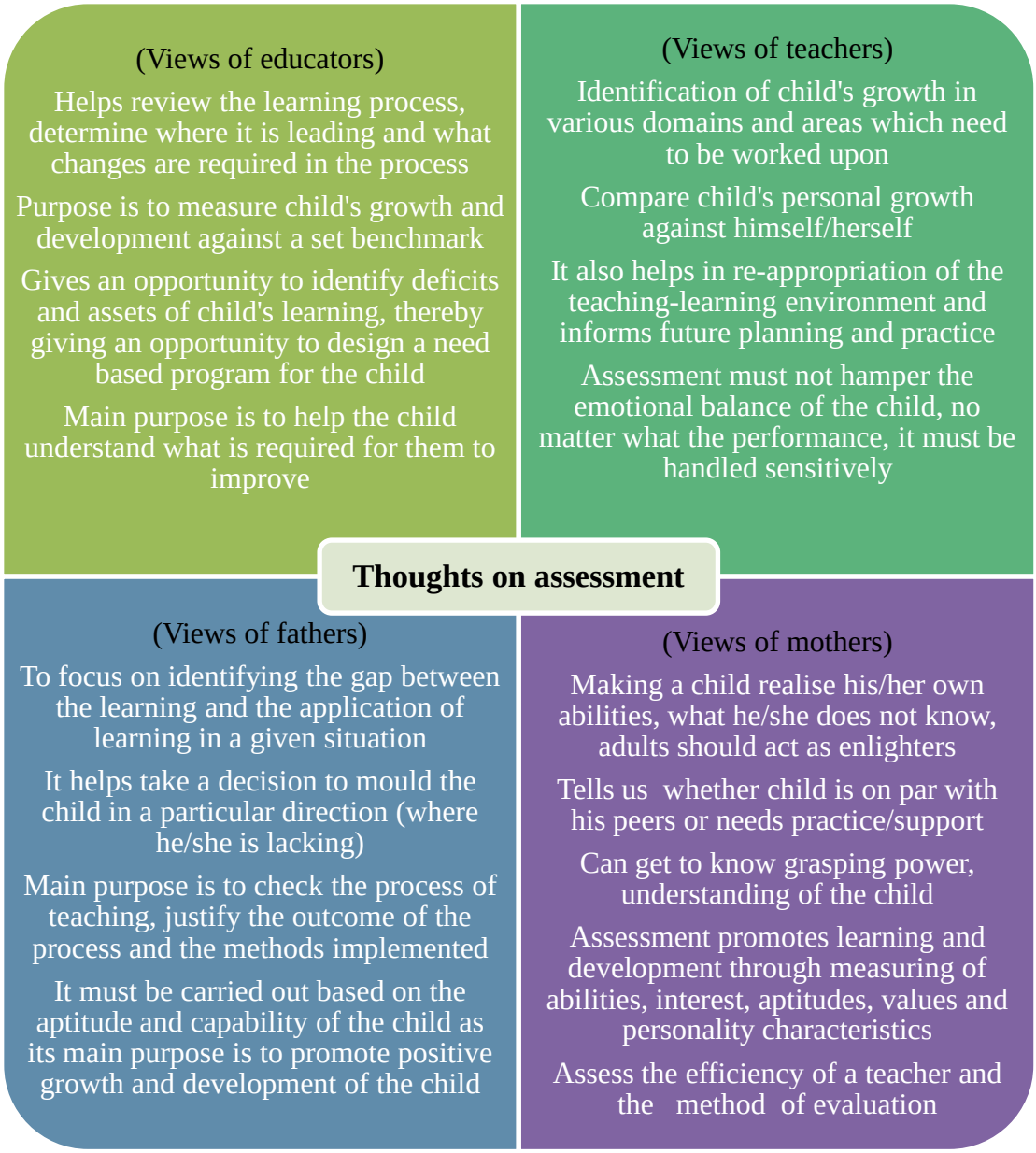

Figure 8. Thoughts on assessment: views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers

Nearly 88% educators (44 of 50 respondents), 84% EC teachers (42 of 50 respondents), 80% fathers (40 of 50 respondents) and 82% mothers (41 of 50 respondents) reported that the purpose of assessment is to diagnose the abilities of the child and consequently help in the growth of the child. They reported that the purpose

of assessment is to inform the evaluee about their progress. They felt that assessment and designing assessment is not a part of the curriculum development. They reported that the assessment should be informal and stress free, which measured the child's potential against his/her own capability. They felt that assessments for children should be subjective and not objective. They considered evaluation to be a holistic process and that the child should be the one that should most benefit from it. The respondents also felt that during assessment, the focus should be on individual norms rather than group norms or fixed criterion. They also felt that students should be evaluated during the period of instruction, rather than after the instruction. They felt there should be no set definitions for a good assessment.

To gain a comprehensive overview of the results, the assumptions of Indian thought, selected national early childhood documents and views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children on selected components of the curriculum are summarized in the following tables.

Table 4

Purpose of Early Childhood Education: Comprehensive Overview

Indian thought	Selected national early childhood documents	Educators	Early childhood teachers	Fathers	Mothers
• Acquisition of knowledge by application of mind • Self realization (*atma-sakshatkar* or *swarupaanubhuti*) was the main objective of education • Emphasis on the inculcation of the sense of discrimination or *viveka* (*satyaasatya vicechana*) • Intelligence itself was not considered enough for	• To eliminate certain aspects from culture which are presumed to be undesirable • Education viewed as a tool to replace the unwanted elements of the society by introducing social practices and values which are believed to be more desirable • Efforts geared at making the society more just, democratic and egalitarian than it currently is	• Stimulation of developmental abilities across domains • Enhance socialization and transmission of basic cultural values • Optimization of development and nurturing of basic skills • Ease the transition from home to external environments • Learn emotional regulation	• Stimulating and Holistic Development • Preparation for formal schooling • School readiness • Child -centered education • Foster creativity, empathy and thinking skills • Training for formal schooling • Learning basic hygiene, mannerisms , social skills and adjustment to new environment	• Learning of social skills • Explore world outside home • Inculcating good personal habits • Fostering cultural values • Preparation for future adulthood and contributing members of the society • Stepping stone for higher education • Increases knowledge about own skills and abilities	• Enhance self concept and interact with peer group • Preparation for formal schooling • Building foundation for life • Learn peaceful co-existence with peers • Nurture natural curiosity of children • Identify and strengthen child's inner strength • Gain emotional stability over separating from parents for the first time

promoting *viveka* or the power for discrimination • *Tapas* of mind emphasized in order to achieve a state of settled intelligence (*sthitipragya*)	through education • The attempt seems to be geared towards gaining social consensus on the curricular aspects of the child's education by highlighting the caste, class and gender differences that exist in the society • Aspirations of a society as envisaged 'or as ought to be' seem achievable through education.	

Table 5

Views on Children: Comprehensive Overview

Indian thought	Selected early childhood documents	Educators	Early childhood teachers	Fathers	Mothers
• Focus on holistic development of child through education • Acquisition of knowledge, the inculcation of social duties and religious rites and above all formation of character. • It sought to build up the whole being of the individual and to enable him to lead the best and the highest kind of	• Children are viewed as potential contributing members of society who are products of the society they live in and can help create a better society in the future. • The underlying perception of the role of education is to guide the development of the child in a direction as deemed 'correct' by the society.	• Crucial and delicate years which need to be addressed with utmost care • Formative years of a child's personality • Learning is at a peak, thus maximum ideas, concepts, information can be passed on • Children are vulnerable, naive, curious, active, ready to learn, gets molded as per	• Formative years for future learning • Provision of the right environment moulds the child into a healthy adults • Foundation years which shape children's health, happiness and future learning • Crucial for strengthening synapses in the brain • Maximum learning occurs during these years	• Constant changes in child's emotional and physical development • Crucial for development of brain and learning of lifelong habits • Early years are shapers, one can mould the child as desired • Children gain increasing control of their feelings and their reactions • Important for child's identity formation, understanding	• Stepping stone of life-long development and character formation • Foundation years for cultivating truth, regularity, cleanliness, courtesy and obedient behavior • Experiences and learning's acquired during early years engrave themselves and support the child for the rest of his/her life • Crucial to respect the child and value its needs during early years in order

life possible for him in the circumstances in which he was placed. Educational influences were so planned as to mould his life from the moment he was conceived to the moment of his death. • It was left upon the teacher to mark the capacity of the pupil to enter upon a study.	• There is a lot of emphasis on the kind of education which is given to the child, thus more acknowledgment is given to honing their potentials to act in the future 'in spite' of their past histories, their socio-economic situation, community etc. • Education must be 'all inclusive' and efforts must be geared at provisioning access to maximum possible children. • Children are perceived as possessing a	situation and experiences he/she faces	relations with others and understanding their place in society	to develop a child who trusts society and is a good judge of right or wrong

	bundle of potentialities, which can be molded in manifold directions.	

Table 6

Perspectives on Learning: Comprehensive Overview

Indian thought	Selected Early Childhood Documents	Educators	Early childhood teachers	Fathers	Mothers
• Concept of learning assumed a form of devotion. The students were known as *shishya* (disciple), *vidyarthi* (student), *vidyarati* (devoted to learning) • The study was conducted under strict discipline and the service to guru; strict obedience and single mindedness in study were thought necessary. • Steps of learning	• Learning regarded as active assimilation of new experiences into learners meaning structures. • Learning requires not only that a social group acquires knowledge, but also that it reaches a consensus both the nature and truth of the learning, and also towards achieving social	• Experience based knowledge forms the foundation of learning for children • Learn through observation, sensory learning and from a stimulating environment • Environment at home and surrounding them provides them with all kinds of learning experiences • Basis of all humans are emotions, so is	• Through play and manipulation of environment • First hand, concrete experiences • Through senses and day-to-day life experiences • Self exploration of environment, with peers, adults and family members • Observation, imitation, exposure to different media	• Learn through observation, activities, self-experience, interacting with others • Sensory learning, imitation of those around them, by trial and error and play way method • Children live in their own fantasy world, even if they are asleep or awake, they learn from that • In order to make them learn new concepts, adults	• Through play, interacting with people, observing, listening, participating • They learn through practical experiences, field trips, rhymes, songs, pictures, action, first hand experiences and presence of enriching materials • Through playful interaction with objects and motivated by their own desires • How children learn is dependent upon

comprised of *shravanam* (listening to the guru and remembering what was taught by him). Followed by *mananam* (reflection, deliberation and argumentation) by the pupil himself. • It has been mentioned that one-fourth of learning is achieved from guru, one- fourth from other students', one-fourth by own experience and one-fourth by putting it in practice. • In the process of teaching and	consensus and/or agreement. • They also believe and emphasize that learning takes place when people interact with the world around them and make meaning for themselves out of those interactions. • For learning to occur, a stimulating environment is thought to be crucial, direct experiences are also thought to be important. • Emphasis is not just on experiences but the kinds of meanings that are	the case with young children, if a theme/concept appeals to them emotionally they imbibe it in their hearts and minds	need to design new strategies	the experiences communicated by the teacher and by experiential learning

learning, the guru acted as friend, philosopher and guide.	made out are considered crucial to learning.

Table 7

Concepts of Teaching: Comprehensive Overview

Indian thought	Selected Early Childhood Documents	Educators	Early childhood teachers	Fathers	Mothers
• Teaching was considered as a social and moral duty (*brahma karma swabhavajam*). • Guru was the general term used for teachers. He was expected to remove the darkness of ignorance from the student's mind and empower him to realize the ultimate truth. • For becoming a teacher the highest intellectual, moral and spiritual qualities were	• The teacher is viewed as or expected to be someone whom the children can look up to and further on it is expected that teachers must be capable of reflecting on themselves and on their society. • The teachers are expected to be preparers of the classroom and the environment such that children can be actively engaged	• Be with children by choice and not compulsion • Act as role models, second mothers and understand characteristics of young children • Should be trained, flexible, creative, energetic, caring, be able to handle emergencies, approachable	• Formal training in child development • Role model, friend and mentor to the child • Young at heart and mind, active, spontaneous, should love and like children • Can focus on each child individually • Motivates children, provides reinforcement and teaches basic learning skills • Should be able to create and provide a stimulating environment for learning	• Should have capacity to emulate mothers, encourage and nurtures the child, gives warmth, compassion and feeling of security to the child • Makes children fearless, acts as facilitators and guiding lights • Implement personal values, pillars to child's socio-emotional and character development • Experience with a teacher can make	• Smart, active, dynamic, bubbly, caring, supportive and expressive • Treats each child as individual and makes efforts to make the child into a good human being • Be a facilitator and friend to children, treat all children equally with a positive approach • Guides children according to their individual personalities • Should be next to mothers, a good role

required. • They were expected to be self-realized and individuals with settled intelligence. They were expected to be well versed in the art of teaching (*adhyapanam*), be a good communicator (*vakta*) and a commentator (*vishleshaka*). • Clarity of thought and speech, proficiency in discussion, debate, giving examples, art of explanation, elaboration and illustration were the other qualities. • The teacher was expected to know the art of reading child's mind and providing a suitable	in learning. • They should encourage and guide children's' innate curiosity and self exploration tendencies. • Teachers must be open to differences amongst children, and respect children and their potentialities. • Distinction is made between abstract and concrete learning and teachers are expected to work accordingly. • They are expected to be carefully observant of	and respect individuality and differences of young children • They must have lots of patience and without expectations and should be transmitters of knowledge but they are paid very less	or break a child, thus, the teacher must understand feelings and emotions of children	model and creative

learning opportunity to *alp-pragya* (below normal), *pragya* (of normal mental power) and *mahapragya* (gifted) children. • Teaching was expected to be based upon the learning potentialities of the students. • Question method, lecture method, discussions and debates were common teaching techniques. • Children with higher mental power were essentially encouraged towards self learning, whereas for students of lower ability,	children, respect where they come from, and to not let the distinctions of class, caste and gender, bias their views against children and consequently damage their self concept. • The teacher must also function as the facilitator to children during the process of learning. • Interactions are to be based on adults' knowledge and expectations of age-appropriate behavior in children

story method was common. for teaching.

