Chapter 5

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE)

5.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS:

According to the latest Census Report (1998), the total population of under 5-year age group in Pakistan is 18.6 million which is 14.2% of the 130.58 million population of the country. In the year 2000, the population in the 3-5 years age group was 8.61 million (4.40 million boys and 4.21 million girls).

i. Early Childhood Education

The importance of early childhood care and development (ECCD) in general and early childhood education (ECE) in particular, is now well-established. It is widely acknowledged that the effects of the kind of early care a child receives from parents, pre-school teachers and caregivers, determines how well a child learns and performs throughout his/her life. The early years are critical for the acquisition of the concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. These include the acquisition of language, perception-motor skills, problem-solving skills and a love for learning. With good quality early education, educational efficiency would improve as children would acquire the basic concepts, skills and attitudes required for successful learning and development prior to or shortly after entering the system, thus reducing the chances of failure; and the system, too, would be freed of under-age and under-prepared learners who have proven to be the most at risk in terms of school failure and drop-out.

Other benefits of early care and education relate to increased economic productivity over a lifetime and better standards of living when the child becomes an adult. It is also proven that intervening in the earliest years help to reduce social and economic disparities and gender inequalities that divide our society. It is, therefore, the children of the poor classes which require the greatest attention in early childhood programmes in general, and in early childhood education, in particular.

ii. Early Childhood Education in Pakistan

ECE Programmes in Formal Schools

Early Childhood Education had been well organized and formalized till seventies. Katchi or pre-primary classes were organized in the formal primary schools. However, officially this practice was almost discontinued during eighties. Realizing the role and significance of early childhood education, especially for improving the learning achievement/competencies, provision has been made in the current
National Education Policy (1998-2010) to reintroduce Katchi/pre-primary class as a formal class in primary schools, extending the primary education for six years - Katchi to grade V. Implementation of this policy provision has not started due to scarcity of resources. Pakistan’s priority area is primary education (5-9 age group). Once the target of Universalization of Primary Education (UPE) is achieved, the next two priority areas will be Adult Literacy and Early Childhood Education (ECE).

In the public sector primary schools, especially in rural areas, children below 5 years of age do attend school informally, and learn basic concepts of literacy and numeracy. Available evidence indicates that of the total enrolment in pre-primary and primary classes, the share of enrolment in pre-primary classes ranges between 4.73% in Islamabad Capital Territory and 30.11% in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Among the provinces, while Punjab, NWFP and Balochistan have high levels of pre-primary enrolments, the share of pre-primary enrolments in total (primary and pre-primary) classes is relatively very low i.e., 7.29%, in Sindh. The proportion of female children in pre-primary classes ranges between 22.19% in FATA and 45.59% in Punjab (Table 4).

Table 4: Enrolment in Pre-Primary (Katchi/Unadmitted) Classes: 1999/2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Enrolment in Pre-Primary (Katchi/Unadmitted)</th>
<th>% Enrolment of Pre-Primary in Pre-Primary &amp; Primary classes</th>
<th>% Female Enrolment in Pre-Primary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>1,847,967</td>
<td>18.38</td>
<td>45.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>243,747</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>36.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWFP</td>
<td>541,425</td>
<td>17.69</td>
<td>39.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balochistan</td>
<td>218,716</td>
<td>26.15</td>
<td>36.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATA</td>
<td>125,097</td>
<td>30.11</td>
<td>22.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FANA</td>
<td>36,030</td>
<td>22.71</td>
<td>39.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>6,827</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>44.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,019,809</td>
<td>16.64</td>
<td>42.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (i) Provincial EMIS; (ii) NEMIS; (iii) FBS; (iv) Pakistan Literacy Commission; and (v) Curriculum Wing, MoEducation

In private sector schools pre-primary education is well organized, being an essential part of primary education. However, due to their high fees, these private schools cater only to the needs of the relatively affluent urban class, excluding a large section of the society comprising poor families. Almost all such schools arrange pre-primary education in the form of Nursery, Pre-nursery or Kindergarten KG-I, KG-II classes.

