

**EFFECT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE) ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN WITH RESPECT TO GENDER & LOCALE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*In the life of children, the early years of life are most critical. These years determines the child's future development, and lay down the foundation for their learning. Therefore, it is very important to nurture them in progressive environment. The studies conducted around the globe show that ECCE is one of the most effective ways to improve children's success in school. The early childhood educational programs provide children with the tools they need to learn social, behavioral, and learning skills. The present study explored the effect of ECCE on social development of children who attended the ECCE and those who did not attend the ECCE in Bhutan with respect to their gender and locale. 158 children studying in Pre Primary classes were selected for study. The questionnaire on Social Development by Miriam Mani (2002) had been used to collect the data. The study found that there is no significant difference in social development of preschoolers who attended early childhood care and education with respect to gender and locale but there exist is a significant difference in social development of preschoolers who attended ECCE and those who did not attended ECCE. The study recommends that the government needs to promote and facilitate the establishment of public, private and community ECCE centers and community should support ECCE through enrollment of children and participation in the process of education given in ECCE.*

Key Words: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Gender, Social Development

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**Introduction**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, major paradigm shifts are taking place in the field of education. The focus of entire world has shifted on to the quality of early education. As a result the various governments in different countries have taken major steps in investing more in the field of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD). Many researchers opined that ECCE as one of the wisest investment in education of a child. The ECCE is the key to narrow down the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged.

In Bhutan, due to economic progress, lifestyle has changed dramatically. Unlike past many people do not prefer to live in the joint families because both parents and even the grandparents are often found busy working. So, families in general have no time for traditional activities such as telling stories, singing, cuddling, talking to, or playing with children, which was considered as important purpose of building and strengthening important neural connections in the development of the brain of a child. So, ECCE provides these interventions in which children gets ample of opportunities for their development. In Bhutan, ECCE centres have been opened to provide the early education to children from age 3-5 years old by the government and private agencies.

Camilli, et al. (2010) conducted a meta-Analysis of 123 comparative studies on the effects of early education interventions on cognitive and social developments and found that there is significant effects in the development of cognitive and social development of children. Burger (2010) concluded that early education and care involvement intend to improve the intellectual and social abilities of children which are the basis for their subsequent development. ECCE provides an environment that stimulates beneficial development.

**Social Development**

The social development is the learning of behavior required by the social expectation of the culture. It involves learning to get along with other people. It involves proper performance behavior, playing of approved roles and the development of social attitudes (McCaw, 1965). Social development takes place in a social group which has a particular culture or a set of common and characteristic ways of behaving and believing. Socialization is the process of learning this culture. Although a human being is inherently social, he does not come into the world equipped with the necessary traits and techniques for social living. He has to learn how to

be social and this learning is one of the most difficult things he has to master. Social development is a process in which a child learns the values, knowledge, and skills enabling the children to relate to others effectively and makes the contribution positively towards family, school and to society as a whole. It is often referred to how a child develops friendships and other relationships and managing the conflicts with their peers. Social development is very important because it can impact many other forms of development a child experiences. A healthy interaction with the people around a child can impact everything from learning new words as a toddler, to being able to resist peer pressure as a high student, and to tackle the challenges of adulthood. Healthy social development can help a child to develop language skills, build self esteem, resolve conflicts, establish positive attitude, and strengthen learning skills. Early childhood education provides such opportunities for a child. Children in their first few months in a preschool offer an interesting study in social development. They stay there for several hours and there is frequent opportunity for interaction with children as well as adults. In the nursery school, perhaps, for the first time, the child is in a group of peers. Ample opportunities for socializing are essential because children cannot learn to live socially with others if they spend most of their time alone. The onset of the pre -school stage provides the child with greater opportunities to interact with people in the environment. During these years the child progress in his social behaviour and there is a significant decrease in his autism.

Children who attended the preschool have better social adjustment because they have developed the independence, concentration, cooperation conformity and peer sociability (Phillips et.al. 2009).The children who experienced TPS pre-K were also reported by their kindergarten teachers to be less apathetic, more attentive, and marginally less prone to attention- seeking behavior (Taggart et.al 2015). Children showed ability to behave appropriately, establish social relationships, engage in social interactions, and provide evidence of emotional maturity. It was also found that they behave significantly better than their peers and have competent social interactions (Bakken, Linda, Brown, Nola, and Downing, Barry, 2017)

Through ECCE, child's mental development and its processes were improved. It has also improved the language skills, social and emotional development by encouraging self-confidence, self- esteem, dignity, spontaneity and discipline (Burlacu, 2008). Varied activities in ECCE programmes provide windows to learn and know-how the diverse cultures, people,

and community. (Fengfeng, 2008). ). Since children have good relation and interconnection with may dimension of the society through early childhood education, it has become an important instrument to achieve the sustainable society (Haddad, 2008). Children develop readiness to mingle with friends (Jena & Wangmo, 2016).

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the study were:

1. To find out the difference in social development of preschoolers who attended early childhood care and education with respect to gender and locale.
2. To find out the difference in social development of preschoolers who attended ECCE and those who did not attend ECCE.