Table 8

Conception of Knowledge: Comprehensive Overview

Indian thought	Selected Early Childhood Documents	Educators	Early childhood teachers	Fathers	Mothers
• The notion of knowledge has been conceptualized in diverse ways. • It has been as 'relation', 'act', 'quality', and 'self-subsistence'. The terms are interlinked and do not refer to inter-linked categories. • *Jnana* (cognition), *upalabhdi* (attainment) and *buddhi* (intellect) are often used independently as well as interchangeably to	• The notion of knowledge is placed in the context of selection and organization of content for curricular purposes. • Agreement with national expectations of learning • Psychologically appropriate • Conceptual connections in terms of priority, sequencing, investigation methodology	• Knowledge helps in deciphering and understanding various awkward situations and helps make correct decisions • Accumulation of facts, ideas, thoughts is information, using it correctly gives one knowledge, being able to decide how to	• Acquisition of skills or information about one's own self or about the world around the individual • An understanding of the way things are, which are passed on from generation to generation in a disciplined manner • Set of ideas and thoughts one acquires during a course of time, it becomes important when it is implemented differently in different situations • Transmission of knowledge into practice is most crucial	• Skills and expertise acquired by a person through education and experience • It increases understanding of reality and acts as a guide for decision making • Holistic learning about a particular theme/topic, ingrained conceptually and become a guiding star • Combination of experience, hearsay, imbibed information, basic	• Information and skills gained through experience or education, consists of beliefs, values, faith and actions • When information about anything reaches a certain level of depth, it becomes knowledge • Perfect combination of right information and experience leads to knowledge • Expertise and skills acquired by a person through experience or education is knowledge

refer to knowledge. As an activity, knowing is characterized as a process of consciousness. • The process of knowing involves four factors, subject (*pramata*), object (*prameya*), method (*pramana*) and the resulting knowledge (*prama*). • It is believed that novelty is the major feature of knowledge. • The validity of knowledge is regarded natural by some schools, Mimamsa and Vedanta, who think that the conditions of	and validation procedures • Must be connected to the local life and with the rest of the world • Understanding that children construct their own knowledge • Influenced by socio-economic context and identity of the learner • Creation of variety of experiences and implementing multiple methods	use this knowledge in life is wisdom • Knowledge is something one must acquire with efforts. It leads to eternal happiness, complete satisfaction, positivity and *'santosh'*	facts, proofs, variations due to experience and existing conditions

validity lie within the very conditions which generate it.

Table 9

Beliefs on Assessment: Comprehensive Overview

Indian thought	Selected Early Childhood Documents	Educators	Early childhood teachers	Fathers	Mothers
• The assessment of students were oral in which knowledge, ability for exposition and elaboration, ready wit, use of proper and correct language, power of expression, oration, analysis, synthesis and to defend one's own point of view were tested. • Assessments in subjects involving skills and competencies for performance were theoretical as well as practical.	• Focus is on stress free, pressure free careful monitoring of children's progress, through continuous and consistent observation. • No quantitative assessment or standardized testing is recommended. • Observations of behavior and skills are thought to be the best ways of assessing and keeping a track of the	• Helps review the learning process, determine where it is leading and what changes are required in the process • Purpose is to measure child's growth and development against a set benchmark • Gives an opportunity to identify deficits and assets of	• Identification of child's growth in various domains and areas which need to be worked upon • Compare child's personal growth against himself/herself • It also helps in re-appropriation of the teaching-learning environment and informs future planning and practice • Assessment must not hamper the emotional balance of the child, no matter what the performance, it must be handled sensitively	• To focus on identifying the gap between the learning and the application of learning in a given situation • It helps take a decision to mould the child in a particular direction (where he/she is lacking) • Main purpose is to check the process of teaching, justify the outcome of the process and the methods implemented • It must be carried	• Making a child realize his/her own abilities, what he/she does not know, adults should act as enlighters • Tells us whether child is on par with his peers or needs practice/support • Can get to know grasping power, understanding of the child • Assessment promotes learning and development through measuring of abilities, interest, aptitudes, values and personality

	progress of the child in the major domains of growth. • The purpose of assessment is to give useful information about children's learning and development to the adults providing the programme as also to children and their families. • It also helps ensure early identification of developmental delays, special educational needs and particular abilities.	child's learning, thereby giving an opportunity to design a need based program for the child • Main purpose is to help the child understand what is required for them to improve	out based on the aptitude and capability of the child as its main purpose is to promote positive growth and development of the child	characteristics • Assess the efficiency of a teacher and the method of evaluation

The following section highlights a summary of distinct views and points of departures surrounding the conceptualization of:

- Purpose of early childhood education
- Views on children
- Views on learning
- Thoughts on teachers/teaching
- Conceptions of knowledge
- Views on assessment

It highlights the perspective of Indian thought, national early childhood documents and the views of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers of young children.

Purpose of Early Childhood Education

The prime purpose of education according to Indian thought is self realization through inculcation of the sense of discrimination and achieving a state of state of settled intelligence.

National early childhood documents consider the purpose of education to focus on eliminating certain aspects from culture which are presumed to be undesirable. Education is thought to be a tool to replace the unwanted elements of the society like differences that emerge due to caste, class, socio-economic status and there is a strong effort to reconstructing the culture, so that its members and attain maximum satisfaction of the material, social, cultural needs.

The views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children conceptualize education as stimulating growth by providing children with stimulating environment and to lay the foundation for future adulthood. In terms of the sources of aims of education for young children, early childhood teachers perceived themselves to be the 'transmitters' of aims as setup by agencies 'external' to the child. Stark distinctions are observed in the perceived links between educational and psychological development of the child, with educators' reporting that educational development leads to psychological development, whereas parents felt that psychological development was influenced in part by educational development.

Overall, the assumptions' regarding purpose of early years education gradually shifted from self realization, to attaining social equality and the needs of children seem to be guided by needs of children as inferred by the adults.

Views on Children

Views regarding children according to Indian thought consisted of an integrated approach to understand an individual, who was understood through five hypothetical/categorical constructs; namely body, energy, mind, knowledge and bliss. The emphasis was on the inter-correlations among these five selves and the emphasis on attaining 'ananda' (bliss) through valid knowledge. It emphasized the process of development of an individual from the physical-physiological to the spiritual.

The national early childhood documents view children as potential contributing members of society who are products of the society they live in and can help create a better society in the future. There is a lot of emphasis on the kind of education which is given to the child, thus more acknowledgment is given to honing their potentials to act in the future 'in spite' of their past histories, their socio-economic situation, community etc. Children are perceived as possessing a bundle of potentialities, which can be molded in manifold directions.

Two distinct positions surround the views regarding children/early years. Educators, early childhood teachers and fathers view children as active agents in their world and possess something of worth. Education was thought to be concerned about processes internal to the child. Children are viewed as integrated organisms and they should be the focus of educational efforts and not the acts or attributes of children. Children should be accepted as the way they are and that children are thought to exist for themselves and not to further ends external to themselves. Children are viewed as unique individuals and within a particular social context.

Mothers and educators report that children are passive agents in their world, are missing something of worth and that education should be concerned about process internal to the children. They view children as atomizable organisms and felt that the acts and/or attributes of children should be the focus of educational efforts and not on children themselves. The purpose of education was to be concerned about making children as they ought to be rather than accepting them as they are. Children are thought to exist not for themselves but to further ends external to themselves. Children

and their education are viewed in relation to standardized norms of the society and in the broader context of academic disciplines.

Overall, the views on children gradually assumed the dimension of contributing members of the society and to further means external to themselves.

Views on Learning

According to Indian thought learning was essentially thought to revolve around listening, reflection and concentration skills and was preceded by study of texts, deliberations of what was learnt, discussions with others and application.

The national early childhood documents seem to primarily conceptualize learning as a social act rather than an individual act. In both process and product, in both means and end, it aims mainly at social self-realization (Brameld, 1950). For learning to occur, a stimulating environment is thought to be crucial, direct experiences are also thought to be important. Emphasis is not just on experiences but what meanings are made out of the learning.

Two distinct positions surround the views regarding learning from the perspectives of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children. Learning is viewed from the perspective of the receiver and is considered primarily as a function of natural growth of young children. Learning is thought to be an integrated process, wherein the children learn multiple constructs in a holistic manner. Learning

is thought to lead a change in mind and that the desired result of learning is also a change in mind. The primary actor during learning is the learner itself rather than any other agent and learning can best proceed when that which is to be learnt is in harmony with the stages of the growth of the child and when individual development of the child is facilitated.

Learning is also viewed from the perspective of the transmitter. It is seen primarily as a function of societal transmission, and is considered as an atomistic process. Learning is thought to primarily change the behavior of a person and that the desired result of learning is a change in behavior. The primary actor during learning is the agent as well as the learner and learning can best proceed when children are provided with guidelines as to what behaviors are expected from them.

Views on learning transacted a path from the oral to the written, while the oral finds a mention in national early childhood documents, the practice pertaining to learning assumes a significantly different direction in practice.

Views on Teachers/Teaching

According to Indian thought, teaching was considered as a social and moral duty and required the highest intellectual, moral and spiritual qualities. They were expected to possess excellent skills in the art of teaching and communication and base teaching upon the learning potentialities of the students. Observation and study of nature were also considered important strategies for teaching.

The national early childhood documents expect that teachers must be capable of reflecting on themselves and on their society and encourage and guide children's' innate curiosity and self exploration tendencies. Teachers must be open to differences amongst children, and respect children and their potentialities. Distinction is made between abstract and concrete learning and teachers are expected to work accordingly. The teacher must also function as the facilitator to children during the process of learning. Interactions are based on adults' knowledge and expectations of age-appropriate behavior in children balanced by adults' awareness of individual differences among children'. (Bredekamp, 1987, p.13)

Two distinct positions surround the views regarding teachers/teaching from the perspectives of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children. The intent of teaching was thought to stimulate the growth of the child and be concerned about the holistic development of the child. Teachers' own attitudes, beliefs and visions regarding teaching and children play a significant role in the life of the child. Role of teacher was that of a facilitator to children's growth and development. Teachers are considered as preparers and supervisors of the classrooms. Teacher effectiveness could be measured by observing the child's growth and the ways in which teachers facilitate the growth of the child. Within classrooms teachers must encourage diversity amongst the students and modify and creatively adapt curriculum based on children's needs and situations.

The intent of teaching was to acculturate children into the vision of education as setup by educators and at the same time be concerned about the holistic development of the child. The role of a teacher is that of a companion, to whom children can look up to and be guided by. They effectiveness of the teachers can be measured by observing whether the teacher is able to effectively transfer to children the vision of education as envisaged by the society. While teachers may accept individual differences in performance of behaviour, the ultimate aim was to stimulate uniformity in terms of values and the kind of human being we want children to be. It was expected that teachers should plan the curriculum and adapt the curriculum based on the social concerns and expectations and that during teaching teachers must encourage children to build cohesiveness with the group and act according to the group dynamics.

Views on teachers ranged from the highest moral obligation to being implementers and supervisors of the classrooms. Early childhood teachers themselves emphasize their role as implementers of the program and responsible for the performance of the child.