In Pakistan, early childhood education suffers from a series of problems:
(i) Lack of realization and awareness about the importance of the benefits of early childhood education;
(ii) Absence of well-defined policy, laws and rules for early childhood education;
(iii) Although pre-primary education has been recognized in the National Education Policy, but no formal measure has been undertaken to implement this policy provision at the school level, such as separate pre-primary classroom, separate teacher; separate facilities.
(iv) Financial allocation to ECE is negligible, especially in relation to the needs of the children.
(v) Lack of coordination among the various government departments related to early childhood care and education and also among the different service providers such as managements of public schools; private schools; NGOs; and other related community-based organizations.
(vi) Provinces, district communities and schools lack the capacity to plan, implement and monitor ECE programmes.

Religious/Informal ECE Education

In Pakistan, like in other Muslim societies, Quranic/Islamic education for all is emphasized, particularly at an early age, both in urban and rural areas and almost equally for males and females. Such education is imparted through all the three modes of education i.e. formal, non-formal, and informal, either in mosques, madrassas, and Quranic Centres, by the communities or at home by the parents, even in most disadvantage and remote areas of the country. For girls, it is usually an elderly or educated woman who imparts religious knowledge at home. It is an effective way to inculcate moral values and teach life skills at an early age. It is estimated that more than 80% children of 4-10 years age group do get Islamic education in this way. Even in some families the family members, especially mothers, begin imparting moral values and basic concepts of literacy and numeracy, to children, even at the age of 2. Role of mothers as educators is very important in Pakistani society.

Day Care Centers

A limited number of Day Care Centers and Nurseries have also been opened by the Social Welfare Department, for children of working mothers in urban areas. Although these centers do not impart any early childhood education per se but these centres cater to the physical, psychological, nutritional and learning needs of infants and children, besides extending proper care in the absence of their mothers. However, their coverage is very low, limited and confined to the metropolitan cities only.
5.2  PLAN FORMULATION
   PLANNING FRAMEWORK:

   5.2.1  Goal in Early Childhood Education:

   5.2.1.1  Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood
care and education, especially for the most vulnerable
disadvantaged children;

   5.2.2  Phasing of the Plan:

   5.2.2.1  Phase-I:  2001-02 to 2005-06  (5 Years)
   5.2.2.2  Phase-II:  2006-07 to 2010-11  (5 Years)
   5.2.2.3  Phase-III:  2011-12 to 2015-16  (5 Years)

   5.2.3  Population Projection:

   •  Total population of 3-5 years i.e. 3 or more than 3 years but less
   than 5 years was 8.1 (male 4.1 : female 4.0) million in the year
   2000. Given the declining population growth rate, this population
   may reduce to 7.4 (male 3.8 : female 3.6) million in 2005; 7.1 (male
   3.7 : female 3.5) million in the year 2010; and then may remain
   almost constant till the year 2015.

   •  Rural population is 5.6 million, which may reduce to 4.5 million by
   the end of the plan. Whereas, urban population may increase from
   the existing 2.5 million to 2.7 million in 2015 due to migration from
   rural to urban area.

   5.2.4  Targets:

   •  Participation Rate:

   The benchmark (year 2000) net participation rate of pre-primary
education which is generally termed as Early Childhood Education
(ECE) is very low i.e., only 25 % (male 31 % : female 18 %). It is
because of the fact that ECE had remained a neglected area as
compared to Primary Education due to resource constraints. The
National Plan of Action (NPA) sets the targets of increasing the net
participation rate at 50 % both male and female by 2015. The mid-term
targets would be 32% and 40% by the end of 1st and 2nd phases of the
plan. The targets in ECE are modest in view of its low priority as
compared to primary education and adult literacy.
• **Enrolment:**

Gross enrolment in Katchi class and un-admitted class, which is considered as Early Childhood Education was around 4 million (3 million in public sector and 1 million in private sector) in 1999-2000. Since, the provinces have pointed out that more than 50% students in Katchi class are 5 years or 5+ years of age, the net enrolment of 3-5 year age group is estimated to be 2 million which has been taken as benchmark enrolment in ECE with enrolment of boys at 1.25 million (62%) and girls at 0.75 million (38%). In order to achieve the planned target of 50% by the end of the plan, the benchmark enrolment would have to be enhanced to 3.6 million (additional enrolment 1.6 million). It could be possible only if we provide access/enroll on the average 100,000 children during each plan year.

• **Left Outs:**

At present, total number of left outs in ECE cohort is around 6 million which may be reduced to 5 million, 4.3 million and 3.6 million by the end of 1st, 2nd and 3rd phase of the plan respectively. In order to achieve the Dakar goal of gender equity, female enrolment will have to be increased at a higher rate than the male.