## **HYPOTHESES**

1. There exists no significant difference in social development of preschoolers who attended early childhood care and education with respect to gender and locale.
2. There exists a significant difference in social development of preschoolers who attended ECCE and those who did not attended ECCE.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Ex-Post-Facto-Research method was used for this study. The students have already attended the ECCE and the main objective is to see its impact upon cognitive & social development of children at preschool level. Investigator had formed two groups, one group of preschoolers who attended ECCE & second group of those who had not attended ECCE. Total of 158 preschoolers, 81 children who attended the ECCD programme and 77 children who did not attend the ECCD programme of age 6 years studying in class PP (Pre-primary) were selected. Questionnaire on Social Development by Miriam Mani (2002) was used for measuring the social development of children.

## RESULT & DISCUSSION

### The difference in social development of preschoolers who attended early childhood care and education with respect to gender and locale

The difference in social development of preschoolers who attended early childhood care and education with respect to gender was computed with the help of t- test. The results are presented below in table 1.

**Table 1: Differences in social development of preschoolers who attended ECCE with respect to gender**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	P value	Remarks
Social Development	Boys	45	64.76	5.74	0.92 *	p-value > 0.05
	Girls	36	64.89	6.90		

*\*Not significant*

From the Table I, it is clear that the P – value (= 0.92) is more than 0.05, which means null hypothesis is accepted. Statically, this indicates there is no significant difference in social development of preschoolers who attended early childhood care and education with respect to gender. As a result of ECCE both male and female do not have significant difference in their social development. The main reason is that ECCE centres are providing equal opportunities of social development for both the boys and girls by making them to participate in all the activities equally. Again t-test was computed to find out the difference in cognitive development of preschoolers who attended early childhood care and education with respect to locale. The results are presented below in table 2

**Table 2: Differences in social development of preschoolers who attended ECCE with respect to locale**

Variable	Locality	N	Mean	SD	P value	Remarks
Social Development	Urban	24	65.92	4.28	0.36*	p-value > 0.05
	Rural	57	64.35	6.89		

*\*Not significant*

From the Table 2, it is clear that the P – value (= 0.36) is more than 0.05, which means null hypothesis is accepted. Statically, this indicates there is no significant difference in social development of preschoolers who attended early childhood care and education with respect to locale. As a result of ECCE both rural and urban children do not have significant difference in their social development. This is because, irrespective of the locations of ECCE centres, the government provides equal facilities and centres follow the uniform curriculum.

### **Difference in social development of preschoolers who attended ECCE and those who did not attend ECCE**

To find out the difference in social development of preschoolers who attended ECCE with those who did not attend ECCE was one of the primary objectives of the study. t-test was calculated as given in below in table 3

**Table 3: Difference in Social development of preschoolers who attended ECCE with those who did not attend ECCE**

Variable	ECCD	N	Mean	SD	P value	Remarks
Social Development	Attended	81	64.81	6.24	0.01 **	p- value < 0.05
	Not attended	77	62.25	6.67		

#### **\*\* Not significant**

From the table 3 it is clear that the P – value is 0.01 is less than 0.05, which means null hypothesis is not accepted. Statistically, it can be analyzed that there is significant difference in social development of preschoolers between the children who attended the ECCE and not attended. As a result of ECCE there is significant difference in social development of children who attended the ECCE and who did not attend the ECCE. This is because children get enough access to and participate in ECCE programmes in order to experience stimulation that fosters the social development through the supportive environment for the children to play with other children. It also provides children to mingle with other children coming from different social background.

The present findings is supported by the past studies, which states; preschool promotes the social inclusion and combats the social exclusion because they provided opportunities to mingle with friends and interact with them (Saylva, et. al., 2004); positive associations between child care quality and children's cognitive development and social competences during the preschool ( Peisner-Feinberg, 2007); Through ECCE, child's mental development and its processes were improved. It has also improved the language skills, social and emotional development by encouraging self-confidence, self- esteem, dignity, spontaneity and discipline (Burlacu, 2008); Varied activities in ECCE programmes provide windows to learn and know-how the diverse cultures, people, and community. (Fengfeng, 2008); there was significant effects in children who attend a preschool program, early childhood education was associated with substantial effects for both cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes ( Camilli, et al., 2010); who attended the preschool have better social adjustment because they have developed the independence, concentration, cooperation conformity and peer sociability (Taggart et.al., 2015); Children develop readiness to mingle with friends (Jena & Wangmo, 2016).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The study concluded that there is no significant difference in social development of preschoolers who attended early childhood care and education with respect to gender and locale. The ECCE centres are providing equal opportunities of social development for both the boys and girls by making them to participate in all the activities equally. Irrespective of the locations of ECCE centres, the government provides equal facilities and centres follow the uniform curriculum. The children get enough access to and participate in ECCE programmes in order to experience stimulation that fosters the social development through the supportive environment for the children to play with other children. It also provides children to mingle with other children coming from different social background. So there is a significant difference in social development of preschoolers who attended ECCE and those who did not attended ECCE.

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