Views on Knowledge

According to Indian thought, the notion of knowledge was conceptualized as ‘relation’, ‘act’, ‘quality’, and ‘self-subsistence’. Cognition, attainment and intellect were often used independently as well as interchangeably to refer to knowledge. The process of knowing involves four factors, that is, subject, object, method and the resulting knowledge. It is believed that novelty is the major feature of knowledge. The

validity of knowledge is regarded natural by some schools of Indian thought, for example Mimamsa and Vedanta, who think that the conditions of validity lie within the very conditions which generate the knowledge.

The national early childhood documents typically view knowledge from the lens of organization of content in different curricular areas. The authority of knowledge emerges from the kind of impact it has in providing individuals with the skills they need to function within society.

Two distinct positions surround the views regarding knowledge from the perspectives of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children. Knowledge is regarded as personal meanings accorded by individuals to things around themselves. Knowledge gives the ability to make own decisions and meanings about the things surrounding themselves. Source of knowledge is individuals' personal and creative response to his/her experience. Knowledge derives its authority from the meaning it has to the one who possess the knowledge and that learning and growth both lead to increase in knowledge.

Knowledge is thought to be the capability for action. Knowledge gives children the ability to do things. Knowledge arises from reality as it is interpreted by the members of society and derives its authority from the impact it has in perpetuating society by providing individual with the skills that they need to function within society. Apart from the ability to do things, knowledge is something that corresponds to the society's view about reality and how things should be.

Indian thought is rich in its conceptualization and perspectives on knowledge, especially from the perspective of organization of knowledge in curricular areas. However, national early childhood documents, except for the National Curriculum Framework, details other dimensions in greater detail. Knowledge is essentially perceived as increase in capacity and skills for functioning in daily life.

Views on Assessment

According to Indian thought the evaluations of students were generally oral in which knowledge, ability for exposition and elaboration, ready wit, use of proper and correct language, power of expression, oration, analysis, synthesis and to defend one's own point of view were tested.

The national early childhood documents emphasizes pressure free and careful monitoring of children's progress is advocated; through continuous and consistent observation. Observations of behaviour and skills of children across time are thought to be the best ways of assessing and keeping a track of the progress of the child in the major domains of growth.

The perspectives of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children consist of the purpose of assessment as diagnosing the abilities of the child and consequently help in the growth of the child. It informs the evaluee about their

progress, however, assessment and designing assessment is not a part of the curriculum development. Assessment should be informal and stress free, which measured the child's potential against his/her own capability however, assessments for children should be subjective and not objective. Assessment is considered to be a holistic process and that the child should be the one that should most benefit from it. The focus of assessment is expected to be on individual norms rather than group norms or fixed criterion. Assessment should take place during the period of instruction, rather than after the instruction and there should be no set definitions for a good assessment.

Indian views on assessment were essentially focused on change in the skills and capacities of children, based on their own learning and expressive styles, the national early childhood documents advocate a stress free, activity based assessment, however the same may not be prevalent in practice. Assessment is thought to be useful in enhancing the teaching learning program whereas, it is also considered as a measure of teacher effectiveness.

Map the preferred curricular ideologies of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children.

The following section highlights the preferred curricular ideological positions of educators, early childhood teachers and mothers and fathers of young children. The preference of ideological position was derived as detailed in the method chapter.

The preferences of curricular ideologies amongst the groups are highlighted based on the following domains:

- purpose of early childhood education
- views on children
- perspectives on learning
- concepts of teaching
- conception of knowledge
- beliefs about assessment

Chi square test for homogeneity of populations was carried out to ascertain homogeneity or heterogeneity of preferred curricular ideologies of the four groups of respondents; namely educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers of young children with respect to the following:

- purpose of early childhood education
- views on children
- perspectives on learning
- concepts of teaching
- conception of knowledge
- beliefs about assessment

Chi square test of homogeneity ($\chi^2_{0.05,}$ df=9) revealed that the preferences on four curricular ideologies were heterogeneous amongst the group of educators, early childhood teachers and fathers and mothers of young children. The heterogeneity of preferences was observed not only amongst the groups, but was also observed within each group, across the selected tenets of early childhood education curriculum.

As highlighted in the method section, the results were computed at three levels, however, the results are presented in a manner which avoids repetition and presents maximum information for interpretation.

Thus the results of this section are thus presented in the following sequence:

1- Preferred curricular ideologies of all respondents within respective groups, namely; group of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers, according to the specific domains of the inventory:
   - purpose of early childhood education
   - views on children
   - perspectives on learning
   - concepts of teaching
   - conception of knowledge
   - beliefs about assessment
2- Comparative overview of preferred ideological position amongst two groups, namely; educators and teachers and fathers and mothers.
3- Percentage rank frequency tables according to the domains of inquiry and Chi-Square values.

Purpose of early childhood education: Preferred curricular ideologies

Educators

Majority of educators, 82% (41 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 8% educators (4 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology, 6% educators (3 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology, while 4% educators (2 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred with regards to views on purpose of early childhood education

Early childhood teachers

Majority of early childhood (EC) teachers 86% (43 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered as most preferred, 10% EC teachers (5 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred and 4% EC teachers (2 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred with regards to views on early childhood education.

Fathers

Majority of fathers 74% (37 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 10% fathers (5 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred, 8% fathers (4 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred and 8% fathers (4 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred with regards to views on early childhood education.

Mothers

Majority of mothers 82% (41 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 8% mothers (4 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred, 6% mothers (3 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred and 4% mothers (2 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred with regards to views on early year's education.

Figure 9 illustrates a comparative overview of preferred ideological position amongst the group of educators and early childhood teachers, and fathers and mothers.

N=200

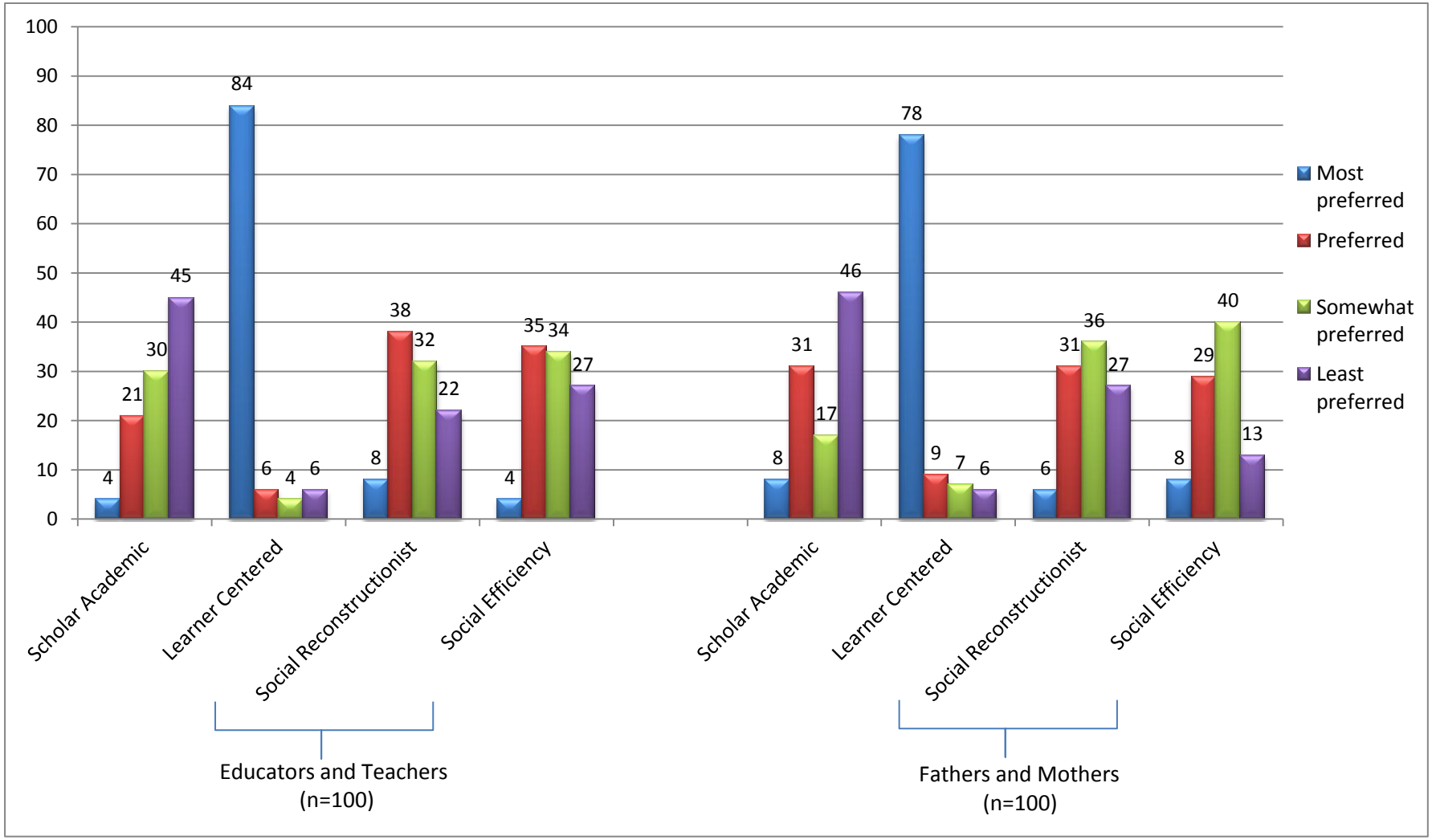

Figure 9. Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: purpose of early childhood education

Table 10 indicates the preferences on four curricular ideological positions with regards to purpose of early childhood education.

Table 10

Percentage Rank Frequency Table: Views on Purpose of Early Childhood Education

N=200

Rank **Statement***	**1 (Most preferred)**	**2 (Preferred)**	**3 (Somewhat preferred)**	**4 (Least preferred)**
1 (C)	14 (7%)	69 (34.5)	68 (34%)	49 (24.5)
2 (D)	12 (6%)	64 (32%)	74 (37%)	40 (20%)
3 (A)	12 (6%)	52 (26%)	47 (23.5)	91 (45.5)
4 (B)	162 (81%)	15 (7.5%)	11 (5.5%)	12 (6%)

*****Sequence of the statements and corresponding ideologies retained in the order of their appearance on the inventory, where:

A- Scholar Academic Ideology

B- Learner Centered Ideology

C- Social Reconstructionist Ideology

D- Social Efficiency Ideology

H_0- Four groups are homogenous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

H_1- Four groups are heterogeneous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

The critical value at 0.05 level of significance with 9 degrees of freedom was:

$\chi^2_{Critical} = \chi^2_{0.05, 9} = 16.82$

$\chi^2_{Obs} = 478.9$

Here, $\chi^2_{Obs} > \chi^2_{Critical}$

Thus, H_0 is rejected and we conclude that preference on four ideologies are heterogeneous amongst the group of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers of young children with regards to purpose of early childhood education.

Views on children: preferred curricular ideologies

Educators

Nearly 68% educators (34 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 12% educators (6 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred, 12% educators (6 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred and 8% educators (4 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred with regards to views on children/early years.

Early Childhood Teachers

Nearly 76% EC teachers (38 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 18% EC teachers (9 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred, 4% EC teachers (2 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred and 2% EC teachers (1 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred with regards to views on children/early years.

Fathers

Majority of fathers 72% (36 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 14% fathers (14 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred, 8% fathers (4 of 50 respondents) rated the social

efficiency ideology as most preferred and 6% fathers (3 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred with regards to views on children/early years.

Mothers

Majority of mothers 74% (37 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 14% mothers (7 0f 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred, 6% mothers (3 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred and 6% mothers rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred with regards to views on children/early years.

Figure 10 depicts a comparative overview of preferred ideological position amongst the group of educators and early childhood teachers, and fathers and mothers.