5.2.5 **Programmes/Strategies/Inputs For Access/Quantitative Expansion:**

Some of the major strategies for access are as follows:

- Policy makers, planners, managers/administrators, teachers and parents will be sensitized about the importance and significance of early childhood care and education.

- Katchi class has been recognized as part of formal system in the current National Education Policy (1998-2010). As such not only the existing Katchi class already operative in primary school, will be recognized and strengthened but also this programme will be expanded. Opening of Katchi/ECE classes in the public sector primary schools will be the major programme for improving the access in ECE under NPA.

- Adequate financial allocations for ECE will be ensured to provide the inputs proposed such as additional classroom, one teacher, audio-visual aids, teaching, learning and instructional materials. Average 2500 formal primary schools in each year of the plan will provide the above inputs to start ECE. In this way 50% additional children of ECE will be accommodated in public sector schools each year.

- Efforts will be made to improve coordination among the various stakeholders involved in ECE programmes. District and provincial EFA Forums will be established and strengthened for the purpose.
• Private sector is playing an important role in promotion of Early Childhood Education. It may also expand its programme in future. On an average, 1500 ECE centres/classes in each year of the plan are expected to be opened by private sector to accommodate around 30% of ECE children.

• The role of communities is also very crucial for pre-primary education. Public sector will persuade, organize and facilitate the communities to open and run Early Childhood Education Centers. UNICEF and other donor agencies and Education Foundations can be very helpful in this regard. At least 250 centres/classes are being proposed to open and run by the local communities every year of the plan. Mosques can be used as an important resource for this purpose.

• At least 500 centres each year are being proposed to open and run by NGOs to accommodate around 10% of the additional ECE children.

• Social Welfare Departments are running Day Care Centres especially for the children of working mothers. These centres play important role for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development. This programme will also be expanded under NPA so as to open at least 250-Day Care Centres each year to cater to the needs of around 5% children of ECE cohort.

• The services of Teachers Resource Center (TRC) Karachi will be utilized as a resource institution for providing policy and professional backup for ECE at National, Provincial and District levels.

• Statistical data and other related information on core ECE indicators would be regularly collected through EMIS, PIHS and other sources for analysis and dissemination.

5.2.6 Quality Inputs

Following quality inputs for Early Childhood Education (ECE) will be made:

i. Curriculum Wing of the Ministry has already developed the curricula for ECE in collaboration with Teachers Resource Center (TRC) and is coordinating for development of teaching-learning materials.

ii. Full-time teachers for katchi class/pre-primary education will be trained and recruited.
iii. Activity-based Qaaida and other learning materials for pre-primary education will be developed and provided free of cost to the deserving children.

iv. Instructional material, teaching kit and A.V. Aids for ECE will be developed and provided to ECE centers and schools.

v. The atmosphere of the ECE class/center will be made attractive, lively and child friendly.

vi. Play-way method will be introduced in ECE centers/classes.

5.2.7 **Resources:**

5.2.7.1 **Human Resources:**

In public sector around 3000 ECE teachers will be trained and recruited annually. Training of teachers may be imparted in the existing Teacher Training Institutions. Total number of ECE teachers required during the plan period (2001-05) is estimated to be 45000. Faculty of Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs) will be trained for imparting training to ECE teachers.

5.2.7.2 **Financial Resources:**

- Development cost for addition of one classroom along with the other required provisions (at the rate of Rs.2 million) worked out to be Rs.500 million during the base year which may increase to 850 million in the final year. Total development cost comes out to be Rs.2450, Rs.3075 and Rs.4725 million during 1st, 2nd and 3rd phase of the plan respectively.

- Recurring cost including salaries of the teacher (Rs.48,000 per year), teachers training (Rs.10,000 per teacher) and audio-visual aids and Instructional Materials (Rs.5,000 per school/center) estimated at Rs.300 million in the base year and Rs.5100 million in the final year of the plan.

5.3 **Plan Implementation**

Implementation mechanism of ECE Plan will be almost the same as proposed for Primary Education Plan with the exception that in ECE Plan implementation local communities, NGOs and donor agencies such as UNICEF will be assigned a greater role.

5.4 **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The mechanism of monitoring and evaluation of ECE programmes will be the same as proposed for Primary Education Plan.