N=200

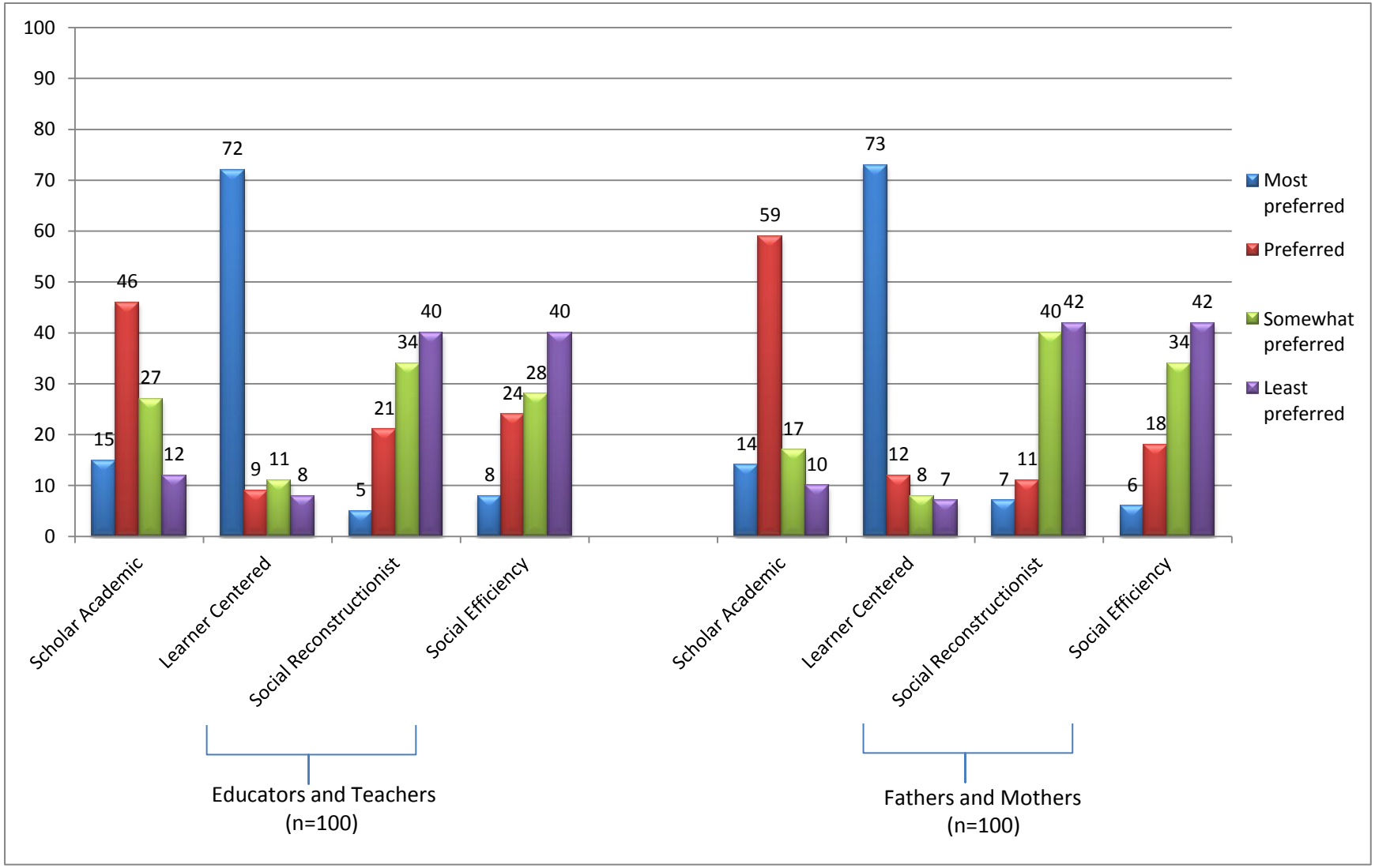

Figure 10. Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: views on children

Table 11 indicates the preferences on four curricular ideological positions with regards to views on children.

Table 11

Percentage Rank Frequency Table: Views on Children/Early Years

N=200

Rank **Statement***	**1 (Most preferred)**	**2 (Preferred)**	**3 (Somewhat preferred)**	**4 (Least preferred)**
1 (D)	14 (7%)	42 (21%)	62 (31%)	82 (41%)
2 (A)	29 (14.5%)	105 (52.5%)	44 (22%)	22 (11%)
3 (B)	145 (72.5%)	21 (10.5%)	19 (9.5%)	15 (7.5%)
4 (C)	12 (6%)	32 (16%)	74 (37%)	82 (41%)

*****Sequence of the statements and corresponding ideologies retained in the order of their appearance on the inventory, where:

A- Scholar Academic Ideology

B- Learner Centered Ideology

C- Social Reconstructionist Ideology

D- Social Efficiency Ideology

H_0- Four groups are homogenous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

H_1- Four groups are heterogeneous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

The critical value at 0.05 level of significance with 9 degrees of freedom was:

$\chi^2_{Critical} = \chi^2_{0.05, 9} = 16.82$

$\chi^2_{Obs} = 443.8$

Here, $\chi^2_{Obs} > \chi^2_{Critical}$

Thus, H_0 is rejected and we conclude that preference on four ideologies are heterogeneous amongst the group of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers of young children with regards to views on children/early years.

Perspectives on learning: preferred curricular ideologies

Educators

Nearly 56% educators (28 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, while 26% educators (13 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred, 16% educators (8 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred and 2% (1 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred; with regards to views on learning.

Early Childhood Teachers

Nearly 40% EC teachers (20 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 30% EC teachers (15 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred, 24% EC teachers (12 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred and 4% EC teachers (2 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred with regards to views on learning.

Fathers

Nearly 52% fathers (26 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 28% fathers (14 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred, 12% fathers (6 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar

academic ideology as most preferred and 8% fathers (4 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred with regards to views on learning.

Mothers

Nearly 56% mothers (28 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 34% mothers (17 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred, 6% mothers (3 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred and 4% mothers (2 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred with regards to views on learning.

Figure 11 depicts a comparative overview of preferred ideological position amongst the group of educators and early childhood teachers, and fathers and mothers.

N=200

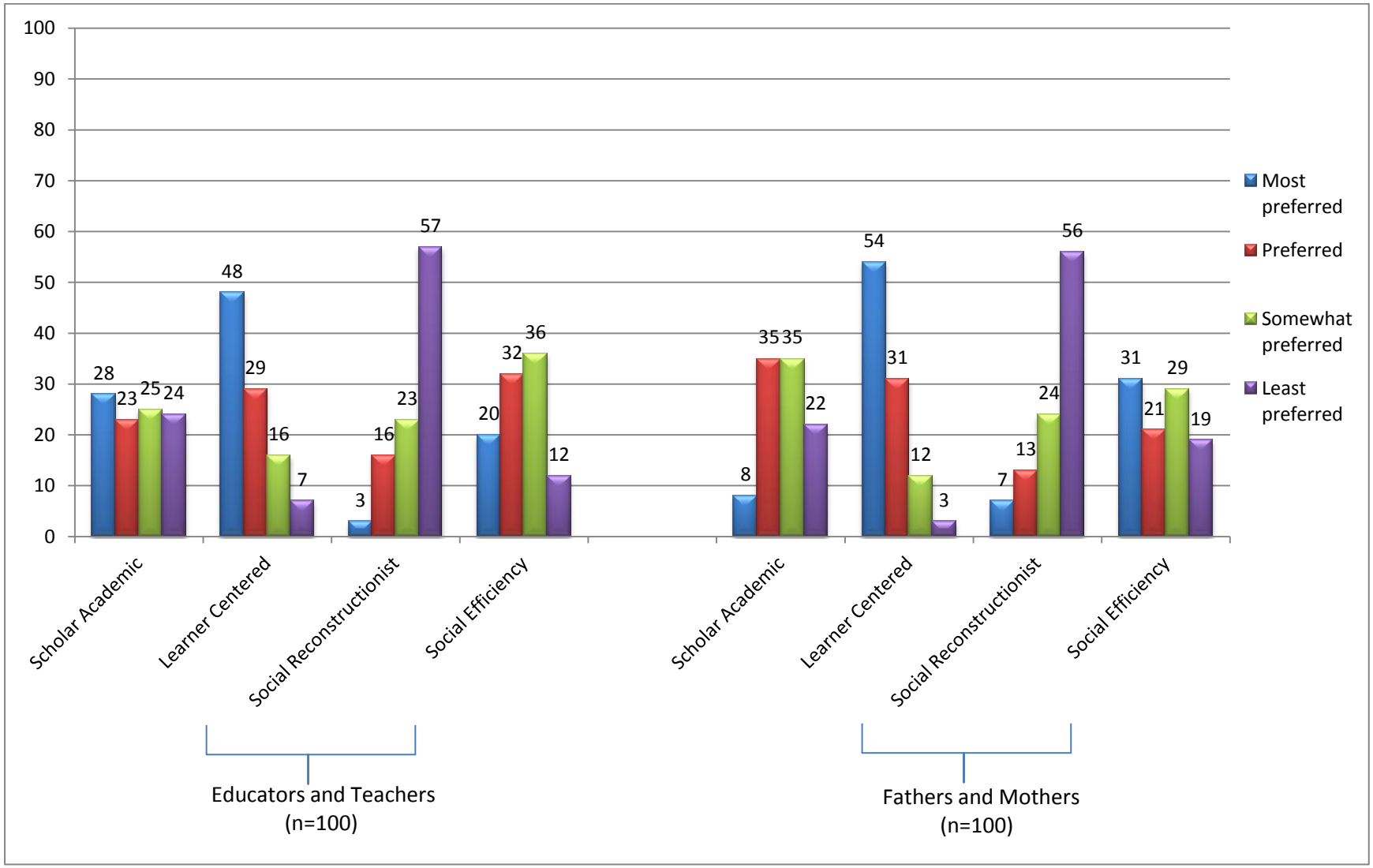

Figure 11. Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: perspectives on learning

Table 12 indicates the preferences on four curricular ideological positions with regards to views on learning.

Table 12

Percentage Rank Frequency Table: Perspectives on Learning

N=200

Rank **Statement***	**1 (Most preferred)**	**2 (Preferred)**	**3 (Somewhat preferred)**	**4 (Least preferred)**
1 (D)	51 (25.5%)	53 (26.5)	65 (32.5%)	31 (15.5%)
2 (A)	36 (18%)	58 (29%)	60 (30%)	46 (23%)
3 (B)	102 (51%)	60 (30%)	28 (14%)	10 (5%)
4 (C)	10 (5%)	29 (14.5%)	47 (23.5%)	93 (46.5%)

*****Sequence of the statements and corresponding ideologies retained in the order of their appearance on the inventory, where:

A- Scholar Academic Ideology

B- Learner Centered Ideology

C- Social Reconstructionist Ideology

D- Social Efficiency Ideology

H_0- Four groups are homogenous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

H_1- Four groups are heterogeneous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

The critical value at 0.05 level of significance with 9 degrees of freedom was:

$\chi^2_{Critical} = \chi^2_{0.05, 9} = 16.82$

$\chi^2_{Obs} = 205.1$

Here, $\chi^2_{Obs} > \chi^2_{Critical}$

Thus, H_0 is rejected and we conclude that preference on four ideologies are heterogeneous amongst the group of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers of young children with regards to views on learning.

Concepts of teaching: preferred curricular ideologies

Educators

Nearly 46% educators (23 of 50 educators) rated the social reconstruction ideology as most preferred, whereas 42% educators (21 of 50 educators) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 8% educators (4 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology and 4% educators (2 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred with regards to views on teachers/teaching.

Early Childhood Teachers

Nearly 42% (21of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 30 % EC teachers (15 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred, 22% EC teachers (11 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred and 6% EC teachers (3 of 50 educators) rated the social reconstruction ideology as most preferred with regards to views on teachers/teaching.

Fathers

Majority of fathers 60% (30 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred, 22% fathers (11 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 10% fathers (5 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred and 8% fathers (4 of 50 respondents) rated the

social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred with regards to views on teachers/teaching.

Mothers

Nearly 44% mothers (22 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred, 40% mothers (20 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 14% mothers (7 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred and 2% mothers (1 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred with regards to views on teachers/teaching.

Figure 12 depicts a comparative overview of preferred ideological position amongst the group of educators and early childhood teachers, and fathers and mothers.

N=200

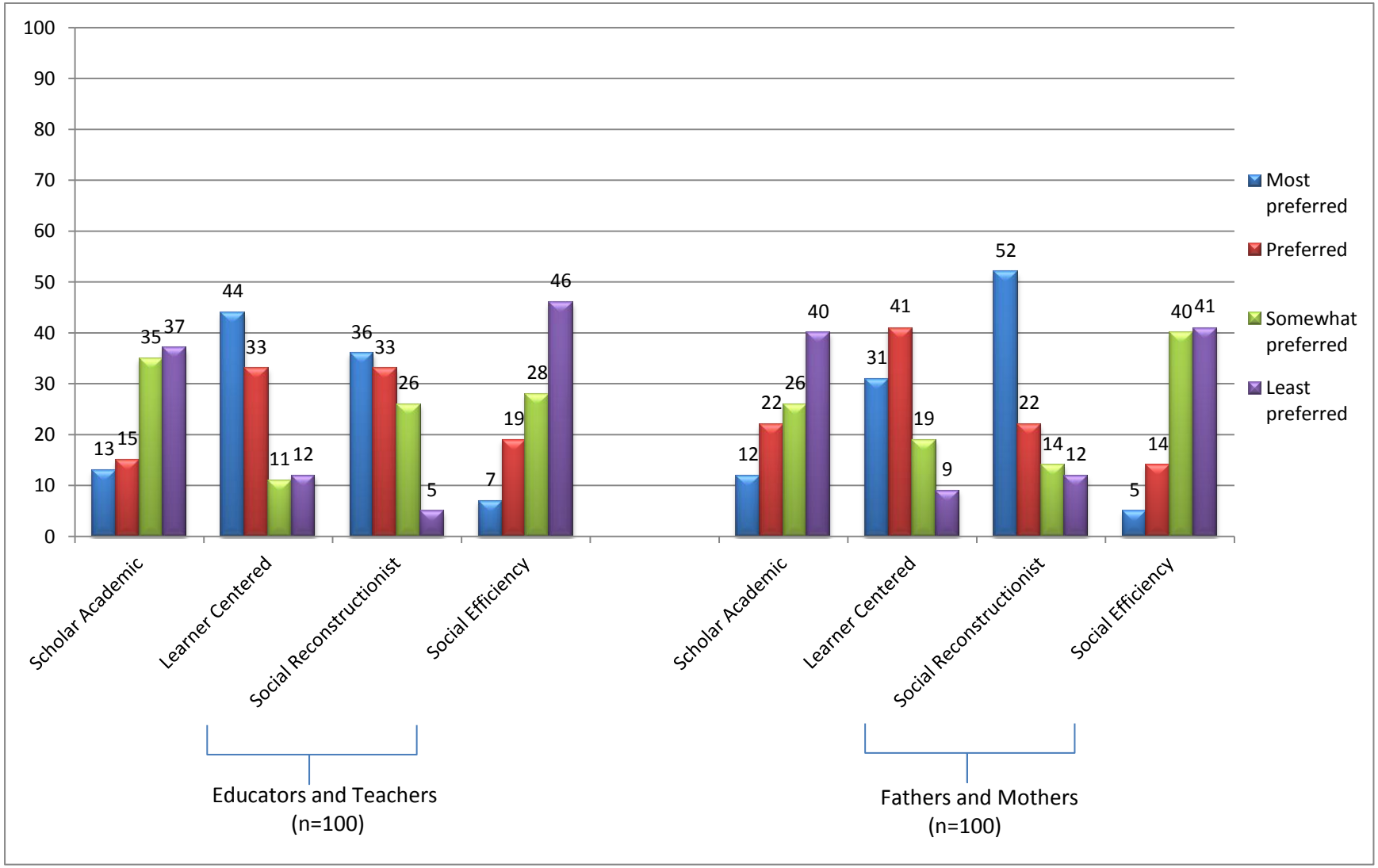

Figure 12. Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: concepts of teaching

Table 13 indicates the preferences on four curricular ideological positions with regards to views on teaching.

Table 13

Percentage Rank Frequency Table: Views on Teachers/Teaching

N=200

Rank **Statement***	**1 (Most preferred)**	**2 (Preferred)**	**3 (Somewhat preferred)**	**4 (Least preferred)**
1 (D)	12 (6%)	33 (16.5%)	68 (34%)	87 (43.5)
2 (C)	88 (44%)	55 (27.5%)	40 (20%)	17 (8.5%)
3 (B)	75 (37.5%)	74 (37%)	30 (15%)	21 (10.5%)
4 (A)	25 (12.5%)	37 (18.5%)	61 (30.5%)	41 (20.5%)

*****Sequence of the statements and corresponding ideologies retained in the order of their appearance on the inventory, where:

A- Scholar Academic Ideology

B- Learner Centered Ideology

C- Social Reconstructionist Ideology

D- Social Efficiency Ideology

.

H_0- Four groups are homogenous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

H_1- Four groups are heterogeneous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

The critical value at 0.05 level of significance with 9 degrees of freedom was:

$\chi^2_{Critical} = \chi^2_{0.05, 9} = 16.82$

$\chi^2_{Obs} = 186.2$

Here, $\chi^2_{Obs} > \chi^2_{Critical}$

Thus, H_0 is rejected and we conclude that preference on four ideologies are heterogeneous amongst the group of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers of young children with regards to views on teaching/teachers.

Conception of knowledge: preferred ideological positions

Educators

Nearly 58% educators (29 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, while 36% educators (18 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred, 4% educators (2 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology and 2% educators (1 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred with regards to thoughts on knowledge.

Early Childhood Teachers

Nearly 44% EC teachers (22 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred, 42% EC teachers (21 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 8% EC teachers (4 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred and 6% EC teachers (3 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred with regards to thoughts on knowledge.

Fathers

Nearly 40% fathers (20 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 36% fathers (18 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred, 18% fathers (9 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred and 6% fathers (3 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred with regards to thoughts on knowledge.

Mothers

Nearly 40% mothers (20 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 40% mothers (20 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred, 14% mothers (7 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred and 6% mothers (3 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred with regards to thoughts on knowledge.

Figure 13 depicts a comparative overview of preferred ideological position amongst the group of educators and early childhood teachers, and fathers and mothers.

N=200

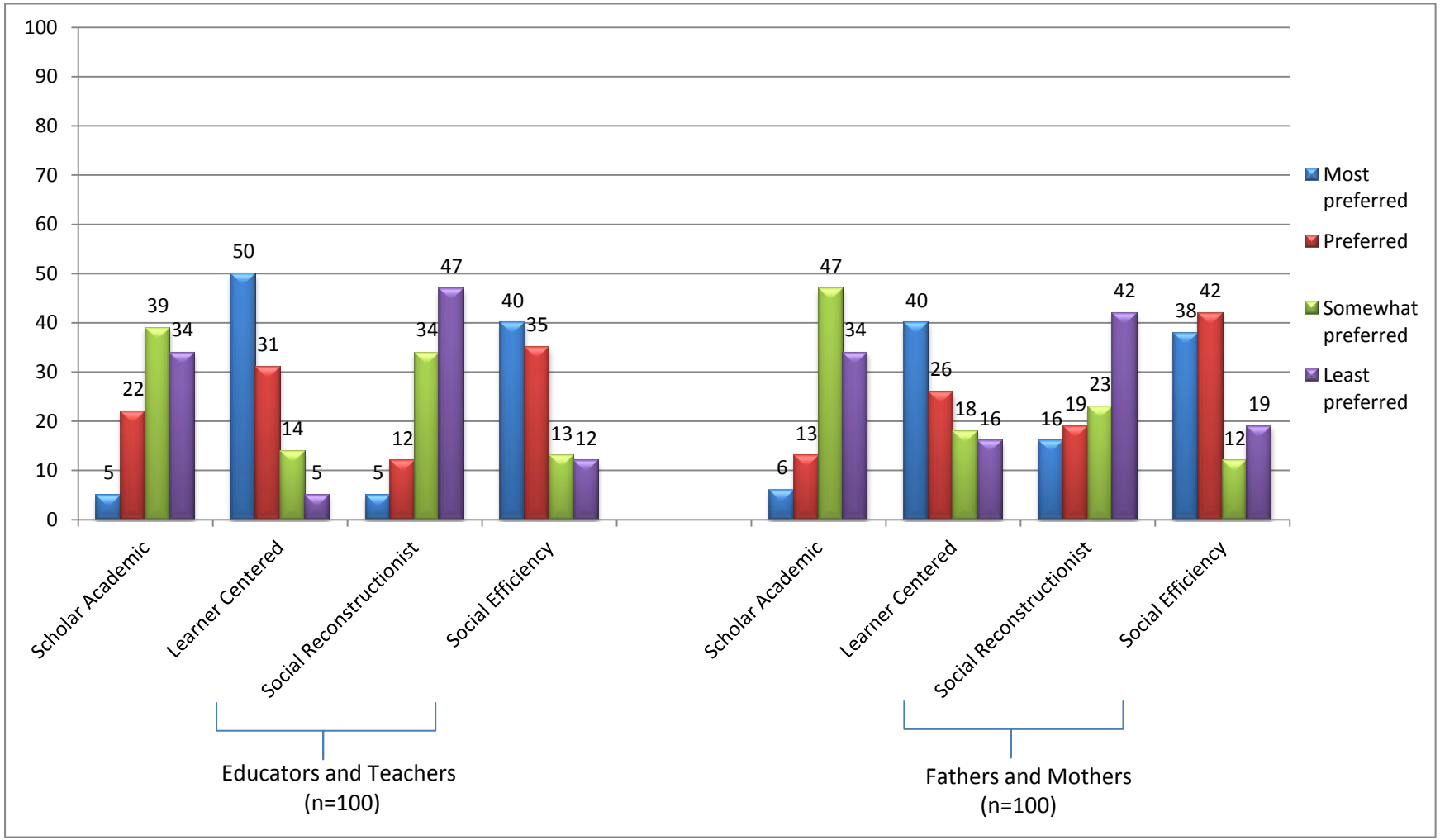

Figure 13. Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: conception of knowledge

Table 14 indicates the preferences on four curricular ideological positions with regards to thoughts on knowledge.

Table 14

Percentage Rank Frequency Table: Conception of Knowledge

N=200

Rank **Statement***	**1 (Most preferred)**	**2 (Preferred)**	**3 (Somewhat preferred)**	**4 (Least preferred)**
1 (A)	11 (5.5%)	35 (17.5%)	86 (43%)	68 (34%)
2 (B)	90 (45%)	57 (28.5)	32 (16%)	21 (10.5%)
3 (D)	78 (39%)	77 (38.5%)	25 (12.5%)	20 (10%)
4 (C)	66 (33%)	31 (15.5%)	57 (28.5%)	89 (44.5%)

*****Sequence of the statements and corresponding ideologies retained in the order of their appearance on the inventory, where:

A- Scholar Academic Ideology

B- Learner Centered Ideology

C- Social Reconstructionist Ideology

D- Social Efficiency Ideology

H_0- Four groups are homogenous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

H_1- Four groups are heterogeneous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

The critical value at 0.05 level of significance with 9 degrees of freedom was:

$\chi^2_{Critical} = \chi^2_{0.05, 9} = 16.82$

$\chi^2_{Obs} = 202.2$

Here, $\chi^2_{Obs} > \chi^2_{Critical}$

Thus, H_0 is rejected and we conclude that preference on four ideologies are heterogeneous amongst the group of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers of young children with regards to views on knowledge.

Views on assessment: preferred curricular ideologies

Educators

Majority of educators 76% (38 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 8% educators (4 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred, 8% educators (4 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred and 8% (4 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred with regards to their views on assessment.

Early Childhood Teachers

Majority of EC teachers 84% (42 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 24% EC teachers (12 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred and 12% EC teachers (6 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred with regards to views on assessment.

Fathers

Majority of fathers 80% (40 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 14% fathers (7 of 50 educators) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred and 6% fathers (3 of 50 educators) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred with regards to their views on assessment.

Mothers

Majority of mothers 86% (43 of 50 respondents) rated the learner centered ideology as most preferred, 6% mothers (3 of 50 respondents) rated the social reconstructionist ideology as most preferred, 4% mothers (2 of 50 respondents) rated the social efficiency ideology as most preferred and 4% mothers (2 of 50 respondents) rated the scholar academic ideology as most preferred with regards to their views on assessment.

Figure 14 depicts a comparative overview of preferred ideological position amongst the group of educators and early childhood teachers, and fathers and mothers.

N=200

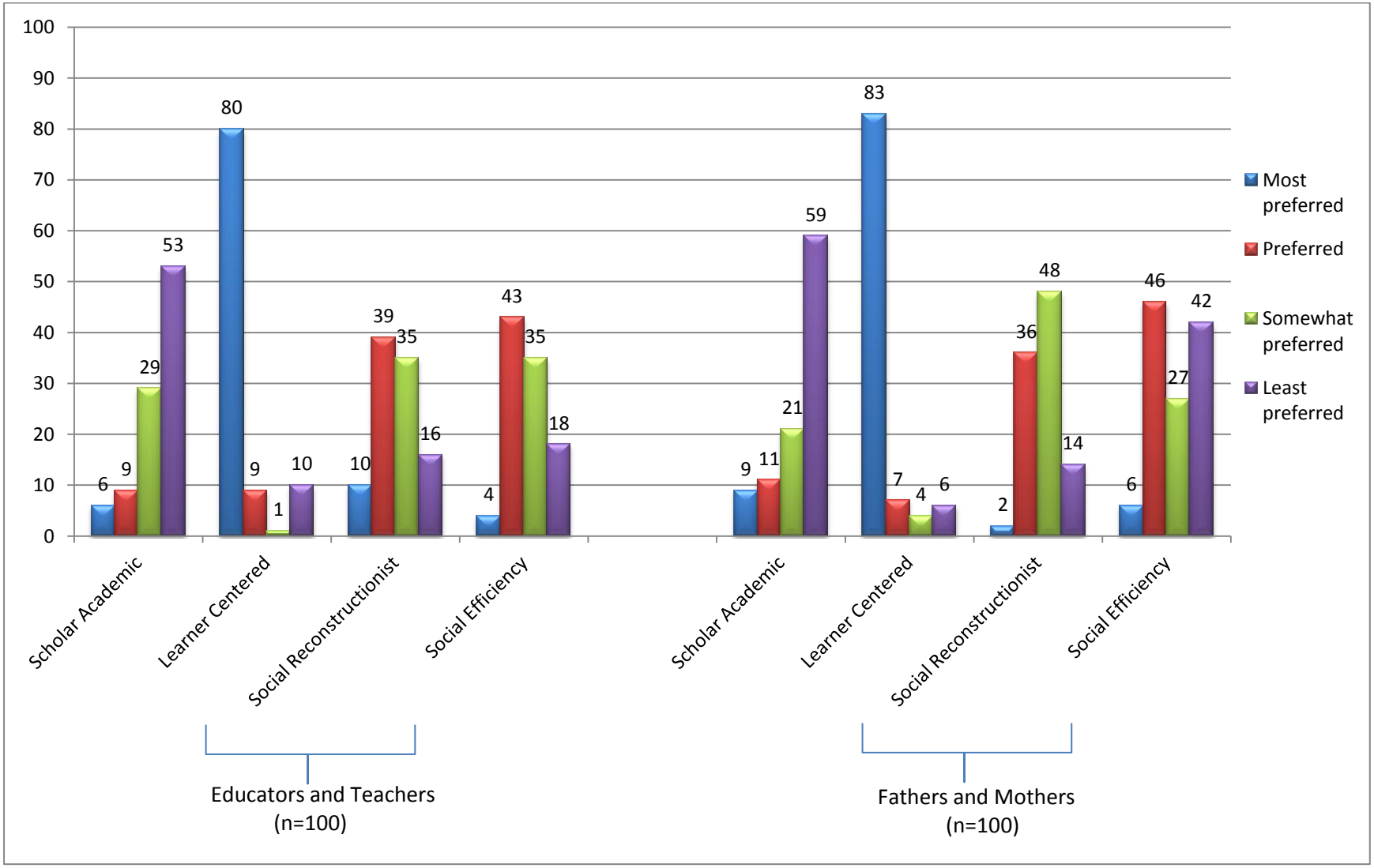

Figure 14. Comparative overview of preferred ideological position: beliefs about assessment

Table 15 indicates the preferences on four curricular ideological positions with regards to views on assessment.

Table 15

Percentage Rank Frequency Table: Beliefs about Assessment

N=200

Rank / **Statement***	**1 (Most preferred)**	**2 (Preferred)**	**3 (Somewhat preferred)**	**4 (Least preferred)**
1 (D)	10 (5%)	89 (44.5%)	62 (31%)	39 (19.5%)
2 (B)	163 (81.5%)	16 (8%)	5 (2.5%)	16 (8%)
3 (C)	12 (6%)	75 (37.5)	83 (41.5)	30 (15%)
4 (A)	15 (7.5%)	20 (10%)	50 (25%)	112 (56%)

*****Sequence of the statements and corresponding ideologies retained in the order of their appearance on the inventory, where:

A- Scholar Academic Ideology

B- Learner Centered Ideology

C- Social Reconstructionist Ideology

D- Social Efficiency Ideology

H_0- Four groups are homogenous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

H_1- Four groups are heterogeneous regarding preferred curricular ideology on views of schools

The critical value at 0.05 level of significance with 9 degrees of freedom was:

$\chi^2_{Critical} = \chi^2_{0.05, 9} = 16.82$

$\chi^2_{Obs} = 603.3$

Here, $\chi^2_{Obs} > \chi^2_{Critical}$

Thus, H_0 is rejected and we conclude that preference on four ideologies are heterogeneous amongst the group of educators, early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers of young children with regards to views on assessment.

The most preferred curricular ideologies across the selected tenets of early childhood education curriculum amongst the group of educators, early childhood teachers and father and mothers of young children are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16

Most Preferred Curricular Ideologies: Comparative Overview

	Educators	Early Childhood Teachers	Fathers	Mothers
Views on early childhood education	Learner centered	Learner centered	Learner centered	Learner centered
Views on teachers/teaching	Social reconstruction Learner centered	Learner centered Social efficiency	Social efficiency Learner centered	Social efficiency Learner centered
Views on learning	Learner centered Scholar academic	Learner centered Scholar academic	Learner centered Social reconstructionist	Learner centered Social reconstructionist
Thoughts on knowledge	Learner centered Social reconstructionist	Social reconstructionist Learner centered	Learner centered Social reconstructionist	Social reconstructionist Learner centered
Views on children/early years	Learner centered	Learner centered	Learner centered Scholar academic	Learner centered
Views on assessment	Learner centered	Learner centered	Learner centered	Learner centered

The following is a summary of the most preferred curricular ideologies of educators, early childhood teachers and fathers and mother of young children, according to the domains of inquiry. Detailed explanation for the same has been mentioned in the previous sections.

Purpose of early childhood education

The educators, early childhood teachers and fathers and mother of young children, prefer the learner centered ideology as most preferred in terms of the purpose of early childhood education.

Views on teachers/teaching

Educators prefer the social reconstruction ideology and learner centered ideology, whereas early childhood teachers, fathers and mothers of young children prefer the learner centered and social efficiency ideology with regards to their views on teachers/teaching.

Views on learning

Educators and early childhood teachers prefer the learner centered and scholar academic ideologies, while fathers and mothers prefer the learner centered and social reconstructionist ideologies with regards to their views on learning.

Thoughts on knowledge

Educators, early childhood teachers and fathers and mother of young children prefer the social reconstructionist and learner centered ideologies with regards to their views on knowledge.

Views on children/early years

Educators, early childhood teachers and mothers prefer the learner centered ideologies whereas fathers prefer the learner centered and scholar academic ideologies with regards to their views on children/early years.

Views on assessment

The educators, early childhood teachers and fathers and mother of young children, prefer the learner centered ideology as most preferred in terms of the purpose of early childhood education.

Overall the most preferred ideologies are the learner centered, followed by social reconstructionism, social efficiency and scholar academic. The preference of the curricular ideologies resonates with their views and assumptions pertaining to the domains of inquiry.

Draw implications for conceptualization of an indigenous early childhood education curriculum framework

The following section highlights the implications of the study results on conceptualization of an indigenous early childhood education curriculum framework. The implications were derived on the basis of conceptual overview of Indian thought on selected aspects of curriculum, analysis of select national documents of early childhood care and education and the views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children.

- Ancient Indian thought on education reflects a process inclusive of a variety of contexts and meanings. Education was conceptualized as the process of acquisition of knowledge by applying one's own mind. The development of the intellectual power alone was not the aim of education. Along with it a most desirable quality needed was the inculcation of the sense of discrimination or *viveka* (*satyaasatya vicechana*). Intelligence itself was not considered enough for promoting *viveka* or the power for discrimination. *Tapas* of the mind was emphasized in order to achieve a state of settled intelligence (*sthitipragya*), considered of prime importance towards the goal of self realization.

- Teaching was considered as a social and moral duty (*brahma karma swabhavajam*). Guru was the general term used for teachers. He was expected to remove the darkness of ignorance from the student's mind and empower him to realize the ultimate truth. Self-realization was thought to be impossible without

the guidance of the guru. For becoming a teacher the highest intellectual, moral and spiritual qualities were required. They were expected to be self-realized and individuals with settled intelligence. They were expected to be well verse in the art of teaching (*adhyapanam*), be a good communicator (*vakta*) and a commentator (*vishleshaka*). Clarity of thought and speech, proficiency in discussion, debate, giving examples, art of explanation, elaboration and illustration were the other qualities.

- The teacher was expected to know the art of reading child's mind and providing a suitable learning opportunity to *alp-pragya* (below normal), *pragya* (of normal mental power) and *mahapragya* (gifted) children. Thus, teaching was expected to be based upon the learning potentialities of the students. Question method, lecture method, discussions and debates were common teaching techniques. Children with higher mental power were essentially encouraged towards self learning, whereas for students of lower ability, story method was common. Explanation of subtle ideas proceeded through elaboration and illustration, with the guru giving examples and making comparisons'. Observation and study of mature were also considered important strategies for teaching.

- Learning in ancient India was conceptualized as a process inclusive of three steps. The first step was called *shravanam* (listening to the guru and remembering what was taught by him). This was followed by *mananam* (reflection, deliberation and argumentation) by the pupil himself. Then came the stage of *nididhyasana* (meditation and concentration on the theme of *shravanam* and *mananam*) for

understanding the essence or hidden meaning behind a concept. In addition, *adhyanen (*study of texts), *mananen* (reflections and deliberations on the essence of what has been learnt), *pravachanen* (discussing with other pupils) and *prayogena* (application) were considered as the basics of learning.

- The notion of knowledge has been approached by Indian thinkers in diverse ways. It has been conceptualized as 'relation', 'act', 'quality', and 'self-subsistence'. The terms are interlinked and do not refer to inter-linked categories. *Jnana* (cognition), *upalabhdi* (attainment) and *buddhi* (intellect) are often used independently as well as interchangeably to refer to knowledge. As an activity, knowing is characterized as a process of consciousness. A valid cognition is one which is free from doubt (*samsaya*), indefiniteness (*anadhyavasaya*) and error (*bhrama*), and which therefore reveals things as they are (*yathartha*), furnishes the basis of successful activities (*samvadi-pravrttyanukula*) and is not contradicted (*abadhita*) by any other experience. The process of knowing involves four factors, that is, subject (*pramata*), object (*prameya*), method (*pramana*) and the resulting knowledge (*prama*). It is believed that novelty is the major feature of knowledge. The validity of knowledge is regarded natural by some schools of Indian thought, for example Mimamsa and Vedanta, who think that the conditions of validity lie within the very conditions which generate the knowledge. Thus knowledge is known from the knowledge itself (*svatah-pramana*).

- It has been told that one-fourth of learning is achieved from the guru, one- fourth from other students', one- fourth by one's own experience and one-fourth by putting it into practice. Thus, in the process of teaching and learning, the pupils played a major role and guru acted only as friend, philosopher and guide.

- The evaluations of students were oral in which knowledge, ability for exposition and elaboration, ready wit, use of proper and correct language, power of expression, oration, analysis, synthesis and to defend one's own point of view were tested. Evaluations in subjects involving skills and competencies for performance were theoretical as well as practical.

- Ancient Indian thought on selected components of curriculum consists of ideas which might be useful in thinking about and educational practices with young children. Although some of the concepts may not be directly implemented, they can be extremely useful if appropriated selectively.

- Educators and early childhood teachers can be made aware of Indian ideas surrounding curriculum and can be empowered to choose the ways in which they may use this knowledge in practice with children.

- Conceptualization of early childhood education curriculum framework must recognize the presence of curricular disagreements and competing images as they exist in the views of national early childhood documents and the views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children.

- Key dispositions and assumptions of primary stakeholders regarding the broad aspects of curriculum must be recognized for the role they play in practice with young children.

- Curricular decisions regarding children seem to be characterized by ideological struggles amongst the current educational discourse and amongst the views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children. Increased awareness of the direction these struggles assume, would lead to better decision making and place the curriculum in resonance with societal values, beliefs and practices.

- It seems likely that a unified conception of early childhood education curriculum may not exist, however; efforts should be made to build a strong and effective partnership by implementing wide varieties of strategies which can serve as a 'bridge' between the thoughts and expectations of national documents and the views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children.

- Policy documents pertaining to early childhood documents must portray cognizance to the numerous ways in which the preferred ideological positions have impact on the ways issues related to early childhood education curriculum are interpreted and engaged in by those who plan and implement the curriculum (educators and early childhood teachers) and those who are secondary receivers (parents of young children).

- Notions regarding the selected components of early childhood education curriculum seem to be ‘preserved’ in distinct images. These images seem to reflect differing assumptions and positions of national early childhood documents and views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children. Consequently, it influences thinking about and practice with young children.

- Curricular decisions for children must be ‘located’ within the distinct images that surround the notion of purpose of education, views on children, thoughts on teaching, conceptions of knowledge, views on learning and beliefs about assessment.

- A curriculum framework may acknowledge cultural diversity as it exists, by acknowledging the presence of multiple childhoods, families in different circumstances and cultures. However, it must also aim to gain a deeper understanding and attempt to address the issues that may emerge out of conflicts and power relations that exist within diverse circumstances and the various ways in which they influence thoughts related to education of young children.

- A curricular framework for early childhood education must take note of the dualities that children face on a day–to-day basis and the ways in which it influences the development of the child. Thus, the nature and scope of interventions for young children must acknowledge its political as well as cultural impact on children as well as educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children.

- Developmentally appropriate practices are envisaged, however, there seems to be a lack of clarity in what ways they may translate in practice.

- A broad variety of meanings surrounds the notion of developmental appropriateness and seems to be ensconced within the broader purview of social reconstructionism.

- Scientific prudence regarding child development finds its way into the way child is described; however, the notion of developmental appropriateness does not seem to be considered separate from the overall vision of creating an equal and just society through equality in provision and access to early childhood education.

- Visions of children from a developmental context that emphasizes their living fully in each stage through which they pass are coupled with the need to prime children into the society they live in. They are viewed primarily as members of social groups, not as individuals. The realization of their potential is in social interaction with others. Thus developmental appropriateness has its own meaning in the Indian context.

- Views on teaching/teachers reflect distinct thoughts. Teachers of young children are expected to negotiate a broad continuum of values ranging from being good role models to possessing ‘ideal’ qualities to work with young children. The value attribution is in terms of ‘expectations’ and the ideals the teachers must achieve. However, thoughts of parents reflect a distinct shift from ‘expectation’ to ‘assessment’ when they attribute the child’s performance to the capability of the

teacher/ teaching style. The teacher is viewed as someone who would primarily ‘transact’ the curriculum, ensuring that each child ‘performs well’.

- The results of the research suggest that these ideas can be useful and selectively appropriated in creating an early childhood curriculum from an indigenous perspective.

Observations

The following are few observations which emerged after analyzing the results of the study and merits mention:

- *Teachers as implementers*

  Literature in early childhood education often highlights the notions surrounding pre-school teachers as being ‘child minders’ and supervisors of the classrooms. Results of the present study revealed similar patterns in the views of national early childhood documents and views of educators and parents of young children. However, the study results point to the seemingly prevalent notions amongst early childhood teachers as being ‘implementers’ of the early childhood education programs.

- *Gender of the pre school teacher*

  The results of the study highlight a bias towards the ‘female’ pre-school teacher as being the ‘ideal’.

- *The Young child*

  The analysis of the data and the emerging results underlie the ‘young child’ who seems conspicuous by its absence. Though the research focused on early childhood education curriculum, visions pertaining to the ‘child’ seem cloaked under the visions of those around her.

Limitations of the Study

The research study tried to understand various nuances surrounding the conceptualization of early childhood education curriculum and tried to ascertain whether a curriculum framework from an indigenous perspective can be evolved. The following are some of the limitations of the present study:

- The research study respects and acknowledges developmental perspectives and its positive child outcomes, however, it aimed at exploring the possibility of evolving a perspective that has roots in Indian Epistemology and identifying the spaces in the views of national early childhood documents and views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children, where these perspectives might find a 'goodness-of-fit'. The results of the study must be thus, interpreted from this perspective.

- Many views surround the notion of 'Indian Thought', the study does not aim at specifying a particular school of thought as being 'Indian'. However, it humbly acknowledges the deep history and the rich diversity which characterizes Indian Epistemological perspectives.

- A variety of meanings surround the notion of 'indigenous'. Thus, the results of the study must be taken in view of the meaning of the term which guided the study.

- The study was carried out in two cities of Gujarat, namely; Baroda and Bhavnagar, both urban towns, with a purposively selected sample. The results of the study may have assumed a different format and direction if the study was carried out in rural or tribal areas.

- The study pin-points at diversities in the views of Indian thought, national early childhood documents and views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children. However, the study acknowledges the origin and evolution of varied perspectives. Indian thought was influenced and evolved over a period of time, national documents advocate a particular view as it functions from a larger canvas, and views of educators, early childhood teachers and parents of young children have their own color.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some recommendations that emerged from the present research.

- The study can be further applied in a different setting or socio-cultural context.
- Further studies can be undertaken to design and implement an early childhood education curriculum model by incorporating ancient Indian thoughts on organization of knowledge in curricular areas.
- Teacher training modules on the '*Panchakosha Theory'* of personality can be developed, with an effort to ascertain its feasibility and impact in re-interpreting the development of a child's personality and effective classroom pedagogy.
- Further research can be undertaken to explore the visions surrounding the role of men in the early childhood care and education environments.

A SPECIAL NOTE

A Special Note

समानी व: आकूति: समाना हृदयानि व: |

समानम् अस्तु वो मन: यथा व: सुसहा असति ||

यथा व: सुसहा असति ||

ऋग्वेद

Let your conclusions be one (or be alike)

Let your hearts be the same (or be alike)

Let your minds think alike/similar.

May all these factors make your power an impressive one.

Rigveda

The research inquiry began with an acknowledgment of competing images and discourses surrounding the education of young children. The above mentioned ancient 'shloka' from the Rigveda merits mention as a powerful reminder that somewhere amongst diverse views, assumptions and practices pertaining to education of young children lays an enduring 'concern' for young children.

The present study firmly reiterates the presence of the 'young child' at the heart of all endeavours. May the 'young child' be blessed by hearts and minds that recognise this power.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Introductory Note and Consent Form

I, Namita Bhatt, am a Doctoral Candidate and UGC Research Fellow at the Department of Human Development Family Studies, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda.

The topic of my doctoral research is 'Towards an Indigenous Early Childhood Education Curriculum: Locating Indian Thought'. With reference to the same, I solicit your responses on the Curriculum Ideology Inventory.

Your responses shall remain confidential and shall be used solely for the purpose of research.

Thank you for your co-operation and support.

Namita Bhatt
(Doctoral Candidate)
Department of Human Development Family Studies
Faculty of Family and Community Sciences
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

Prof. Prerana Mohite
(Research Guide)
Department of Human Development Family Studies
Faculty of Family and Community Sciences
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

APPENDIX B

Participant Information Form: Parent

Name:

Age: **Male / Female**

Contact No:

Educational Qualification:

Occupation: Employed / Business / Homemaker / Other

Children:

Daughter_____ Age _____

Son _____ Age_____

APPENDIX C

Participant Information Form: Educator

Name:

Age: **Male / Female**

Contact No:

Educational Qualification:

Area of Expertise: (ECCE/Education/Psychology/Other)

Current Occupation:

APPENDIX D

Participant Information Form: ECCE Teacher

Name:

Age: **Male / Female**

Contact No:

Educational Qualification:

Affiliation:

APPENDIX E

Curriculum Ideology Inventory

(Adapted from Schiro, 2008)

Guidelines

(Section 1-6)

In each of the six sections you will find four statements with a blank in front of each.

Please read each statement carefully and then rank the statements from 1 to 4, placing:

1 next to the statement you prefer the most
2 next to the statement that you prefer second most
3 next to the statement that you prefer third most
4 next to the statement that you prefer the least

Use each of the numbers (1, 2, 3 and 4) only once in each part of the inventory.

Place the numbers on the lines to the left of each statement.

This is not a test. There is no right answer.

Take your time.

SECTION 1

-------- Schools should provide children with the ability to perceive problems in society, envision a better society, and act to change society so that there is social justice and a better life for all people.

-------- Schools should fulfill the needs of society by efficiently training students to function as mature constructive members of society.

-------- Schools should be communities where the accumulated knowledge of the culture is transmitted to the students.

-------- Schools should be enjoyable, stimulating, child centered environments organized around the developmental needs and interests of children.

SECTION 2

-------- Teachers should be supervisors of student learning. They should use instructional strategies that will optimize student learning.

-------- Teachers should be companions to students. They should use the environment in which the student lives to help the student learn.

-------- Teachers should be a support to children. They should help students learn by presenting them with experiences from which students can make meaning.

-------- Teachers should be knowledgeable people. They should transmit that which is known to those who do not know it.

SECTION 3

-------- Learning best proceeds when the student is presented with the appropriate motivation, materials and positive reinforcement.

-------- Learning best proceeds when the teacher clearly and accurately presents to the student, the knowledge which the student is to acquire.

-------- Learning best takes place when children are motivated to actively engage in experiences which allow them to create their own knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live.

-------- Learning best occurs when a student confronts a real social crisis and participates in the construction of a solution to that crisis.

SECTION 4

-------- The most worthy knowledge is the structured knowledge and ways of thinking that have come to be valued by the culture over time.

-------- The most worthy knowledge is the personal meaning of oneself and of one's world. This knowledge comes from one's direct experience in the world and one's personal response to such experience.

-------- The most worthy knowledge consists of specific skills and capabilities for action. This allows an individual to live a constructive life.

-------- The most worthy knowledge consists of a set of social ethics, a commitment to those ethics, and an understanding of how to implement those ethics.

SECTION 5

-------- Childhood is essentially a time of learning in preparation for adulthood, when one will be a constructive, contributing member of society.

-------- Childhood is essentially a period of intellectual development. It is highlighted by growing reasoning ability and capacity for memory that results in greater absorption of cultural knowledge.

-------- Childhood is essentially a time when children grow according to their own innate natures, felt needs, organic impulses, and internal timetables. It is a time to focus on children as they are during childhood rather than what they would be like as adults.

-------- Childhood is essentially a time of practice and for preparation. It is a time to prepare oneself for acting upon society to improve oneself and the nature of society.

SECTION 6

-------- Assessment should objectively indicate whether the student can or cannot perform specific skills. Its purpose is to certify students' competence to perform specific tasks.

-------- Assessment should continuously identify children's needs and growth so that further growth can be promoted by appropriate adjustment of their learning environment. It is primarily for children's benefit, not for comparing children with each other or measuring them against predetermined standards.

-------- Assessment should be a subjective comparison of students performance with their capabilities. Its purpose is to indicate to the students and others the extent to which they are performing in relation to their capabilities.

-------- Assessment should objectively determine the amount of knowledge students have acquired. It allows students to be ranked from those with the greatest intellectual gain to those with the least.

APPENDIX F

Semi Structured Interview Schedule

Kindly give your opinions on the following questions.

Q-1- What is the main purpose of early childhood education? How and in what ways does it help young children?

Q-2- What is teaching? What should teachers of young children be like? What is their role in the lives of young children?

Q-3- What is learning? How and in what ways do young children learn new concepts/information?

Q-4- How would you describe knowledge? What is it made up of? When does Knowledge become most useful?

Q-5- Do you think the early years of a child's life are important? Why? What is a child like in the early years of its life?

Q-6- According to you, what is assessment? What is its purpose? Which are the different ways in which young children should be assessed?

APPENDIX G

Introductory Note and Consent Form (Gujarati)

પરિચય નોંધ

હું,નમિતા ભટ્ટ, ડોક્ટરેટ માટે ઉમેદવાર તથા મહારાજા સયાજીરાવ યુનિવર્સીટીની ફેકલ્ટી ઓફ ફેમીલી એન્ડ કોમ્યુનીટી સાયન્સમા સ્થિત હ્યુમન ડેવલોપમેન્ટ અને ફેમીલી સ્ટડીઝ વિભાગમા યુ.જી.સીની રીસર્ચ ફેલો છું.

મારા સંશોધનનો વિષય, "ટોવર્ડસ એન ઇન્ડીજીનસ અર્લી ચાઇલ્ડહુડ યુરીક્યુલમ:લોકેટીગ ઇન્ડીયન થોટ" છે. આ સંદર્ભમા હું આપનો પ્રતિભાવ, સાથે આપેલ ક્યુરીક્યુલમ આઇડીયોલોજી ઇન્વેન્ટરી માં આપવા વિનંતિ કરું છું

તમારો પ્રતિભાવ ખાનગી રહેશે અને તેનો ઉપયોગ ફક્ત સંશોધન કાર્ય માટેજ થશે.

આપના સહકાર બદલ આભાર.

નમિતા ભટ્ટ
(ડોક્ટરેટ માટે ઉમેદવાર)
હ્યુમન ડેવલોપમેન્ટ અને ફેમીલી
સ્ટડીઝ વિભાગ
ફેક્લ્ટી ઓફ ફેમિલી અને
કોમ્યુનીટી સાયન્સ
ધ મહારાજા સયાજીરાવ યુનીવર્સીટી
વડોદરા

પ્રો.પ્રેરણા મોહીતે
(સંશોધનના માર્ગદર્શક)
હ્યુમન ડેવલોપમેન્ટ અને ફેમીલી
સ્ટડીઝ વિભાગ
ફેક્લ્ટી ઓફ ફેમિલી અને
કોમ્યુનીટી સાયન્સ
ધ મહારાજા સયાજીરાવ યુનીવર્સીટી
વડોદરા

APPENDIX H

Participant Information Form (Gujarati): Parent

પ્રતિભાવ આપનારની વીગતો
(વાલી)

નામ-:

ઉમર-: પુરૂષ/સ્ત્રી

ફોન-:

શૈક્ષણીક લાયકાત-:

કાર્યક્ષેત્ર-: નોકરી/વ્યાપાર/ઘરસંભાળ/અન્ય

બાળકો

પુત્રી _: ઉંમર

પુત્ર _: ઉંમર

APPENDIX I

Participant Information Form (Gujarati): Educator

પ્રતિભાવ આપનારની વીગતો
(એડયુકેટર)

નામ-:

ઉમર-: **પુરુષ/સ્ત્રી**

ફોન-:

શૈક્ષણિક લાયકાત-:

હાલના કામનો પ્રકાર-:

APPENDIX J

Participant Information Form (Gujarati): ECCE Teacher

પ્રતિભાવ આપનારની વીગતો
(ઇ.સી.સી.ઇ ટીચર)

નામ-:

ઉમર-: પુરુષ/સ્ત્રી

ફોન-:

શૈક્ષણિક લાયકાત-:

હાલના કામનો પ્રકાર-:

APPENDIX K

Curriculum Ideology Inventory (Gujarati)

ક્યુરીક્યુલમ આઇડીયોલોજી ઇન્વેન્ટરી

(અભ્યાસક્રમની વિચારધારાની યાદી, Adapted from Schiro 2008)

(ભાગ ૧ થી ભાગ ૬ સુધી)

હવે પછીના દરેક ભાગમાં ચાર વિધાન આપેલ છે. જેની સામે ખાલી જગ્યા રાખેલ છે. દરેક વિધાન વાંચીને તેને નીચે મુજબ ક્રમાંક આપો.

૧ જે વિધાન તમને સૌથી યોગ્ય લાગે.

૨ જે વિધાન તમને વિધાન ૧ કરતાં ઓછું યોગ્ય લાગે.

૩ જે વિધાન તમને વિધાન ૧ તથા ૨ કરતાં ઓછું યોગ્ય લાગે.

૪ જે વિધાન તમને સૌથી ઓછું યોગ્ય લાગે.

દરેક ક્રમાંકનો યાદીના દરેક ભાગમા ફક્ત એક વખત ઉપયોગ કરો.

ક્રમાંકને વિધાનની ડાબી બાજુ દર્શાવો.

આ કોઇ કસોટી નથી.

કોઇ જવાબ સાચો નથી.

તમને યોગ્ય લાગે એટલો સમય લો.

ભાગ ૧

------- શાળાઓએ બાળકને એ કાબેલિયત આપવી જોઇયે જેથી તે સમાજના પ્રશ્નો સમજી શકે,સારા સમાજની પરિકલ્પના કરી શકે અને એવુ કાર્ય કરી શકે કે દરેક વ્યક્તિને સામાજીક ન્યાય અને સારી જીવનશૈલી પ્રાપ્ત થાય.

------- શાળાઓએ બાળકોને તેઓ સમાજના પરિપક્વ,સર્જનાત્મક સભ્ય બની શકે તેવી તાલિમ આપીને સમાજની જરૂરિયાત પૂરી કરવી જોઇએ.

------- શાળાઓ એવી સંસ્થા હોવી જોઇએ જેમાં સંસ્કૃતિનું એકત્રીત થયેલ જ્ઞાન બાળકોને આપવામા આવે.

------- શાળાઓએ બાળકોના વિકાસ અને રસને કેન્દ્રમા રાખીને,તેમને ગમતું,પ્રેરણા આપે તેવું વાતાવરણ પૂરું પાડવુ જોઇએ.

ભાગ ૨

------ શિક્ષક બાળકના ભણતર માટે નિરીક્ષક હોવો જોઇએ. તેમણે સુચના દ્વારા બાળકોને મહત્તમ જ્ઞાન મળે તેવી પદ્ધતિ અપનાવવી જોઇએ.

------ શિક્ષકો બાળકોના સાથીદાર હોવા જોઇએ.તેઓએ બાળકો જે વાતાવરણમાં રહે છે તેનો ઉપયોગ તેમના અભ્યાસમા મદદરૂપ થાય તેવુ કરવુ જોઇયે.

------ શિક્ષકો બાળકોના સહાયક હોવા જોઇએ.તેઓએ બાળકો સામે એવા અનુભવની વાત કરવી જોઇએ જેમાથી બાળકો શીખી શકે.

------ શિક્ષકો જ્ઞાની હોવા જોઇયે.તેઓએ પોતે જે જ્ઞાન ધરાવે છે તેને તેમની પાસે પહોંચાડવુ જોઇએ જેઓ તે જ્ઞાન ધરાવતા નથી.

ભાગ ૩

-------- શીખવાની પ્રક્રિયા ત્યારે શ્રેષ્ઠ રીતે ચાલે છે,જ્યારે બાળકોને યોગ્ય પ્રોત્સાહન,સાધનો તથા હકારાત્મક વલણ પૂરું પાડવામા આવે છે,

-------- શીખવાની પ્રક્રિયા ત્યારે શ્રેષ્ઠ રીતે ચાલે છે,જ્યારે શિક્ષક સ્પષ્ટ,સચોટ રીતે બાળકોએ જે જ્ઞાન લેવાનુ છે તે દર્શાવે છે,

-------- શીખવાની પ્રક્રિયા ત્યારે શ્રેષ્ઠ રીતે ચાલે છે,જયારે બાળકોને એવા અનુભવ લેવા માટે પ્રોત્સાહિત કરવામા આવે છે જેને કારણે તેઓ પોતે જે જગતમાં રહે છે તેની વિષે જ્ઞાન મેળવી શકે અને સમજણ કેળવી શકે

-------- શીખવાની પ્રક્રિયા ત્યારે શ્રેષ્ઠ રીતે ચાલે છે જ્યારે બાળકો સમાજની વાસ્તવિક મુશ્કેલીનો સામનો કરે છે અને તેનુ રચનાત્મક નિરાકરણ લાવવામાં પોતાનો ફાળો આપે છે.

ભાગ ૪

-------- સૌથી ઉત્તમ જ્ઞાન એ છે જે ચોક્કસ માળખામાં રહેલ છે અને જે સાંસ્કૃતિક રીતે સન્માનીય વિચારધારા પ્રમાણે છે.

------- સૌથી ઉત્તમ જ્ઞાન એ છે જે વ્યક્તિની પોતાની જાતનો તથા તેના જગતનો પરિચય છે. આ જ્ઞાન વ્યક્તિના જાતઅનુભવથી અને તે અનુભવ સામેની તેની પ્રતિક્રિયાથી આવે છે.

------- સૌથી ઉત્તમ જ્ઞાન એ છે જે વ્યક્તિને ચોક્કસ પ્રકારની આવડત અને કાર્યક્ષમતા આપે છે. જેને કારણે વ્યકિત રચનાત્મક જીવન જીવી શકે છે.

------- સૌથી ઉત્તમ જ્ઞાન એ છે જે અમુક સામાજીક નીતિનિયમો,તેના પાલન માટેની વચનબધ્ધતા,તથા તેના અમલીકરણની સમજણનું બનેલું છે.

ભાગ ૫

------- બાળપણ ખાસ કરીને એ સમય છે જેમાં પરિપક્વ થવાની તૈયારી કરવામા આવે છે જેથી વ્યક્તિ એક જવાબદારીનું ભાન ધરાવતો,રચનાત્મક વલણવાળો,સમાજનો સભ્ય બને છે.

------- બાળપણ ખાસ કરીને બુદ્ધિના વિકાસનો સમય છે.આ વધુ સ્પષ્ટ ત્યારે થાય છે જ્યારે તાર્કિક આવડત તથા યાદશક્તિ વધતી જાય છે જેને કારણે સાંસ્કૃતિક જ્ઞાનની સમજણ કેળવાય છે.

------- બાળપણ ખાસ કરીને એ સમય છે જ્યારે બાળકનો તેના પોતાના સ્વભાવ,જરૂરિયાતો, સંવેદનાઓ તથા આંતરિક સમયાનુસાર કુદરતી વિકાસ થાય છે.આ સમય એવો છે કે બાળકો જેવા બાળપણમાં છે તેના પર ધ્યાન આપવામા આવે,નહીકે તેઓ મોટા થઇને કેવા બનશે તેની ઉપર.

------ બાળપણનો સમય મુખ્યત્વે મહાવરા અને તૈયારી માટેનો છે.આ સમય પોતાની જાતને એવી તૈયાર કરવાનો છે જેને લીધે પોતાનો તથા સમાજનો વિકાસ થાય.

ભાગ ૬

------ મૂલ્યાંકન થકી તે નક્કી થવુ જોઇયે કે બાળક ચોક્કસ પ્રકારની આવડત ધરાવે છે કે નહી મૂલ્યાંકનનો હેતુ છે બાળકની નિર્ધારિત કામ કરવાની ક્ષમતાને પ્રમાણિત કરવાનો.

------ મૂલ્યાંકન વડે બાળકોની જરૂરિયાત શું છે તેની સતત ખબર પડવી જોઇએ,જેથી કરીને તેમના અભ્યાસના વાતાવરણમાં યોગ્ય ફેરફાર કરીને તેમના વિકાસમા મદદરૂપ થઇ શકાય.આ મૂખ્યત્વે બાળકોના ફાયદા માટે છે,નહીકે બાળકોને એકબીજા સાથે સરખાવવા માટે કે કોઇ પહેલેથી નક્કી કરેલા માપ સાથે તેમને સરખાવવા માટે.

------ મૂલ્યાંકન બાળકોના કામની તેમની કાર્યક્ષમતા સાથે સરખામણી હોવી જોઇએ.તેનો હેતુ બાળક તથા બીજાને એ બતાવવાનો હોવો જોઇયે કે તેઓ તેમની ક્ષમતાની સરખામણીમાં કેવુ કામ કરી રહ્યા છે.

------- મૂલ્યાંકન દ્વારા એ નક્કી થવું જોઇયે કે બાળકોએ કેટલું જ્ઞાન મેળવેલ છે.તેના દ્વારા બાળકોને તેમની બુદધીશક્તિ પ્રમાણે ક્રમ આપી શકાય કે કોણ સૌથી વધુ બુદિધ ધરાવે છે અને કોણ સૌથી ઓછી.

APPENDIX L

Semi Structured Interview Schedule (Gujarati)

નીચે આપેલ પ્રશ્નો માટે તમારો અંગત અભિપ્રાય આપવા વિનંતિ.

પ્ર. ૧ –: બાલમંદિરનો મુખ્ય હેતુ શું છે અને તે કઇ રીતે બાળકને મદદરૂપ થાય છે? તે અંગેનો તમારો અભિપ્રાય જણાવો

પ્ર. ૨ –: નાના બાળકોના શિક્ષક કેવા હોવા જોઇએ?નાના બાળકોના જીવનમાં તેમની શું ભુમિકા છે?

પ્ર. ૩ –: તમારી દ્રષ્ટિએ નાના બાળકો નવી નવી બાબતો કઇ કઇ રીતે શીખે છે?

પ્ર ૪ –: તમારા મત પ્રમાણે જ્ઞાન એટલે શું? તે સૌથી વધુ ક્યારે ઉપયોગી બને?

પ્ર. ૫-: તમને લાગે છે કે બાળકના જીવનના પ્રારંભના વર્ષો મહત્વના છે? શા માટે? બાળક જીવનના પ્રારંભિક વર્ષોમા કેવું હોય છે?

પ્ર.૬ -: તમારા મત પ્રમાણે મૂલ્યાંકન/પરિક્ષાનો મુખ્ય હેતુ શું છે? નાનાં બાળકોનૂં મૂલ્યાંકન/પરીક્ષણ કઇ રીતે થવું જોઇએ?

APPENDIX M

Permission from Michael Schiro to use/modify the Curriculum Ideology Inventory

From: Michael Schiro:schiro@bc.edu

To: Bhatt Namita <bhatt.namita@gmail.com>

Date: 14th October 2010 23:07

Object: Re: Greetings from The M.S. University India

Hello Namita,

You have my permission to make copies of the inventory and use it in India. You also have my permission to alter the inventory and/or to translate it, as you might choose. You might want to change some of the words or phrasing to correspond to usage in India. You might also want to change some of the statements so they correspond to the possible choices that are understood in India.

I am delighted that you found my book and the inventory useful. If I can in any way be helpful to you, please do not hesitate to email me.

Good luck with your endeavors, and please do keep me informed of your findings.

Michael Stephen Schiro
Retired Professor
Boston College, MA
schiro@bc.edu